

# **Attorney General Raoul Urges Walmart To Strengthen Worker Protections During COVID-19 Pandemic**

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CHICAGO — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today led a coalition of 12 attorneys general in calling on Walmart to strengthen measures to protect the health and safety of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a letter sent to Walmart CEO Douglas McMillon, Raoul and the coalition express concern over media reports and complaints by employees alleging inadequate safety measures for employees and customers, insufficient sick leave policies, failure to inform customers and employees of potential exposure to COVID-19, and pressure put on employees to return to work while exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

“It is unconscionable that Walmart has failed to provide the minimum protections and benefits to its employees that are required of other, smaller employers,” Raoul said. “As millions of Americans rely on Walmart for groceries and necessary supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge Walmart to take the additional steps needed to ensure the health and safety of employees and consumers.”

To adequately protect customers and employees, Raoul and the attorneys general ask Walmart to confirm it is adhering to all applicable state directives and commit to:

Monitoring enforcement of social distancing guidelines, including six feet of separation between customers and employees.

Establishing and implementing a plan in case of exposure to a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, which includes cleaning and disinfecting all shared areas, informing employees and customers about incidence of confirmed COVID-19 cases, and promptly alerting employees who were in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Providing non-medical masks for employees to wear.

Installing shields or other barriers at registers and check-out areas to physically separate cashiers and customers, using every other register, and rotating customers to a previously closed register every hour to allow for regular cleaning.

Assigning an employee to wipe down carts and handbaskets after each use.

Reducing the number of customers Walmart allows in its stores to ensure that workers and customers at its stores can remain six feet away from each other at all times.  
Informing state and local health departments about the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in each of Walmart’s stores.

Additionally, Raoul and the coalition call on Walmart to adopt a policy of paid sick leave which provides the minimum protections required under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), including:

Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay when the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined and experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.

Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay when the employee is unable to work because of a need to care for an individual subject to quarantine, or to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid, expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay when an employee is unable to work due to COVID-19, or has a need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

Finally, Raoul and the coalition ask Walmart to provide the coalition with documents and records containing information related to Walmart's policies and practices in place to protect employees against the spread of COVID-19.

Walmart plays an important role during this crisis by providing groceries and necessary supplies to millions of Americans and has seen increasing profits and expansion. Raoul and the coalition argue that Walmart has an even greater obligation to ensure its employees stay safe and healthy while working throughout the pandemic.

Joining Raoul in the letter are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Washington.