



Recommended Social Distancing Protocols and Procedures for Garden Centers

The following are recommended protocols for retail garden centres to utilize based on guidance from the Province of Ontario and guidelines adopted by other Canadian provinces. For more comprehensive information please communicate with your public health authority. Store layout, structure and area will dictate the feasibility of introducing physical distancing protocols. Achieving as many of these as feasible will minimize the spread of COVID-19 and keep the public and your employees safe.

Post Signage:

- At all public entries of retail facility that indicates:
 - The Maximum allowable customer capacity (see below)
 - That patrons should refrain from entry if they have a cough or fever
 - Required distancing between patrons of 2 meters (6 feet)
 - Reusable containers or bags are not permitted
 - Recommend the use of masks by patrons
- At payment area:
 - Suggestion to use contactless payment where feasible
 - Reusable containers or bags are not permitted
 - Required distancing between patrons of 2 meters (6 feet)
 - Defined payment location (tape on floor etc.)
- Throughout store:
 - The Maximum allowable customer capacity (see below)
 - Required distancing between patrons of 2 meters (6 feet)

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Calculating the Maximum Number of People in a Store:

A good rule for calculating the maximum number of people in a store at any one time (customers and staff) is four square metres of retail floor space per person or 50% of the legal capacity of the retail space.

Measures for Businesses to Encourage Social Distancing:

- Consider having a dedicated staff member at entry to greet customers to adhere to reduced occupancy requirements. Once the maximum number of patrons is reached, meter one entry for each person who exits.
- Where possible create a single flow of patrons through the garden centre so that there is a single dedicated path from entry to exit.
- For seasonal garden centres with dedicated entries to permanent stores (i.e. department or hardware stores) consider creating a single entry by obstructing public entries from the street or securing entries from the store to ensure all patrons enter from a single point (see illustrations below) and where feasible exit to an alternate location.
- Create single directionality in walkways/aisles with floor arrows indicating direction of travel to avoid passing or interaction of customers in tight quarters.
- Use physical queue line controls, such as crowd control cordons or stanchions at entrances and checkout lines. Place high visibility markers (e.g. tape or cones) every two metres as cues to support physical distancing.
- Install transparent barriers at checkout counters to ensure safety of employees and customers.
- Have clear signage in multiple locations (see above).
- Ask customers who arrive with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough or breathing issues) to return home and use a delivery service instead.
- Suggest the use of masks where feasible
- Offer online or telephone orders with delivery or curbside pick-up services as alternatives to in-person shopping.

Measures for Businesses to Mitigate Unnecessary Public Exposure/Contact:

- Provide clean carry-out bags for purchased items where applicable. Customers should be encouraged **not** to use their own containers, reusable bags or boxes.
- Limit or eliminate the sale/distribution of edible products.
- Place hand sanitizer with a minimum of 70% ethyl alcohol in dispensers near doors, pay stations and other high-touch locations for customers and staff use. Make wipes and trash bins available .
- Disinfect items used by the public after each use (wagons, shopping carts, baskets etc.)

Measures for Businesses to Protect Employee Health:

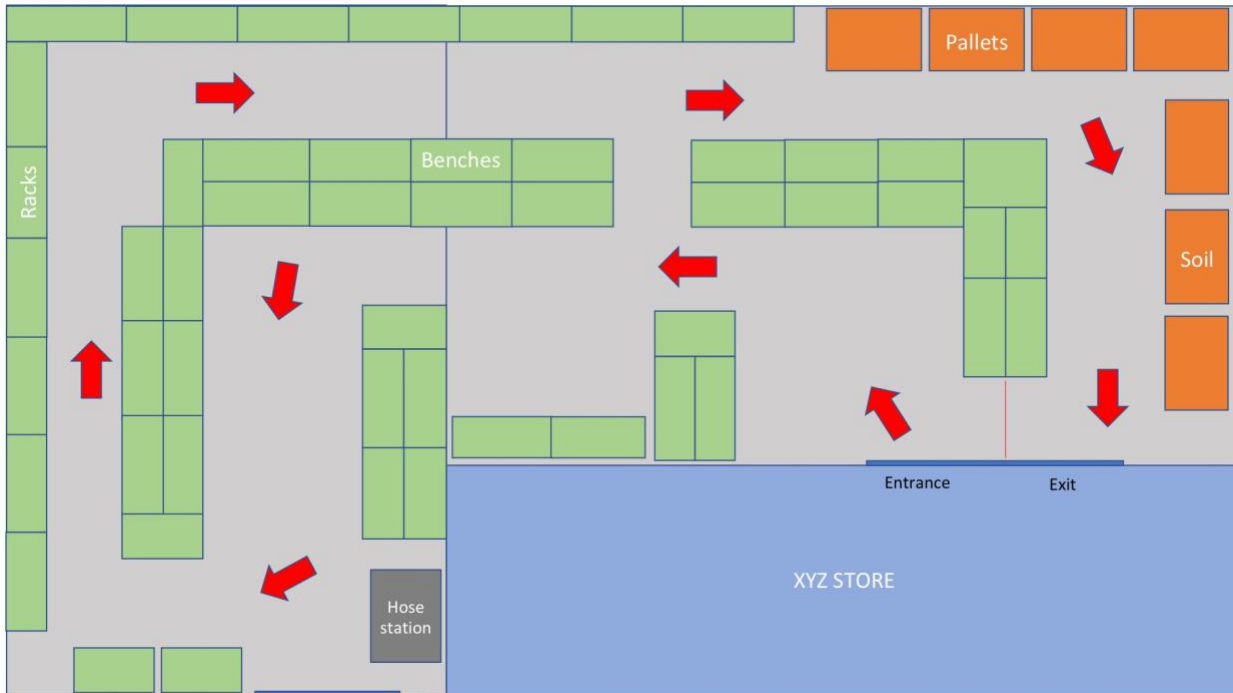
- Enhance the garden centres/store's sanitation plan and schedule. Check that the disinfectant used in the store is appropriate for elimination of viruses. Increase cleaning and disinfection of commonly contacted areas. Commonly contacted areas include wagons, baskets, doorways, containers, doorknobs, till conveyances, keyboards, bathroom surfaces, countertops, PIN pads, self-pay stations, hand baskets, light switches machine handles, tools, safety glasses, safety vests, gloves, and soles of boots.
- Keep in mind that high touch areas include those in both customer and employee accessed areas.
- Minimize use of shared equipment and tools, all tools are wiped down again at the end of shift. Keep tool sharing to a minimum, ideally each person has their own marked set of tools if enough are able.
- Ensure staff are practicing proper hygiene proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette including:
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty and handwashing isn't available.
 - Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue, then immediately dispose of the tissue and wash hands. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Ensure employee and public washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and that warm running water is available. Garbage bins should be emptied frequently.

