

Shop Responsibly: Province urges everyone to use common sense when shopping for groceries or essential items

As the Easter weekend quickly approaches, the Nova Scotia Government is warning people to shop responsibly.

Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Robert Strang, stressed responsible shopping during Tuesday's daily briefing, saying his frustration level is growing higher as he sees photos of crowds waiting to get into stores.

"We need to keep ourselves apart as much as possible," he said. "Anything that brings people together from around the community in close contact with one another, this is where the virus spreads. That is why we need to separate and keep as much to our homes as possible. Yes, I get it some people still need to go to work and we are asking them to do this. People need to get groceries and



go the pharmacy but there are ways we can do that responsibly. Lining up with a large number of people, cheek to cheek outside a store, is not common sense, not responsible. I am baffled when I see a picture like that. What are people missing that has been said over the last three weeks to think that is okay? It is putting themselves at risk, but it is giving the virus a foothold and puts us all a risk."

John Davison, coordinator for Pictou County Regional Emergency Management Organization, said he has seen good measures put in place by local stores trying to enforce physical distancing. Many stores are limiting the number of people in stores, have detailed traffic flow plans, and protective measures for cashiers.

"The retailers are trying their best to do their part while continuing to provide much needed services to the people of Pictou County," he said. "Everyone needs to obey the rules in place and shop responsibly."

Davison said local retailers know Easter is typically a busy shopping time, which is why they have been urging people to not leave their shopping to the last minute. Many stores will be closed this coming Friday and Sunday and he does not want to see people waiting until Thursday or Saturday to get their groceries or other items.

"Planning ahead and getting everything you need in one trip is ideal," he said. "Send one person to the store with a complete list of items and if there are line ups, physical distance. Give people space and respect the rules in place at the stores. They are in place not frustrate you, but to keep you safe."

The Retail Council of Canada recently released some tips for people on how to shop responsibly.

Below are a few tips everyone should follow to ensure that we all stay safe while shopping at the grocery or drug store, ensuring we help keep front-line workers in stores safe as well:

BEFORE WE SHOP

- If you're sick or have been asked to quarantine at home, don't go to your local grocery or drugstore. Use contactless delivery and have someone drop them off at your door, knock, then retreat to a safe distance!
- We all feel isolated and are looking for ways to fill our days and to keep our loved ones busy. We need to remember that we must avoid planning our grocery or drugstore trips with others in tow. Just designate one person to shop – shop alone!

WHILE WE SHOP (alone)

- Practice Physical Distancing – 2M or 6ft. (That's the length of an average hockey stick 😊)
- Be considerate. Only buy what you need; Only touch what you take.
- Wash your hands before and after you shop and use sanitizer whenever you can.
- When paying for your goods, use contactless debit or credit/tap wherever possible.
- If you use re-usable bags – wash them before and after your shopping trip – and if possible, bag items yourself – or don't use them at all right now.
- Be kind – we are all in this together.

ALWAYS – WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY WORKING TOGETHER

- Be considerate. Listen to the authorities – they have our best interest in mind and by following these tips, we'll get through this crisis.
- We all have a role to play in keeping these retail environments safe for employees and customers.

