

Industry needs urgent help to survive, and we request the following support from MHA

Retail is the cash engine of the entire value chain. If non-essential retail is not opened at the earliest and demand does not return, it will be impossible for the sector to survive let alone revive. Every week of delay in opening up this sector will not only put the direct 20 million+ jobs at risk, but it will also put the manufacturing jobs of 40-50 million at risk as well.

Opening up of retail as per the MHA guidelines issued on May 17, 2020

It is possible to implement safe shopping so that the retail sector can be opened up without compromising on safety. We request the MHA to work with the industry to open up shops in a safe way as outlined below.

1. The current notification mentions that shops should ensure minimum six (6) feet distance among customers and shall not allow more than 5 persons at the shop. By this definition a large number of stores will not be able to operate, especially the larger stores. Since social distancing of 6 feet will be maintained in the larger stores as well, the 5 person limit should be removed. We recommend that point (vii) of Annexure II (National Directive for COVID-19 Management) should be reworded as: Shops will ensure minimum six feet distance (2 gaz ki doori) among customers.
2. Since each state has interpreted the notification during lockdown 3.0 differently, many stores were not allowed to open even in green and orange zones. To ensure that the states uniformly interpret the MHA order during lockdown 4.0, we suggest including the following clarification for the retail sector.
 - All standalone stores irrespective of size, other than in a mall environment should be allowed to open e.g. Small or big operating as one brand, like Nalli's, Heritage Emporium, V-Mart, CROMA, Westside, Shoppers Stop etc. and other local, regional & national chains
 - All standalone stores small or big air conditioned or Non Air conditioned
 - Allow stores to be opened for up to 12 hours to accommodate more customers ensuring social distancing norms and all safety measures

The above rules should apply for all shops outside of containment zones

3. **Opening of malls:** A large part of consumption happens in malls and hence opening this segment is critical for recovery of the entire value chain. Since malls have few entry and exit points and are professionally managed, they can be opened with strict safety protocols (detailed in point 4). Moreover, for the first phase of opening up they can be opened with 1/3rd customer traffic. To further ensure safety, in the first phase only the shops in the malls can be allowed to open while foot courts and cinemas can continue to remain closed.

4. Standard Operating Procedure for Shops/Stores and malls:

To ensure safe shopping for customers, Shops/Stores should be made to follow the Standard Operating Procedure as below:

I. Safety and Sanitization

- a. Organisations to ensure availability of masks & gloves for employees
- b. Availability of alcohol-based sanitizers across premises and encourage employees to frequently sanitise their hands

II. Social Distancing

- a. Controlled entry and exit points following strict procedure for monitoring customers
- b. When standing in queue a minimum distance of 6 ft to be maintained
- c. Gathering of crowds strictly prohibited. Cars (3 persons each max.) and Buses to follow social distancing rules
- d. Malls to operate without theatres and food court but with longer working hours

III. Contact Tracing (Aarogya Setu)

- a. As per government's order, Aarogya Setu should be made mandatory for all the employees
- b. Encourage employees to regularly take self-assessment on the app