How to keep your employees safe

Follow these guidelines: https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

Review safety programs and emergency action plans to ensure that they include infection disease protocols and are compliant with OSHA and health and safety regulations. Circulate information to employees reminding them of best hygiene practices and prevention measures.

Suggestions from the CDC that you may consider:

- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies.
- Require employees to
  - stay home if they have a fever, a cough, or symptoms of a cold
  - limit non-essential travel
- Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment. When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses.
- Increasing the amount of trash receptacles around the store to ensure customers can throw waste away themselves

Additional suggestions on how to further reduce contamination within your store:

- If possible, designate employees to take orders and become personal shoppers while customers wait outside.
- Designate specific aisles or locations within a store that employees maintain to ensure their safety as well as reduce the number of products that customers come in contact with.
- If customers are using cash, designate a lane or register for cash only and require that employees use gloves.

Urge customers to:

- Practice the CDC’s recommended practice of staying at least 6 feet away from each other.
- Leave reusable bags at home for now.
- Bag their own groceries.

What to do if an employee encounters someone that may have COVID-19 or becomes ill

If an employee calls in to self-report an illness, the Vermont Department of Health is directing Vermonters to contact their health care provider by phone. Do not call the Vermont Department of Health and do not go to the hospital, except in a life-threatening situation.
• Employers should not identify or disclose to other employees the reason that an employee is not at work.
• Documents pertaining to, or communications with, employees about their medical conditions should be kept in a secure and confidential location separate from the employee’s personnel file.
• Employers should engage employees in the interactive process and accommodate employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of the virus by allowing them to take time off from work to see a doctor.

When can employees return to work when a doctor’s note might not be possible because the healthcare system is taxed?

• Employees can return to work at least 72 hours after fever and symptoms have stopped; and at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. CDC Healthcare Guidelines
• Employees who have come in close proximity to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 should self-isolate for 14 days. Those individuals can return to work if they do not exhibit symptoms upon completion of the 14 days.