# SOCIAL DISTANCING – STORE LAYOUT

The clear instructions from the Government are - stay home, and when you leave to get your essentials, make sure you are standing at least 1.5m away from other people.

There are practical considerations in retail businesses that must be made when setting their occupancy limits to meet guidelines, but also allow customer movement through complex store layouts.

## Maximum Occupancy

Businesses must calculate the maximum occupancy of their business to ensure they are providing space to meet the 4sqm requirement for each customer.

Calculating this figure is a simple area calculation (length x width) based on the customer area.

In a bicycle store environment this would mean you would need to measure the customer area **(so the shop floor less the counter, display racks, workshop, storeage etc)** if it is say 5m x 11m then the area is 55, then the max number of persons in the store at one time is 13 (rounded down to the nearest whole person).

This number includes staff.

## Need for Caution

The simple example must be treated with caution and need for clarity comes from the reality that in the average bicycle store having the max number of people based on the area calculation (13) would likely result in failing the social distancing requirements.

In the example above the layout of the store may be such that while there is the area for 13 people, there is only really space for 5 people to effectively social distance on the floor, when ability to move through the store is considered.

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It is more complicated if you consider that, even after you take out the area occupied by shelving and other stock, having a customer on every point 1.5m from each other on the floor, would limit the customers capacity to move through the store, select items and get into line.

Retail sites will need to take a practical eye to their shop layout, and work out how many people can safely, and practically, shop in the store at any one time. The 4sqm requirement show the maximum safe occupancy, but it does not take the practical nature of shoppers, moving through the store and then lining up into account

Depending on the site layout the 4sqm requirement may say that the site can have 15 people safely, but the layout practically will only allow 3 people queuing (1 at the counter and 2 in a line 1.5m from each other) and 1 or 2 people moving through the shop floor

**Setting Practical Safe Shopping Person Limit instore**

**1. Work out the 4sqm Maximum Occupancy**

- Take the customer accessible shop floor length in metres multiplied by the customer accessible shop floor width in metres (length x width) to give you the Total Customer Area.
- Subtract the physical space taken by counters, display racks, workshop
- Divide the Total Customer Area by 4 to give you the number of 4sqm blocks in the customer accessible shop floor – this number is the Maximum Occupancy.

**2. Build and mark out a Safe Queue**

- Start with the counter
- Mark a point at the counter to allow for service of the customer at the front of the line – this becomes the 'customer being served' spot
- From the centre of the 'customer being served' spot, measure 2m back and mark another point – this becomes the 'second customer in line' spot

- Continue adding Safe Queue spots in the available space. For some sites there will only be enough space for a 2 person queue, for others the layout may allow a longer queue

**3. Consider the rest of the store for 'shoppers'**

- Imagine a person on each of the Safe Queue spots and then visualise the rest of the store
- Consider the regular shopper patterns on entering the store. Do shoppers typically go down a particular aisle? Do shoppers go up and down all aisles?
- Determine, based on your situation, how many more people can be 'shopping' without coming into the Safe Queue space, or each others space

**4. Add the Safe Queue number of people to the 'shoppers' number to get your Practical Person Limit**

- Check that your Practical Person Limit number is less that the Maximum Occupancy number. If it is you have your Practical Safe Shopping Person Limit. If it is not you will need to ensure you lower your number to match that of the Maximum Occupancy.

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**Store Example;**

1. *Work out the 4sqm Maximum Occupancy*

- Customer area of the shop is 6 metres long and 12 metres wide
- 6m x 12m = 72sqm
- 72sqm / 4sqm = 18 blocks of 4sqm = 18 people Maximum Occupancy

2. *Subtract the space for display racks, counters, storage and workshop*

- The maximum area includes the area that customers can physically access.
- Rack space = 12sqm
- 72sqm – 12sqm = 60sqm
- 60sqm / 4sqm = 15 blocks of 4sqm = 15 people Maximum Occupancy

3. *Build and mark out a Safe Queue*

- Eq - Safe Queue is 3 people, one at the counter and two 2meters back. The Safe Queue can not be longer because of the placement of the doors. Extension of the Safe Queue into the aisles would reduce shopping capacity so the Safe Queue number is 3.

4. *Consider the rest of the store for 'shoppers'*

- Consideration shows 2 'shoppers' could effectively navigate the store without invading each others safe social distancing or crossing over with the Safe Queue, so the 'shoppers' number is 2.

5. *Add the Safe Queue number of people to the 'shoppers' number to get your Practical Person Limit*

- Safe Queue of 3, plus the 'shoppers' of 2 makes a Practical Person Limit of 5
- The Practical Person Limit of 5 is less than the Maximum Occupancy of 12 so the Practical Safe Shopping Person Limit is 5.

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## Communicating to Customers

It is important to communicate the requirements of social distancing to customers, and to ensure that they are queuing (particularly) where you have assessed it is safe to queue. This can be achieved with stickers, taped crosses on the floor or other indicators.

It can also be helpful to post notices to customers before they enter the store (such as on the pumps), and on the entry doors, to remind them of the importance of these measures.