



Vermont Retail & Grocers Association
963 Paine Turnpike N.
Berlin, VT 05602

December 7, 2021

Dear Municipal Officials,

On behalf of Vermont's retailers, we thank you for your service and commitment to the enormous task of protecting the welfare of your communities across the state.

As you know, retailers' focus since the beginning of the pandemic has squarely been on employee and customer safety. The dual impacts of a health crisis and an economic downturn have caused enormous strain on us all. Retailers have been at the forefront of this crisis, first as essential locations to provide access to food and necessities for Vermonters; second, working tirelessly since the outset of the pandemic to develop and maintain protocols for keeping employees and customers safe.

As our strategies to contain the pandemic evolve, The Vermont Retail & Grocers Association **respectfully requests that if individual municipalities mandate facial coverings for all customers, the appropriate municipal agents or personnel be charged with enforcing the order.** Retail employees do not receive training, nor do they have the authority, to enforce public laws and should not be required to de-escalate confrontations. Any municipal order requiring facial coverings should clearly define which municipal agents will enforce it, and should explicitly note that retailers and their employees are not required to enforce it. Requiring retailers to enforce such orders unfairly places business owners and employees in untenable and uncomfortable situations.

Shoppers should feel confident that they can safely enter retail stores statewide. VRGA continues to support the use of masks and asks shoppers to please wear masks when shopping for the safety of themselves and those around them. We encourage patrons to take advantage of hand sanitizer available in most stores when entering and exiting shops. Working together, we can keep stores open and stop the spread of this virus.

Again, thank you for your continued dedication to the safety of Vermonters and for your service and commitment to your towns and cities.

Sincerely,

Erin Sigrist
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