Beat: News

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Timeline for retail to reopen in June

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USPA NEWS - Prime Minister Boris Johnson sets out a timeline for retail to reopen in June.

Thousands of high street shops, department stores and shopping centres across England are set to reopen next month once they are COVID-19 secure and can show customers will be kept safe, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed today.

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From:
Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, and The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

The Prime Minister has set out:

Outdoor markets and car showrooms will be able to reopen from 1 June, as soon as they are able to meet the COVID-19 secure guidelines to protect shoppers and workers. As with garden centres, the risk of transmission of the virus is lower in these outdoor and more open spaces. Car showrooms often have significant outdoor space and it is generally easier to apply social distancing.

All other non-essential retail including shops selling clothes, shoes, toys, furniture, books, and electronics, plus tailors, auction houses, photography studios, and indoor markets, will be expected to be able to reopen from 15 June if the Government´s five tests are met and they follow the COVID-19 secure guidelines, giving them three weeks to prepare.

Shops like supermarkets and pharmacies have been trading responsibly throughout the pandemic. Building on this and in line with the Government´s roadmap, reopening non-essential retail is the next step towards restoring people´s livelihoods, restarting the UK´s economy, and ensuring vital public services like the NHS continue to be funded.

Businesses will only be able to open from these dates once they have completed a risk assessment, in consultation with trade union representatives or workers, and are confident they are managing the risks. They must have taken the necessary steps to become COVID-19 secure in line with the current Health and Safety legislation.

The government is taking action to help businesses re-open and protect their staff and customers, including:

Publishing updated COVID-secure guidelines for people who work in or run shops, branches, and stores, after consultation with businesses, union leaders, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

Working with local authorities to continue to carry out spot checks and follow up on concerns by members of the public.

The updated guidance takes into account the best practice demonstrated by the many retailers which have been allowed to remain open and have applied social distancing measures in store. Measures that shops should consider include placing a poster in their windows to demonstrate awareness of the guidance and commitment to safety measures, storing returned items for 72 hours before putting them back out on the shop floor, placing protective coverings on large items touched by the public such as beds or sofas, and frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, including self-checkouts, trolleys, coffee machines and betting terminals, for example.

The vast majority of businesses will want to do everything possible to protect their staff and customers, but tough powers are in place to enforce action if they don´t, including fines and jail sentences of up to two years.

As per the roadmap, hairdressers, nail bars and beauty salons, and the hospitality sector, remain closed, because the risk of transmission in these environments is higher where long periods of person to person contact is required.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:
The high street sits at the heart of every community in the country. Enabling these businesses to open will be a critical step on the road to rebuilding our economy, and will support millions of jobs across the UK.

The guidance we have set out today provides a vital framework to get shops open in a way that is safe for everyone. It explains how retail workers who are not currently working can go back to work as safely as possible and feel confident in their workplace. And it reassures customers that shops are properly assessing the risks and putting in place measures to protect them.

Josh Hardie, CBI Deputy Director General, said:
As our high streets slowly reawaken, this new guidance is important for businesses on the ground. Our shops are doing all they can to keep the public and their staff safe, and we´ve seen many retailers leading from the front with innovative solutions to do just that. As more and more businesses turn their attention to reopening, this guidance will help them plan to do so safely and securely.

Andrew Goodacre, CEO, British Independent Retailers Association, said:
Bira is pleased with the guidance being given to retail outlets.

It provides a broad framework for the basic measures and still allows the retailer to be flexible according to the size, layout and location of the shop.

This guidance will ensure that independent retailers provide safe environments for employees and customers.

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