

Best Buy limits store customers, Walmart and Home Depot shorten hours as retailers adjust to coronavirus

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KEY POINTS

- Best Buy, Target, Home Depot, Walmart and Walgreens have both seen a surge in demand as people buy household essentials and set up home offices.
- Starting Monday, Best Buy will limit each store to 10 to 15 customers at a time and customers will be escorted by an employee, who is six feet away.
- Home Depot said stores will close at 6 p.m. starting Thursday to allow more time for cleaning and restocking.
- Target said it would also reduce hours beginning Wednesday to allow more cleaning and restocking. It also will have special shopping time for seniors or people with an underlying health condition.

[Best Buy](#) is turning all in-home consultations virtual and limiting the number of customers in each store to 10 to 15 at a time, the company said [in a statement](#).

Best Buy, [Walmart](#), [Home Depot](#), [Target](#) and [Walgreens](#) said they're reducing store hours to improve safety and keep up with demand, too.

These retailers are dealing with a surge in sales due to the coronavirus outbreak. At Home Depot, shoppers have been stocking up on masks, toilet paper and cleaning products as well as buying appliances like refrigerators and air filtration. At Best Buy, customers have been purchasing appliances to freeze or store food and tech-related products to set up home offices and help children remotely attend school. At Walmart, Target and Walgreens, customers have been filling their baskets with groceries, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, over-the-counter medicines and more.

Starting Wednesday, Best Buy said store hours will be 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., according to a [company statement](#) on its website. That will continue through Sunday.

Beginning Monday, Best Buy will also limit each store to 10 to 15 customers at a time. Customers will be escorted by an employee, who is six feet away. The company said it will have fewer employees working at any one time. It will pay employees who are not working two weeks' wages.

Best Buy will continue curbside pickup and drop off of products that need repair by the Geek Squad -- but the company said it will not allow people to cluster in groups to maintain safe social distancing. Online orders will continue to be shipped to homes.

All in-home consultations will become virtual and deliveries will be done, if permitted and safe, the company said.

"We are making the best decisions we can with two goals in mind: protecting employees, customers and their respective families, while trying our best to serve the millions of Americans who rely on us for increasingly vital technology that keeps them connected to their school and work, and for the appliances necessary to help them store and prepare food," Best Buy said in the statement.

Walmart, which [began reduced hours at many of its stores Sunday](#), is cutting them back further. Starting Thursday, its stores will be open 7 am to 8:30 pm. Stores that open later than 7 am will have the same starting hours.

The retailer's employees will have the same shifts, but more time for restocking and sanitizing. It said it's also limiting employees' purchases of essential items like baby food, diapers, milk and eggs, to make sure people can get what they need.

Walmart said its auto care centers will temporarily shut down to free up more employees to help in the store. Its vision centers will continue to operate, but provide only essential services like glasses repair, and they will have fewer dedicated employees.

Home Depot's stores will close earlier than usual -- at 6 p.m. -- starting Thursday to allow more time for cleaning and restocking of shelves, it said in [a statement on its website](#). Opening times will stay the same.

"As an essential retailer to the communities we serve, we're committed to keeping stores open just as we always do during times of crisis and natural disaster," it said in the statement. "Homeowners and businesses depend on us for urgent needs such as hot water heaters, refrigerators, cleaning supplies, electrical and plumbing repairs, and harsh weather items like tarps, propane and batteries."

The home improvement retailer has seen an increase in sales of masks, hand appliance and cleaning supplies, as well as urgent home appliance purchases, like electrical and plumbing repair, refrigerators and air and water filtration, company spokeswoman Sara Gorman said.

Target said it will also reduce hours beginning Wednesday to allow more cleaning and restocking. All stores will close at 9 p.m. It will also reserve the first hour of shopping each Wednesday morning for vulnerable customers who are older or have an underlying health condition.

Walgreens said it will reduce store hours starting Thursday. Most stores, including 24-hour locations, will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays.

The company said its 24-hour drive-through pharmacies will remain open and pharmacy hours will mostly stay the same on weekends. It said it will [update the hours of each store and pharmacy on its website](#).

Walgreens' employees will keep their current shifts, but have more time for restocking and cleaning. Walgreens President Richard Ashworth said in a statement that the adjusted hours will "help team members and customers feel comfortable and safe to shop our store during this time."