

# Are Shifting Supply Chain Dynamics Disrupting your Manufacturing Operations?

*Covid-19 pandemic has put tremendous demands on supply chains. Take a look at how manufacturers are working to meet these challenges and keep up with demand.*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, October 26, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Changing Demand For Products Is Causing Supply Chain Disruptions And Spot Shortages In Raw Materials

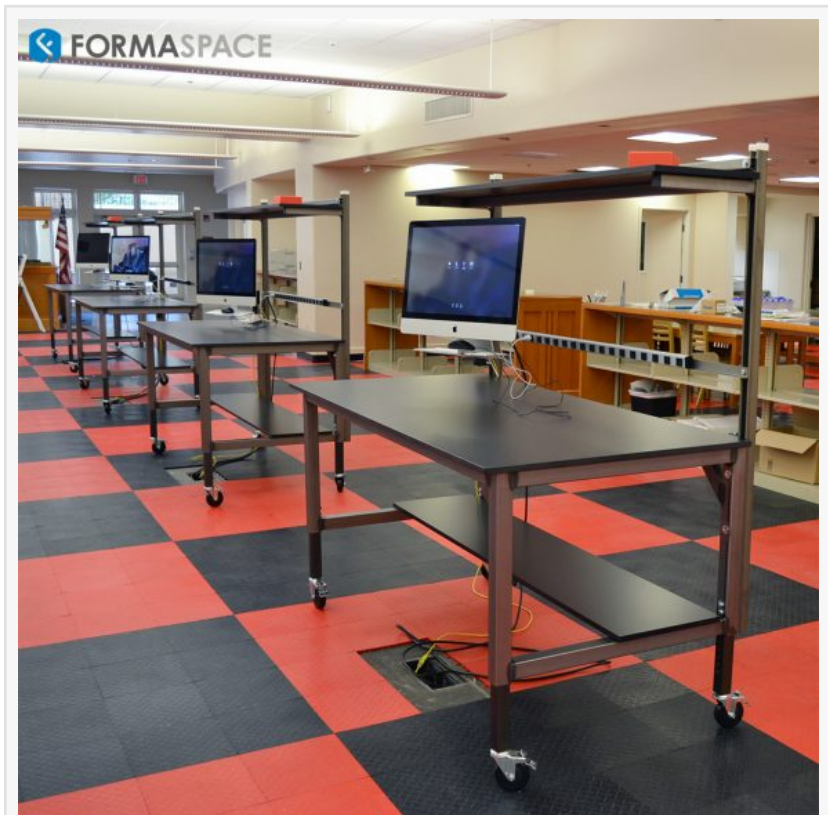
The coronavirus pandemic has not only been a stark reminder of the importance of public health measures, it's also taught [manufacturers](#) around the world some brutal lessons in operations management as sudden shifts in demand have suddenly turned supply chains upside down.

We begin our look at the effect that burgeoning demand due to Covid-19 can have on manufacturing operations with something that's close to home for Formaspace: the production of transparent barriers to protect employees at work.

New CDC Guidelines For Reopening Businesses And Schools Is Driving High Demand For Transparent Shields That Help Protect Against Virus Transmission

As business offices, manufacturing facilities, bars and restaurants, K-12 schools, and universities around the country begin to reopen after an extended Covid-19 lockdown, OSHA and the CDC have issued updated guidelines designed to keep people safe at work.

These newly issued recommendations include wearing masks and incorporating social



Mobile furniture solutions from Formaspace make it easy to reconfigure layouts in accordance with the new social distancing guidelines from OSHA and the CDC. Shown above is custom furniture that's suitable for educational classroom or library use.

distancing measures at work.

To comply with these new guidelines, business owners and facility managers are making significant changes to their interior floor plans, such as moving desks and tables further apart.

In cases where it's not possible to establish a 6-foot separation between workers, the CDC and OSHA recommend taking the following action:



“Install transparent shields (such as clear plastic sneeze guards) or other physical barriers where possible to separate employees and visitors where social distancing is not an option.”

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The sudden switch in demand away from restaurants and traditional food-service operators to home cooks caught the food supply chain off guard and has led to spot shortages of many popular ingredients.”

*Formaspace*

Where Can I Find The Latest CDC And OSHA Recommendations?

