



## ADAPTING TO THE 'NEW NORMAL': AN AVB CHECKLIST

As stores adapt to the new business environment, BrandSource members are urged to consider these retail guidelines to safely and successfully transition your staff and customers to a post-pandemic marketplace.

### EMPLOYEES

#### ○ Reinforce [safety policies and procedures](#)

- ☐ No handshakes!
- ☐ Maintain six feet of social distance
- ☐ Wash hands frequently
- ☐ If symptoms develop, employees are to stay home and notify their manager

#### ○ Update your [employee handbook](#)

- ☐ Delineate responsibilities of managers, supervisors and employees
- ☐ Detail protective workplace procedures for sales/inside staff and delivery/service teams
- ☐ Address employee confidentiality and privacy issues

#### ○ Conduct training sessions on safety protocols

"Everyone on your staff must buy in and play a part in mitigating the spread of the virus."

– Don Frank Sr., L.H. Brubaker Appliances & Water Treatment





## CUSTOMERS

- **Assure customers of a safe and welcoming in-store experience**
  - ❑ Communicate store policies via website, social media, [Google My Business](#) and exterior store signage
  - ❑ Keep the store neat, well organized and clean
- **Institute crowd control**
  - ❑ Limit the number of shoppers in the store at one time
  - ❑ Schedule store appointments
- **Offer alternatives to in-store visits**
  - ❑ Conduct virtual product demos using videoconferencing platforms like FaceTime or Zoom
  - ❑ Don't overlook phone calls as a productive sales tool

"We do not allow any groups of more than three people in the store, and no children under the age of 16." – AVB member survey response

"After a few days of stepping backward only to have our clients walk forward to close the gap, we tried taping off six feet as a reminder to everyone."

– Todd Hall, Duerden's Appliance

## SHOWROOM

- **Disinfect, disinfect, disinfect**
  - ❑ Place "[sanitation stations](#)" with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes throughout the showroom
  - ❑ Cleanse all high touch surfaces frequently
  - ❑ Make disposable face masks available upon request
- **Change it up**
  - ❑ Reconfigure the store layout to allow for wider distancing
  - ❑ Use masking tape to [mark off 6 feet](#) on the sales floor
  - ❑ Place plexiglass shields around the checkout counter
  - ❑ Place safety reminder signage throughout the store

## WEBSITE

### ○ If you're not already transactional, [get with the program](#)

- ❑ Online dollar volume was up 454% for members in March and April
- ❑ Consumers' embrace of e-commerce will last long past the health crisis
- ❑ AVB Marketing can implement full e-commerce functionality in just seven days

"We wouldn't be open right now without the website." – Tim Hillebrand, Don's Appliances

"Chat activity is off the charts. They start coming in before we get here in the morning and it gets busy at midnight."

– Jackie King, Nampa Appliance TV & Mattress

"It is most important that we stay in front of our customers."

– Mason Lafferty, Lafferty's Home Center, on recording and posting video clips

### ○ Utilize all the [digital tools](#) at your disposal

- ❑ Sort your products by popularity and availability
- ❑ Flag your in-stock items
- ❑ Provide payment gateways (BrandSource Credit Card by Citi, soon with apply-and-buy; PayPal; Amazon Pay)
- ❑ Offer add-on items like [extended warranties](#) and installation accessories
- ❑ Offer add-on services like delivery, installation and haul-away
- ❑ Engage your customers [around the clock with chat](#)

### ○ Use social media, [video messaging](#) and [Google My Business](#) to drive traffic to your site

- ❑ Use Google My Business to list updated store hours, new delivery parameters and any other operational changes
- ❑ Utilize Google My Business's free text messaging feature to connect with consumers
- ❑ Video is a powerful medium — use it to stay top-of-mind with customers
- ❑ Video production needn't be elaborate; start with an iPhone and a Facebook account

