

Starbucks stores may go drive-thru only or limit seating

12 March 2020, by Dee-Ann Durbin



In this Monday, Jan. 26, 2009 file photo, a Starbucks barista hands a coffee drink to a customer from a drive-up window at a store near the company's corporate headquarters in Seattle. On Thursday, March 12, 2020, the company said some of their stores in the U.S. and Canada may become drive-thru only while others could limit the number of people allowed inside, one day after the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of coronavirus a pandemic. (AP Photo/Elaine Thompson)

Some Starbucks stores in the U.S. and Canada may become drive-thru only while others could limit the number of people allowed inside, the company said, one day after the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of coronavirus a pandemic.

"As a last resort, we will close a store if we feel it is in the best interest of our customers and partners, or if we are directed to do so by government authorities," Starbucks CEO Kevin Johnson said in a letter to customers.

Johnson emphasized that any closures will be temporary. The company said decisions will be made on a store-by-store basis.

The Seattle roaster has approximately 15,000 U.S. stores and 1,600 Canadian stores. Most are owned by the company but some—including

locations in [retail stores](#) and airports—are run by licensees.

Starbucks has already increased the pace of sanitizing stores and put into place a temporary ban on use of personal cups or in-store mugs and glassware.

In a separate letter to employees, the company said it is temporarily expanding catastrophe pay for employees who have been diagnosed with or exposed to the virus. Employees can use up to 14 days of catastrophe pay in addition to paid [sick leave](#), [vacation time](#) and personal days.

Employees with symptoms are also being asked to stay home.



A sign posted at a Starbucks store in Tacoma, Wash., Thursday, March 5, 2020, tells customers that the coffee company is temporarily stopping accepting reusable cups, as part of efforts to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

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