Here are the primary guidance websites from the CDC and OSHA:

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

In addition, the CDC has detailed guidelines for:

- Childcare, Schools, and Youth Programs
- Colleges, Universities, and Higher Learning
- Manufacturing
- Meat and Poultry Processing
- Office Buildings
- Restaurants and Bars

## Formaspace Shield Products Can Help You Comply With CDC And OSHA Covid-19 Guidelines

If you're looking for ways to protect people at your business facility, office, manufacturing plant, laboratory, distribution center, or educational facility, we can help.

Formaspace offers three popular options to help you comply with CDC and OSHA Covid-19 guidelines. We can also build custom furniture solutions to meet your unique specifications at our Austin, Texas factory headquarters.

### Formaspace [Protective Health Shield](#)

If you need to modify your existing workbenches or desks to comply with OSHA or CDC guidelines, the Protective Health Shield is the right choice. It features high walls made of durable HDPE designed to create physical barriers between people.

### Formaspace Protective Workbench Screen

The Formaspace Protective Workbench Screen mounts to new or existing installations of our Basix and Benchmarx workstations\* to provide a transparent barrier across the full back width. It mounts directly to the rear struts of the workbench, and no tools are required for installation.

(\*Kits for Basix workstations include vertical frame upgrades required to mount the Protective Workbench Screens.)

### Formaspace Counter Sneeze Guard

If you have personnel who work directly with the public, such as bank tellers, cashiers, or office workers, the Formaspace Counter Sneeze Guard will provide protection during face-to-face interactions. These tall transparent barriers can be customized as well; for example, you can specify pass-through slots for handling paperwork or making cash transactions.

## Are The New CDC And OSHA Regulations Creating Raw Material Shortages In The Transparent Plastics Market?

In what may be an all-too-familiar refrain, the Coronavirus pandemic may be responsible for yet



Formaspace Protective Workbench Screen

another raw material product shortage.

Thanks to these new CDC and OSHA regulations requiring transparent barriers, the demand for transparent plastic has sent shockwaves through the supply chain.

Manufacturers, including Formaspace, have been facing delivery slowdowns in receiving raw material supplies of professional-quality transparent acrylic plastics (including the brand name Lexan), PMMA plastics (such as the brand name Plexiglas), as well as sheets of other transparent polymers, including polycarbonate (PC) and polyethylene terephthalate-glycol (PET-G).

In response, professional quality plastics manufacturers, such as Germany's Röhm (the inventor of Plexiglas), have stepped up production shifts to operate around-the-clock to meet the newfound surge in demand.

Unfortunately, in addition to spot shortages of high-quality plastic products, there has been a rise in unscrupulous low-quality plastic materials coming onto the market to take advantage of the current conditions. Many of these transparent plastic products are brittle, scratch easily, produce noxious fumes (due to chemical off-gassing), and are susceptible to yellowing discoloration when exposed to light. As a result, purchasers need to educate themselves before specifying products that incorporate plastic components. Your Formaspace Design Consultant can assist you in making informed decisions.

The Shift From Restaurant Sales To Home Consumer Purchases Has Turned The Food Supply Chain Upside Down

Meanwhile, the food distribution supply chain has faced its own set of unique challenges.

Restaurants and institutional food-service operators (including school cafeterias) were the largest single purchasers of our nation's food products prior to the Coronavirus outbreak.



Formaspace manufactured this custom workbench for the quick-serve restaurant chain McDonald's. Twelve monitor screens can be mounted on the back frame, providing managers with an instantaneous overview of a restaurant's operations.

However, with the advent of the Covid-19 lockdown, demand suddenly switched. With restaurants and food-service cafeterias closed, consumers (many of whom now found themselves working at home) began preparing home-cooked meals in record numbers.

This, in turn, created a major shock to the food supply chain.

The sudden switch in demand away from restaurants and traditional food-service operators to home cooks caught the food supply chain off guard and has led to spot shortages of many popular ingredients, including flour and yeast (home bread baking has set all-time high records) as well as produce.

Supply chain managers have had to untangle the same kind of logistics issues that deviled one of the first product logistics casualties of Coronavirus: the supply of toilet paper. The reason is the same; food products destined for restaurants are sold in bulk by wholesaler distributors, while products destined for retail consumer sales are generally sold in a parallel, separate distribution chain that focuses on smaller consumer product packaging. Adding to the overall disruption is the sudden rise in demand for home grocery delivery, which adds yet another wrinkle to an already stressed food supply chain.

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