## MERCHANDISING

- **Keep your best-selling SKUs in stock**
  - ❑ Focus on top performers. This is not the time to broaden your assortment
  - ❑ Manufacturers recommend staging best-selling SKU orders out for 60-90 days
- **Focus on products with PMAP/PLAP pricing**
  - ❑ These will likely be in greatest supply
- **Monitor RDC inventory, comb the closeout/obsolete reports, and work with vendor and distributor reps to procure product**
  - ❑ With supply chains interrupted, snap up inventory by all means possible
- **Run consumer promotions**
  - ❑ Utilize AVB's no-interest financing and \$50 gift card promotions, both available through the Citi/BrandSource credit card
  - ❑ Create your own "home-grown" promotions with Flash Sales or honoring hometown heroes





## DELIVERY & SERVICE

### ○ **Determine whether to provide curbside delivery, in-home delivery, installation or at-store pickup**

- ☐ Whatever you decide, clearly communicate the options to your customers
- ☐ Monitor which services your competitors are providing and what they are charging for those services
- ☐ List the cost of delivery and install services on your website; avoid any suggestion of “hidden” fees
- ☐ If you deliver to a porch or garage, offer to return to complete the installation when conditions change

“Customers are pleased that we can offer something at this time.”

– Suzanne Carey-Fernandez, Moderno Appliance, on virtual service calls

“Now is not the time to be nice. If the customer won’t stay 10 feet away, grab your tools and parts, exit the house. We’ll call the customer.”

– A.J. James, Pegasus Appliance Repair

### ○ **Determine whether to provide on-site or virtual repair service**

- ☐ Problems can often be diagnosed via videoconference and resolved with simple fixes
- ☐ If the repair cannot be performed remotely, offer to resolve the problem at a later date if you have suspended in-home visits

### ○ **Establish strict safety protocols for in-home visits**

- ☐ Inquire in advance whether anyone in the household is symptomatic
- ☐ Wash or sanitize hands before and after the delivery or service call
- ☐ Wipe down truck handles, steering wheel and dashboard at the beginning and the end of the day
- ☐ Wear masks, gloves and booties upon entering a location
- ☐ Have the customer stay outside the room where the service is performed
- ☐ Clean the work area after completing the service
- ☐ Make sure the in-home visit is contact-free — no handshakes!
- ☐ Delivery and service personnel should remove and isolate their work garments in a separate area of their homes





## MEMBERS' ADVICE

- ☆ "When a customer comes to our store for their appointment or calls to make one, they are asked the COVID questions and are reminded about our 6-foot social distance policy."
- ☆ "I am offering \$2.00 per hour hazard bonus to in-home service and delivery employees and a \$200 return-to-work bonus. However, if they don't feel safe, they can collect unemployment."
- ☆ "We will continue to limit deliveries to drop-offs only."
- ☆ "We're going into homes but I'm not sure it's the right decision. But a washer delivered to a lady's garage does her no good."
- ☆ "We sanitize our trucks two or three times a day; it's the same in the store."
- ☆ "I found some older inventory sitting in the warehouse that I put out on the floor and sold right away."
- ☆ "Employee training and projects are very productive during this time, as well as freshening up our sales floor and building maintenance."

## FINAL ADVICE

- **Monitor federal, state and local regulations and guidelines for any updates**
  - ☐ This is especially critical as states set new rules for reopening retail businesses
  - ☐ For those with Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, check the [Small Business Association site](#) for any changes to the forgiveness provisions
- **Lean on AVB**
  - ☐ Visit the [COVID Info Hub](#) regularly on YourSourceNews
  - ☐ Participate in [Region Call-Ins](#)
  - ☐ Tune in to BrandSource webinars and [virtual Town Halls](#)
  - ☐ Call upon your AVB Marketing and Member Relations reps

**STAY SAFE,  
STAY POSITIVE  
AND STAY COMMITTED!**

– Jim Ristow, AVB Inc.