

Apple closing all stores outside China until March 27 due to virus

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Apple is closing all of its stores outside China until March 27 in a bid to slow the spread of the coronavirus outbreak, CEO Tim Cook said.

Cook said the firm had learned from steps taken in China, where the tech giant has just reopened its [retail stores](#).

"One of those lessons is that the most effective way to minimize risk of the virus's transmission is to reduce density and maximize social distance," he said in a statement late Friday.

"As rates of new infections continue to grow in other places, we're taking additional steps to protect our [team members](#) and customers."

Apple's [online store](#) would remain open but office staff outside China would be working remotely if possible, Cook added.

The California-based firm has about 500 stores in 24 countries around the world.

Despite the closures, Cook said hourly workers would continue to be paid as normal.

The CEO said Apple had expanded its leave policy "to accommodate personal or family health circumstances created by COVID-19" including caring for a sick loved one, mandatory quarantine or childcare due to school closures.

Apple has also donated \$15 million to help the fight against the pandemic and will be matching employee donations two-to-one.

"The global spread of COVID-19 is affecting every one of us," Cook said.

He ended his statement thanking "the heroic first responders, doctors, nurses, researchers, public health experts and public servants" around the world fighting the pandemic.

All of Apple's 42 stores in China have reopened after being closed since February 1 as the epidemic rapidly spread there.

The shops have been gradually returning to business in the past few days and the last ones reopened on Friday as China slowly resumes work.

Mass quarantines had forced factories to suspend operations and shops to shut.

Apple, which depends on components from Chinese suppliers and has a big market in China, was hammered on both fronts.

Last month, Apple said it would miss its second quarter revenue forecast and global iPhone supplies would fall because of the epidemic.

The firm had forecast revenue of \$63-\$67 billion for January-March, but did not disclose how much it expected revenue to fall.

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