

Furniture stores are essential and safe, and they deserve equal treatment

Home Furnishings Association members sell products that are essential to their customers' lives. Furniture stores can be operated safely. And they deserve to be treated as same as big-box retailers that also sell home furnishings products. Please share this with your state and local leaders.

Furniture stores are essential

- As millions of Americans adjusted to new circumstances during the coronavirus crisis, some governors recognized as essential “businesses that sell, manufacture or supply products needed for people to work from home” (Arizona, Indiana, Ohio, others). To work from home, people need desks, chairs, computer tables, lighting. Children and college students learning from home have similar needs.
- Appliances, sold by many furniture stores, are essential to the safe and healthy operations of American households.
- Lift chairs, recliners and adjustable-base beds are essential for people with physical infirmities or who are recovering from injuries or illnesses – including COVID-19.
- Americans spending more time at home put more wear and tear on household furnishings. Comfort and utility become more important. New home furnishings, including sofas, armchairs and bedding, make home life more pleasant.
- When furniture stores close, state and local governments lose millions of dollars in sales tax revenue.

Furniture stores are safe

- Centers for Disease Control guidelines for businesses posted May 14, 2020, list measures that furniture stores are well-suited to achieve.
- Furniture stores typically employ small staffs and receive few customers for the space they occupy. They can keep people safe distances apart. Customer visits can be scheduled through appointments to further limit the number of people in stores at one time.
- Because stores are open six or seven days per week and 10 or more hours per day, they can operate staggered shifts for enhanced safety.
- Face coverings don't hinder the work of furniture store employees. They also have time between customers for thorough hand-washing and other hygienic practices.
- Stores can be thoroughly cleaned several times a day.

All stores that sell furniture should be treated the same

- Many big-box chains that sell appliances, groceries, medical supplies – and also furniture – have been granted “essential” status with license to sell home furnishings products that furniture stores could not. This is a fundamental inequity that should not be allowed to continue.