MARKETS			<u>see all</u> →	FEATURED	
- DOW	31,104.97	-1276.37	-3.94%		F
S&P 500	3,932.69	-177.72	-4.32%		\ r
<b>NASDAQ</b>	11,633.57	-632.84	-5.16%		r

Markets

Tech

Media

Success

More

#### Fear & Greed Index What emotion is driving the market now? Click here to see today's reading

LATEST

Railroad strike, and the economic damage it would cause, looms closer Twitter is unable to catch and remove foreign agents in its ranks, whistleblower testifies 'The Crown' viewership surged on Netflix after Queen Elizabeth's death

### Experts say it may be time for grocery stores to ban customers from coming inside because of Covid-19



CNN

By Nathaniel Meyersohn, CNN Business Updated 10:47 PM ET, Sun April 19, 2020



<

• 04:42 Panicked shoppers. Empty shelves. Meet the workers keeping you stocked

02:13 Why Walmart is cutting prices on certain items

• 02:22 Products on the shelves getting smaller? You can blame 'shrinkflation'

• 01:35 Hasbro 3D-prints your You face on its action figure now why toys

pro

New York (CNN Business) - Dozens of grocery store workers have died from the coronavirus, despite masks, temperature checks and capacity restrictions to keep them safe. So far, supermarkets have resisted the most draconian policy: banning customers from coming inside.

However, some worker experts, union leaders and small grocery owners believe it has become too dangerous to let customers browse aisles, coming into close range with workers. Grocery stores are still flooded with customers, and experts say it's time for large chains to go "dark" to the public and convert to curbside pickup and home delivery for food and other essential goods.

"Careless customers" are "probably the biggest threat" to workers right now, according to Marc Perrone, president of the United Food and Commercial Workers' union. The union said 85% of its grocery store member workers reported that customers are not practicing social distancing in stores.

"Anything that reduces the need for interaction with the public and allows for greater physical distancing will ultimately better protect grocery workers," said John Logan, professor and director of Labor and Employment Studies at San Francisco State University. "Shuttering stores and repurposing them for pickup and delivery only would be a positive step."

Mike Houston, general manager of Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op in Takoma Park, Maryland,

decided to close his grocery store to the public in late March, when the state announced a

"It was clearer that there was no real way to protect my staff and the public, especially as we

served 960 people a day on average in a 4,200-square-foot store," Houston said. "I'm unwilling

to put grocery store employees, essential though we are, in a position to risk what can be a fatal

SoFi 🗱

Sponsors of GO BankingRates

infection."



Many small, independent grocery stores have done this to protect their staff.

shelter-in-place order, and switch to curbside pickup.

**SOFI CHECKING AND SAVINGS** Earn up to \$300 when you open a new account with direct deposit.



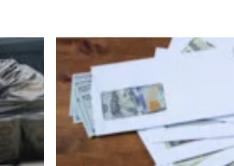
Is your current credit card skimping on Advertiser Disclosure rewards? Find a new

card.

NerdWallet

gas network

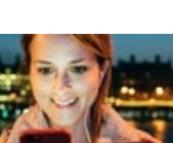




American With Less Than \$9,000 in Savings Should Do These 5 Things The Penny Hoarder

5 Companies That Send People Money When They're Asked Nicely The Penny Hoarder





Credit Expert: Hands Down The Best Card Of

Discover Savings Accounts With Up to 11X the Average APY 2022 NerdWallet

CompareCredit.com

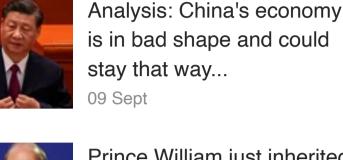
 $\wedge$ 

Q

Live TV

Audio

Log In





Recommended by DianOMi

### **Build the team** that will build your business

Advertisement

upwork

## lendingtree

Personal Loans Credit Cards Mortgage Loan Type Rate APR 30-yr fixed 5.13% 5.31% 15-yr fixed 4.88% 4.95% 5/1 ARM 4.25% 3.31% Loan Amount APR Payment \$1,106.86/mo \$225,000 (5/1 ARM) 3.31% \$350,000 (5/1 ARM) 5.11% \$1,799.49/mo

