

GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING

# Restaurants & Cafés



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



**Fáilte Ireland**  
National Tourism Development Authority

## Note:

This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new Government advice and changes to protocols when they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, the Work Safely Protocol and the updated COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead, and based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines will be included throughout the document.

The Tourism and Hospitality sectoral guidelines, aligned with the Work Safely Protocol, have been developed collaboratively to assist businesses to apply guidance to their operations. The guidelines are informed by the latest Government public health advice and related regulations.

## Disclaimer

The information contained within these operational re-opening guidelines can change from time to time, it must not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document must independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarised themselves with the Work Safely Protocol prior to re-opening and implemented all relevant requirements.

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## Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening

It is recommended that businesses also view the [Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening](#) in addition to this sector specific guideline document, as further information relating to COVID-19 control measures, Health & Safety measures, hygiene measures, etc. are outlined.

**Revision History:**

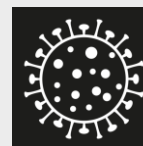
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8.0	26/05/2021	Update of information in line with Work Safely Protocol, Ventilation and other general guidance.
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1.1	09/06/2020	Document Published.



	New Public Health Measures
Weddings	<p><a href="#">Current Measures</a> Max. <b>50 guests</b> at service. Max. <b>6 guests</b> at indoor reception or <b>15 outdoors</b>.</p> <p><a href="#">From June 7<sup>th</sup></a> Max. <b>50 guests</b> at service. Max. <b>25 guests</b> at wedding reception.</p>
Paid Tourist Accommodation	<p><a href="#">Current Measures</a> <b>Open</b> only for those with <b>non-social and non-tourist purposes</b>.</p> <p><a href="#">From June 2<sup>nd</sup></a> Accommodation services including hotels, B&amp;Bs, self-catering, caravan &amp; camping and hostels can reopen. <b>Services including leisure facilities, indoor restaurant and bar services must be restricted to overnight guests and residents only.</b></p>
Gyms, Pools & Leisure Facilities	<p><a href="#">Current Measures</a> Closed.</p> <p><a href="#">From June 7<sup>th</sup></a> Open for <b>individual training only</b>.</p>
Transport	<p><b>Capacity restricted to 50%.</b> <a href="#">Face coverings must be worn</a></p>
Domestic Travel	<p><b>Inter County travel permitted .</b></p>
Cafés, Restaurants & Pubs (including Hotel Restaurants and Bars)	<p><a href="#">Current Measures</a> <b>Closed.</b> Take away or delivery only. Hotels may provide food and beverage services to residents (those that require accommodation for essential purposes only).</p> <p><a href="#">From June 7<sup>th</sup></a> <b>Outdoor service</b> is permitted for a maximum of 6 persons aged 13 or over per table. This limit of 6 does not include accompanying children aged 12 or younger. The total combined capacity at a table cannot exceed 15 overall (max. 6 persons aged 13 and over).</p>
Live Music & Performances	<p><b>No live or loud music permitted.</b> No live performances are permitted.</p>
Closing Time	<p>Food &amp; Beverage facility must be clear of all patrons by <b>11:30pm</b>.</p>
Nightclubs	<p><b>Closed.</b></p>
Attractions	<p>Open with protective measures (for example, a maximum capacity to allow 2m distancing, one-way traffic within the venue). Maximum numbers linked to the capacity, taking account of Public Health Advice. Guided tours within indoor attractions are not permitted.</p>
Activities	<p><b>Outdoor Activities Open</b> with protective measures. Outdoor organised activities have a maximum capacity of 15 people.</p>
Outdoor Parks & Play Areas	<p><b>Open</b> with protective measures.</p>
Organised Formal & Informal Indoor Events / Gatherings	<p><b>No organised indoor events or gatherings should take place.</b></p>
Organised Formal & Informal Outdoor Events / Gatherings	<p>Organised outdoor gatherings are permitted with a <b>maximum attendance of 15 people</b>.</p>
Meetings	<p>Non-Social Meetings, Training and Educational programmes only permitted to take place when considered an essential service.</p>



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NOTE: These guidelines are designed to support the operations of food service businesses which include, but are not limited to, restaurants, cafés and any other food service operation.



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# 1. Introduction: Meeting & Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge

## COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for the tourism sector.

Before re-opening, restaurants will need to review how they work and employ new practices and procedures to ensure everyone stays safe. As a result, Fáilte Ireland has developed operational guidelines in line with the Health Service Executive (HSE), Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

As part of this, Fáilte Ireland has created this set of specific guidelines. You can be reassured that these recommendations are underpinned by advice made available from the HSA, HSE, HPSC, FSAI, World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies.

Businesses must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#) which has been developed under the aegis of the *Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005*. Businesses are now required to review their existing advice and guidance to ensure it is in line with the protocol. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the compliance body and has full powers as set out in this legislation designated in relation to the implementation of the National Protocol. Non-compliance can result in the closure of a business.

Businesses must keep a record of the time and date of arrival at the premises of a group/sole customer and the name and telephone number of the lead person in a group/sole customer for COVID-19 contact tracing.

