

SHOPPING CENTRES: COVID19

South African Shopping Centres

The health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone in South African Shopping Centres is our highest priority with respect to the recent and ongoing COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. We know this situation, which is changing daily, is concerning and confusing to many. That's understandable, especially given the growing number of confirmed cases.

Making informed decisions that are based on the latest known facts and official guidance is our ongoing pledge to our members, tenants and employees.

Creating a safe environment

Our primary goal is to minimize serious illness and overall deaths, and second to minimize societal disruption amongst the public.

Given that there is currently no effective vaccine or specific treatment (e.g. antiviral medication) for COVID-19, public health measures will be the only tools available to mitigate the impact of the virus.

Public health measures such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and environmental cleaning in the home are the cornerstone public measures to protect individuals, their families and others against seasonal influenza and other respiratory viruses.

Environmental cleaning and ventilation

- We recommend the routine cleaning of frequently used surfaces and objects to help to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and to help mitigate the risk of people becoming infected through self-inoculation after touching contaminated surfaces. The virus that causes COVID-19 has the potential to survive in the environment for up to several days. Cleaning, particularly of frequently touched surfaces, can kill the virus, making it no longer possible to infect people.
- We recommend that you intensify your existing rigorous cleaning and sanitizing efforts, which include, but are not limited to, increasing the frequency and intensity of cleaning all commonly touched surfaces including seating, doors, handrails, shopping trollies, credit card machines, elevators, directories, rides as well as rental strollers and wheelchairs.
- You are encouraged to develop protocols for cleaning public spaces if they currently do not have an established cleaning routine.
- Increase and enforce frequency of cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (e.g., phones, elevator buttons, computers, desks, lunch tables, kitchens, washrooms, cash registers, seating areas, surface counters, customer service counters, bars, restaurant tables/menus).
- It is also recommended that items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g., newspapers, magazines, stuffed toys) be removed.
- Increasing ventilation (e.g. opening windows when weather permits) may help reduce transmission, though evidence is limited as to its effectiveness. Simulation studies show that increased ventilation was shown to reduce influenza transmission and is usually simple and feasible in many locations.
- Provide access to handwashing facilities and place hand sanitizing dispensers in prominent locations throughout your Malls and workplace, if possible.
- If appropriate, set up testing areas in your parking lots at Malls after consultation with Public Health officials.

Hand hygiene

- Regularly wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer with alcoholic solutions, gels or tissues to maintain clean hands and fingernails. It should be performed frequently with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds:
- Before and after preparing food (food court areas / tenants);
- Before and after eating;
- After using the toilet;
- After coughing/sneezing into a tissue (or if non-compliant with respiratory etiquette);
- Before and after using a surgical/procedure mask and after removing gloves;
- After handling body fluid-contaminated waste or laundry;
- Whenever hands look dirty.
- If soap and water are not available, hands can be cleaned with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) that contains at least 60% alcohol, ensuring that all surfaces of the hands are covered (e.g. front and back of hands as well as between fingers) and rubbed together until they feel dry. For visibly soiled hands, soiling should be removed with an alcohol-based hand wipe first, followed by use of ABHS.
- Touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands should be avoided.

Respiratory etiquette

- Describes a combination of measures intended to minimize the dispersion of large particle respiratory droplets when an ill person is coughing, sneezing and talking to reduce virus transmission.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a surgical/procedure mask or tissue. Dispose of tissues in a lined waste container and perform hand hygiene immediately after a cough or sneeze

OR

- Cough/sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hand.
- We want shoppers to feel safe when they visit shopping centres and to remember that they play a role in our defence against the spread of COVID-19 by following the practical guidance of health officials:
 - Stay home if you are sick and seek medical attention.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, lathering the backs of your hands, between your fingers, fingertips and under your nails for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based sanitizer if you can't wash your hands.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your arm, when coughing or sneezing.

It is important to note that the official US guidance from state and local health officials is that closing Malls is not a recommended action at this time. In locations where mass gatherings have been cancelled, officials have been careful to say the guidelines do not apply to spaces where people are constantly moving, such as airports, shopping malls and centres, grocery stores or similar spaces.

We will continue to provide updates with the latest information about our response to COVID-19.

SAPOA
16 March 2020