



## **VAPE SHOP BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19**

### **GOAL**

The stated goal of all vape shops should be that no COVID-19 transmission will occur within the premises.

This guidance was developed by Dr. Mark Tyndall in collaboration with retailers and industry experts. VITA is not a public health agency and does not provide health advice.

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION IN VAPE SHOPS**

Vape shops are an essential service for people who vape. It should be acknowledged that public health recommendations around COVID-19 can shift quickly based on new information and priorities.

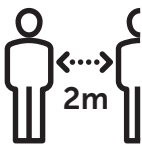
There are a set of standard recommended protocols that should be adopted at all vape shops in accordance with Health Canada recommendations. These include:



**Restricting any customers who are exhibiting signs of infection from entering the shop**



**Limiting the number of customers in the shop at one time – based on size of the shop**



**Keeping 2-metre distancing between customers within the shop and while waiting to enter**



**Providing easy and free access to hand sanitation stations with alcohol-based products**



**Encouraging customers to wear masks in the shop, and when possible, provide masks for those who do not have their own**



**Performing regular cleaning and disinfecting within the shop**



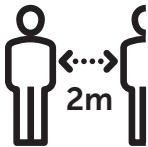
**Temporarily suspending all flavour sampling and flavour sample stations - where applicable**

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION IN VAPE SHOPS**

Management, staff, and other employees who are working in the shop have an additional set of recommendations to follow. These include:



**Restricting anyone who is exhibiting signs of infection from working at the shop**



**Keeping a 2-metre distance from all customers and other staff**



**Encouraging the use of masks**



**Cleaning the surfaces of contact between each customer transaction**



**Washing hands thoroughly with soap and water or sanitizing hands with an alcohol-based product between each customer transaction**

*Please note: VITA is not enforcing recommended protocols. We are making recommendations based upon best practices for the vaping industry.*

Additional vape shop recommendations include:

- ✓ Utilizing open and close check lists
- ✓ Mark 2-metre intervals on retail flooring and in outdoor lineups
- ✓ Have disposable gloves and masks available upon entry
- ✓ Have hand sanitizer available upon entry
- ✓ Use disinfectant wipes or cleaner after each use of payment processor
- ✓ Install acrylic check-out guards or Plexiglass shields at point of sale areas

## **VAPE SHOP SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations have been designed to provide guidance for various processes that are unique to specialty vape shops.

### **Consultation**

1. Offer a video call session that can be used to answer questions, suggest appropriate devices and liquids, and demonstrate the set up and filling of tanks and/or pods. Following the video session, you can choose a time where the customer can come in and pick up the product.
2. Designate a spot inside of your retail location where you and the new customer can be away from others.
3. Shorten the consultation time by creating video clips and make them available on social media platforms where customers can review the various devices and how to set them up.
4. Reduce the question period time by offering follow-up phone services or video sessions.

### **Troubleshooting**

When troubleshooting a consumer's device and/or product the best infection control practices are:

1. Ask the customer to send a video or photo with a brief description of the issue and send it electronically. You could advise the customer on what to do without seeing the device.
2. If the problem needs in shop processing, customers should be advised to sanitize their device and bring it to the shop in a plastic bag. Staff will work on the device in an area designated for troubleshooting that is away from the customer area. The device will be sanitized before returning it to the customer in a new plastic bag.

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### **Flavour Sample Bars**

VITA released guidance on March 11, 2020 due to concerns of potential transmission of COVID-19 which states:

*The only way to ensure that sample stations are not a risk factor is if they are either temporarily closed or if they exclusively use individually sealed, single use, prefilled containers for sampling.*

The best infection control practice recommendation is revised to:

1. Shut down all flavour sampling bars, without exception for prefilled containers. Vaping in or directly outside the premises should be discouraged - where applicable.

### **New Device Demonstrations**

1. Both employee and customer are to wear gloves while handling any device for the purpose of demonstration. The use of hand sanitizer prior to each interaction is an acceptable alternative to wearing gloves.
2. In order to maintain social distancing, products should be placed on a surface for the customer to retrieve instead of being passed from one hand to another.
3. Each demo device is thoroughly disinfected after handling.

## EXAMPLE SHAREABLES

The following are example graphics that demonstrate recommended approaches to safe vaping and helping prevent the spread of COVID-19.