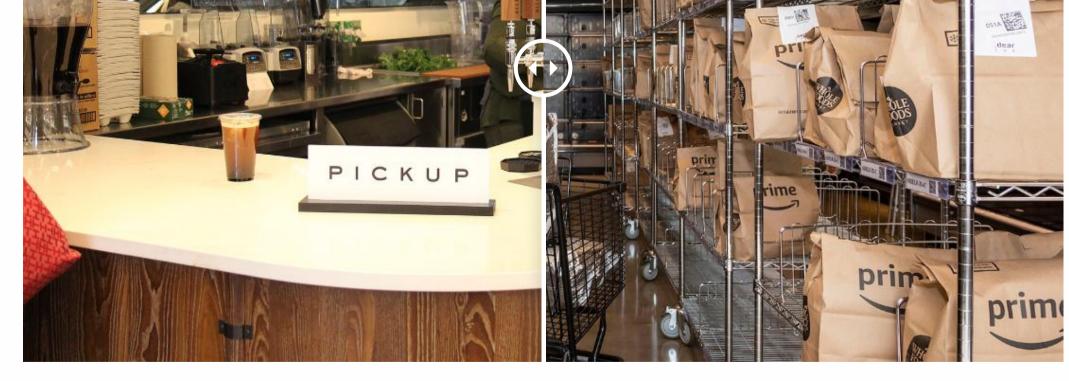
calculate payment

### PAID PARTNER CONTENT

# Dianomi" Þ







Whole Foods Market's Bryant Park location temporarily closed to the public to focus on grocery delivery. The coffee and bar area has been repurposed for delivery storage. WHOLE FOODS MARKET

Some large companies like Best Buy (BBY), which has a strong online infrastructure, have also switched over to this model during the crisis.

### **New regulations**

Public safety officials are not requiring essential stores to shut down to customers, but the US Labor Department last week recommended that retailers start "using a drive-through window or offering curbside pick-up" to protect workers from exposure to coronavirus. The California Department of Industrial Relations said this week that companies should "encourage customer use of online order and pickup."



**Related Article:** Companies are making their own safety rules as the federal government stands aside

Some big grocers are slowly starting to move in this direction. Whole Foods has closed down a store in New York City's Bryant Park area and transitioned it into an online-only store, focused solely on deliveries. Kroger (KR) and Giant Eagle have switched a few stores to pickup and delivery-only locations.

But these are a fraction of stores in their wide networks. And most large chains have hesitated to shut down to the public. Instead, they are implementing more limited policies like taking workers' temperatures and

restricting the number customers inside stores at a time. Companies are calling on families to cut back on their trips to the store and shop alone if they can.

City and state governments are stepping in to force stricter safety measures than the companies have adopted. Los Angeles, Miami, Washington DC, New Jersey, Maryland and New York have ordered shoppers to wear masks or face coverings in stores. Vermont has required big box chains like Walmart to close down their "non-essential" sections like furniture, home and garden equipment and arts and crafts.

#### Will pickup and delivery-only work?

Some companies and safety experts say it's not feasible to convert all grocery stores to delivery and pickup-only outposts. Ordering systems for both pickup and delivery are completely overwhelmed by a crush of demand from customers in many areas of the country.

"We have no choice. They have to stay open. [America's grocery] delivery system has not matured to the point where we can switch to an entirely remote system," said Seth Harris, former deputy secretary of labor during the Obama administration.

Online pickup and delivery requires a much larger staff than grocery stores are currently equipped with. That could fill supermarkets to capacity with workers, defeating the purpose of removing the public from stores.

Paying that many workers would also cost grocers a lot more money, and many smaller chains don't have the resources. They have already hired more workers during the pandemic to meet demand, and they're raising pay for existing employees to convince them to stay on the job. Grocers operate on razor-thin margins, and for many, the recent increase in sales because of coronavirus has been wiped out by the increases they've needed to make in payroll.

"I think that's one of the major reasons chains are reluctant to do the switch," said Logan from San Francisco State University.



The inside of the Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op in Takoma Park, Maryland. The store has closed down to customers and converted to solely online orders.

A Trader Joe's representative said that while "we understand that during this time customers" would appreciate a delivery or pick up service," the grocer's "systems are not set up in a way that would allow us to be able to offer these services, and at the same time maintain our commitment to offering value to our customers."

Switching to online pickup and delivery may also burden low-income customers who can't



### **Build the team** that will build your business

upwork The world's work marketplace

Advertisement

**CNN BUSINESS VIDEOS** 



'foolish'



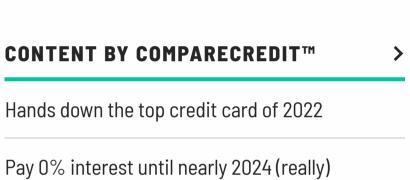
Opinion: 'Highly unlikely that cash will survive much longer'



Bed Bath & Beyond executive jumped to his death from high



At least eight Russian businessmen have died in apparent suicide or accidents in just six months



afford fees that often come with these orders, customers without internet access and food stamp recipients. Most food stamp recipients are ineligible to use their assistance to purchase groceries online, although the Department of Agriculture has doubled the number of states that allow food recipients to order online in the past few weeks.