- Employees who handle cash or credit cards should practice proper hand hygiene. When hands are not visibly soiled and between customer interactions, hand sanitizer can be used. Employees should wash their hands with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of their shift, and before preparing food.
- Consider making personal protective equipment (PPE) available to staff and encourage it be used. Items may include disposable gloves, disposable face masks and/or eye protection.
- If staff are using gloves, they should be changed after every interaction and when changing tasks. Hand hygiene must be performed between every glove change (hand sanitizer or hand washing with soap and water).
- Limit the handling of credit cards, debit cards and loyalty cards wherever possible, by allowing customers to scan. There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 can be passed on to others by touching or handling cash.
- All workers, especially those in constant contact with the public, should self-monitor for symptoms and use the self-assessment tool available on the Government of Ontario's website.
- Workplaces are encouraged to have plans in place for increased worker absences due to illness or isolation. Workplaces should have a workplace illness policy. If policies do not exist or are not in line with COVID-19 recommendations, workplaces should ensure the following:
 - Sick employees should stay home or be sent home from work.
 - The Government of Ontario provides an online COVID19 self-assessment screening tool to help determine if illness may be COVID-19. The tool provides ill workers with next steps depending on responses.
 - If an employee has gone home sick from the workplace, their work areas should be cleaned and disinfected.

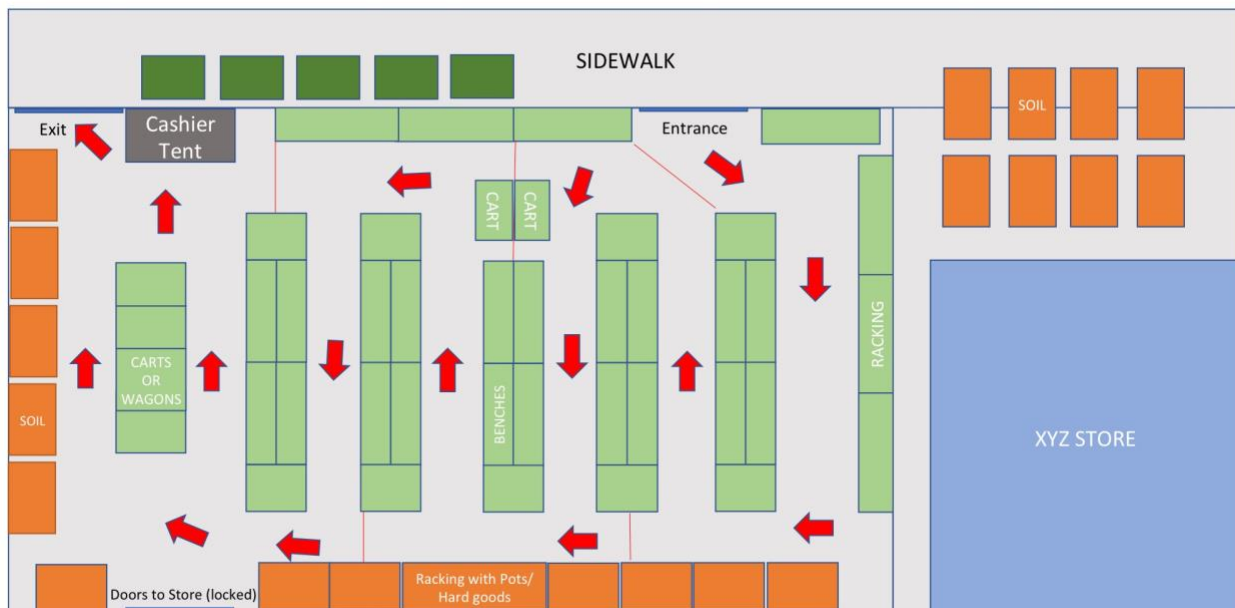
Please note that the recommendations above have been prepared by Flowers Canada (Ontario) Inc. to pair with current social distancing practices in Ontario and in other jurisdictions permitting garden centre sales. To provide additions or amendments to this document, please send them to flowers@fco.ca.

Store Layout Examples:

A.) Seasonal Garden Centre with Dedicated Entry and Exit to an Adjoining Store.



B.) Seasonal Garden Centre with Multiple Entries to an Adjoining Store.



C.) Standalone Garden Centre.

