

The COVID-19 crisis is challenging for all of us, and business owners have been tested in ways they never imagined. Home furnishing retailers managed through lengthy mandated closures and business restrictions to bounce back strongly as the economy started to reopen. The reason: So much of what our industry sells is needed by the American people as they live in our “work at home” world.

As the number of virus cases spike and we look to a long winter, there is a risk of newly mandated business closures. On behalf of all home furnishing retailers, the Home Furnishings Association encourages local and state governments to let us keep our doors open because our businesses are essential to the well-being of all Americans. They have also proven they can operate safely in this pandemic.

Home Furnishings are Essential

- Work at home is a new way of life, and furniture retailers are key to supporting that. In fact, some governors (Arizona, Indiana, Ohio among others) recognized furniture retailers as essential “businesses that sell, manufacture or supply products needed for people to work from home.” There is a consistent need for desks, chairs, computer tables and lighting for professionals as well as their children and college students.
- 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, are necessary to make home life and work more manageable.

Meeting Emergent Needs

- Appliances, sold by many furniture stores, are essential to the safe and healthy operation of American households. When they fail, they need to be replaced immediately.
- 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.

Essential and Safe

- Furniture stores typically employ small staffs and receive few customers for the space they occupy. They keep people safe distances apart, and 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.

An Economic Driver

Demand has been high for furniture and appliances, driving strong sales, ever since stores reopened. Home furnishings retailers are a bright spot in our economic recovery. New closures would have a

dramatic negative impact on that recovery. Let home furnishing retailers remain open to continue to lead the way in safely providing necessary furniture, bedding and appliances to their customers.

Mark Schumacher, CEO of the Home Furnishings Association