



Why C-Stores Are Essential in Times of Need: Key Messages to Share with Your State Officials

NACS

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As the national emergency around coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to evolve, it is imperative that elected officials recognize convenience stores as essential businesses and the critical role we play in providing Americans access to fuel, food, and other necessary items.

NACS has put together the attached key messages to share with your Governor's office, state and local officials. Download the PDF [here](#).

Convenience stores provide essential services and products in communities including critical fuel availability for healthcare and medical professionals, first responders, delivery workers and everyone else who needs to travel the roads. Without convenience stores selling fuel, for example, supply chains and deliveries will be disrupted. When disasters or emergencies occur, convenience stores, most of which offer 24-hour operations, remain in operation as long as they can without putting their own employees' safety and wellbeing in harm's way. This means making sure fuel, food and other necessities are available for emergency workers and customers seeking what they need.

Convenience stores are close to consumers. 93% of Americans live within 10 minutes of a convenience store, including 86% of rural Americans. This proximity allows people to quickly acquire critical items in their neighborhood.

Convenience stores are a destination for fuel. Convenience stores sell most of the gasoline purchased in the country—approximately 80% of all fuel sold in the United States. A total of 121,998 convenience stores sell motor fuels. Overall, 79% of all convenience stores sell motor fuels, accounting for \$412 billion in sales in 2019. Many of these stores provide hand sanitizer and/or gloves at the pump.

Convenience stores sell critical everyday items. Convenience stores provide essential items and services to consumers including:

- Quick and easy access to cash (they are the location for nearly one-third of all U.S. ATMs)
- Over-the-counter medicine (more than \$2.5 billion in annual sales)
- Milk (\$1.4 billion) and bottled water (47% of all individual bottles—excluding packs)
- Electronic Benefits Transfer: 111,816 convenience stores are authorized to redeem SNAP benefits, which comprise 45% of all SNAP-eligible stores.

In countless rural and urban communities designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as “food deserts,” convenience stores are the community grocery store, drug store and community hub; serving those who would otherwise be left behind.

Convenience stores provide a small format and a quick transaction. The average convenience store is 2,951 net square feet, which is a manageable size to clean regularly. Each store conducts about 1,100 transactions per day and these transactions are fast: the average time spent in a store is under four minutes.

Convenience stores are community stores. There are 152,720 convenience stores in every community in the United States, and they provide 2.4 million jobs. Convenience stores account for more than 34% of all retail outlets in the United States. In fact, the convenience store count is more than the combined total of supermarkets (49,034 stores), drugstores (41,127 stores) dollar stores (33,185 stores) and mass merchandisers (4,032).