

Shoppers encouraged to safely shop local

The Scottish Government is encouraging the public to shop local as retail businesses across the country prepare to re-open today.

Under the move to Phase two of the Scottish Government's route map out of lockdown, shops which have an access to the street can now reopen once guidance is implemented.

Today also marks the easing of restrictions on housing moves, outdoor markets, the construction sector, factories, warehouses and labs and research facilities.

The government points out that retail is an essential part of Scotland's communities and is one of the country's largest employers. The re-opening is underpinned by a new Scottish Government campaign to ensure shopping is safe. The national campaign, which includes posters for retailers, encourages the public to enjoy shopping again as they safely support businesses in their local area.

It asks shoppers to pay attention to signs, guidance and instructions from shop staff, to shop outside of peak hours and to follow current health guidance. This includes the wearing of face coverings.

Economy Secretary Fiona Hyslop said: "The progress made in tackling COVID-19 because of compliance of the public with lockdown rules means we are now in a position to ease some restrictions.

“Shops with street access in high streets across the country will be re-opening from today in a significant step towards the recovery of our economy, which has been very severely hit by coronavirus.

“High street retailers have shown huge resilience since the start of lockdown and the work they have done to safely prepare for re-opening, with close engagement between industry and trade unions, has been very welcome.

“As the high street re-opens we are making it clear shoppers are welcome back to their local high street as long as they shop safely and observe key safety messages such as the wearing of face coverings.”

Scotland Policy Chair for the Federation of Small Businesses Andrew McRae, said:“We all have a part to play in breathing life back into our high streets and town centres. Local independent retailers have had a very long, tough few months and they need the public’s support now more than ever.

“We know that money spent locally stays in the local community – and local communities can’t recover unless local economies do so too.”

David Lonsdale, director of the Scottish Retail Consortium, said:“The last fourteen weeks have been very challenging for retailers. Lockdown has forced them to rely on their limited reserves of cash and short term financial support, including the Scottish Government’s grants and rates relief, to survive.

“Being able to reopen today is a chance for those businesses to recover, and hopefully thrive.

“In preparation shop owners have put in an immense effort to take every step possible to be ready to safely open and our hope is customers will come out and support their local town centre and high street.”

The First Minister set out the guidance in her media briefing on Friday.

She said: “I will end with facts, as I have done repeatedly in the last few days, which is the public health campaign summarising the key points you need to remember.

- Face coverings should be worn in enclosed spaces such as shops. They are mandatory on public transport.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Clean your hands and hard surfaces regularly.
- Two metre distancing remains the rule.
- and Self isolate, and book a test, if you have symptoms.

“If we all remember and abide by these five basic measures, all of us can stay safe, protect others and save lives.

“We have made so much progress – but it will reverse in a heartbeat if we drop our guard.

“It would be heartbreaking – for so many reasons – to go backwards now.

“So please let’s all unite to keep this virus under control.”



PHOTO The Scottish Government