And converting to online-only may not completely solve the safety problem either because an influx of gig workers would have to be in the store to pick and fulfill all of the orders.



**Related Article:** Why your local grocery store is making a comeback

It's an imperfect solution, said Charlane Obernauer, executive director of the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health. "Workers would still have exposure if they are delivering goods or if they are in the supermarket."

Still, in Malvern, Iowa, Mulholland Grocery has stopped allowing customers inside and moved to curbside pickup.

"We're in a small town. The employees that I have, they're just like family. I have known many of these people my whole life. I don't want to take the chance of having someone get sick," said owner Tom Mulholland. "There are very few businesses that get the foot traffic that a grocery store does."

Mulholland and Mike Houston in Maryland say their staffs are working harder than ever to select all of their customers' orders, but they're getting more efficient each day and the trade-off is worth it to keep everyone safe.

"Any store still allowing hundreds of members of the public to enter every day is taking a calculated risk on behalf of their front line staff," Houston said. "That is highly irresponsible to me."

**PAID PARTNER CONTENT** 





Hands Down The Best Card Of 2022 sponsored by CompareCredit.com

Dianomi Þ

6 Odd Things Millionaires Do With Money, But Most of Us Haven't Tried sponsored by The Penny Hoarder



Estate Planning Basics [Free Guide] sponsored by Fisher Investments

Take a 21-month beak from paying interest

3 insane cards with 0% interest until 2024

The longest interest-free period available on the market today

>

 $\triangleright$ 

#### **CONTENT BY THE ASCENT**

You can now avoid credit card interest until 2024

A slam dunk if you need a balance transfer (21 months)

It's official: now avoid credit card interest into 2024

0% intro APR until 2024 is 100% insane

Leading cash back card now has 0% intro APR until nearly 2024

#### Paid Links

No Cost Mortgage Refinance

Google Server Hosting

Highest Paying Dividend Stocks

\$30/Hour at Home Jobs

**Best Bathroom Paint Colors** 

\$250,000 in Term Life Coverage Starting at \$13/month

AIG Direct

Search CNN						Search →
US	World	Politics	Business	Opinion	Health	Entertainment
Crime + Justice Energy + Environment Extreme Weather Space + Science	Africa Americas Asia Australia China Europe India Middle East United Kingdom	The Biden Presidency Facts First US Elections	Markets Tech Media Success Perspectives Videos	Political Op-Eds Social Commentary	Life, But Better Fitness Food Sleep Mindfulness Relationships	Stars Screen Binge Culture Media
Tech	Style	Travel	Sports	Videos	Audio	<b>CNN Underscored</b>
Innovate Gadget Foreseeable Future Mission: Ahead Upstarts Work Transformed Innovative Cities	Arts Design Fashion Architecture Luxury Beauty Video	Destinations Food and Drink Stay News Videos	Pro Football College Football Basketball Baseball Soccer Olympics Hockey	Live TV Digital Studios CNN Films HLN TV Schedule TV Shows A-Z CNNVR		Electronics Fashion Beauty Health & Fitness Home Reviews Deals Money Gifts Travel Outdoors Pets CNN Store Coupons
Weather	More					
Climate Storm Tracker Wildfire Tracker Video	Photos Longform Investigations CNN Profiles CNN Leadership CNN Newsletters Work for CNN					
<b>BUSINESS</b>				Audio Live TV <b>FOL</b>	LOW CNN BUSINESS	

Most stock quote data provided by BATS. Market indices are shown in real time, except for the DJIA, which is delayed by two minutes. All times are ET. Disclaimer. Morningstar: Copyright 2018 Morningstar, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Factset: FactSet Research Systems Inc.2018. All rights reserved. Chicago Mercantile Association: Certain market data is the property of Chicago Mercantile Exchange Inc. and its licensors. All rights reserved. Dow Jones: The Dow Jones branded indices are proprietary to and are calculated, distributed and marketed by DJI Opco, a subsidiary of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC and have been licensed for use to S&P Opco, LLC and CNN. Standard & Poor's and S&P are registered trademarks of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC and Dow Jones is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC. All content of the Dow Jones branded indices Copyright S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC 2018 and/or its affiliates.

Terms of Use Privacy Policy Do Not Sell My Personal Information Ad Choices About Us CNN Store Newsletters Transcripts License Footage CNN Newsource

Sitemap