The guidelines were developed based on the following considerations:

- **Restructuring operations**  
Tourism businesses of all types need to adapt their operations, review employee practices and consider the design of their business to ensure physical distancing and the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. Further information on reviewing employee practices can be found in the [Work Safely Protocol](#) e.g. consider any new additional measures for employees who are deemed high risk.
- **Putting dedicated resources in place**  
Tourism businesses must ensure that they have dedicated personnel to implement and operate a robust system that prevents the spread of COVID-19. Equally importantly, businesses need to put processes in place that can deal with individual and multiple cases of the disease that may occur.
- **Adapting and enhancing hygiene practices**  
Tourism businesses must adapt and implement enhanced procedures in general cleaning, storage and cleaning of equipment. In particular, they must introduce and implement touchless solutions where possible. References to HACCP in this guidance are for the purposes of food safety and not the prevention of COVID-19.
- **Ventilation**  
The proven importance of ensuring adequate fresh outside air circulation should be factored into operational practices. Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 2](#).  
  
The spread of the virus is most likely when infected people are in close contact so the risk of getting COVID-19 is higher in crowded and poorly ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. It is important to maximise ventilation in areas where people are in close contact. While large droplets containing the virus will settle onto the surrounding surfaces within seconds, smaller particles containing the virus can stay suspended for longer periods of time. Dilution of indoor air by opening windows and doors or using mechanical ventilation (HVAC) systems can lower the airborne concentration and remove these smaller particles from the air.
- **Focusing on best practice in food & beverage service**  
Tourism businesses must follow HACCP, best practice in service, and physical distancing requirements to promote the health of employees and customers.
- **Food and beverage service businesses as 'controlled' environments**  
Public and private venues or workplaces are considered controlled environments. This includes food and consumption businesses such as restaurants and cafés. Uncontrolled environments are settings where people have open access to the premises and generally don't know each other and are unlikely to be in close contact with each other for an extended period of time. Examples include supermarkets, retail stores, shopping malls and takeaway-only food outlets.  
  
Additional details on controlled and uncontrolled environments can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

#### ■ **Food Preparation Area**

Current legislation states a “food preparation area” means an indoor part of such premises which is structurally adapted and used for the purpose of preparing food for consumption by members of the public on or off the premises concerned and, for the avoidance of doubt, does not include a tent, caravan, vehicle, storage container or other temporary structure.

If your business serves food, you are required to have a designated food preparation area as outlined above.

#### ■ **Food Safety and COVID-19 Safety**

There are no reports of transmission of COVID-19 via food. The main mode of transmission is from person to person. Food business operators must continue to apply their food safety management systems, based on the principles of HACCP.

The requirement in legislation is to have a Food Safety Management System in place based on the principles of HACCP. ISO 340:2007 is one of the available approaches to achieve this. A Health and Safety statement was already required, and is still a requirement. The COVID-19 Response is a requirement of the Work Safely Protocol.

In addition, food and beverage business operators will be required to introduce COVID-19 safety management systems in the form of enhanced hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, employee training and health checks, as well as physical distancing. This is to protect against the transmission of the virus to or between employees, customers and other people who enter their premises. Any COVID-19 precautions must not compromise food safety.

For advice and information on food safety during COVID-19 and for food businesses re-opening, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) website is a useful resource which is regularly updated See [HERE](#) for more information.

#### ■ **Guidance on International Travel**

A range of new measures and requirements, including mandatory quarantine for travel from certain countries, for those travelling to Ireland is available [HERE](#). It is important for employers to keep up to-date on travel restrictions and requirements into the country as these may be subject to change on a regular basis.

Current Government advice is available [HERE](#).

## 2. Business Response/Action Plan

**Creating an Action Plan will help to clarify what is required to overcome the threat of COVID-19 and give your employees and guests confidence that they are safe.**

In developing an Action Plan, the first step that the restaurant's management must take is to familiarise themselves with the latest guidelines from the following sources:

- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)
- Irish Government Departments
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)
- World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information from these sources will help to shape your plan of action. You must also:

- **Complete a risk assessment** to identify what operational, changes you need to make in your business, this should include an occupational health and safety risk assessment. Further information can be found [HERE](#).
- **Review all standard operating procedures (SOPs)** to define and note what you are changing.
- **Create a communication plan** to inform employees and visitors of what you are changing, what you need them to do and how you expect everyone to act and behave.
- **Visit the HSA website** for templates, checklists and advice on returning to work safely Protocols. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

A number of activities will require review e.g. workflows, operations, etc. For advice on reopening, visit the FSAI website. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

The plan must reassure employees and customers that safeguarding their health and safety is of the utmost importance. It will also assist in ensuring that your operations continue to run in an appropriate manner.

You must review the action plan regularly and amend it as new regulations, guidelines and procedures come into place.

Experience will also tell you how appropriate and effective the action plan is.

For further information on the development of your Action Plan see [HERE](#).

### Monitoring & Supporting

A COVID-19 Response Team/Lead Worker Representative (LWR) must be appointed to ensure new procedures are adhered to. Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in their place of work. A collaborative approach to the implementation

of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy in.

Each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their workplace. The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Further information and a short online course on the role of [Lead Worker Representative](#) can be found on the HSA website.

Employers should have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representative (including health and safety committee where it exists) about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers should provide COVID-19 induction training for all workers on their return.

The number of worker representatives for COVID-19 appointed should, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and this person(s) should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

**Section 3** of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) sets out the steps for employers and workers to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

These provisions include:

- Consulting with the workplace representatives in the development of a COVID-19 response plan.
- Developing/Amending policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Developing, consulting, communicating and implementing workplace changes or policies. Specific reference is made to agreeing with workers any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. There is also provision for the *lead worker representative to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.*
- The HSA has introduced interim guidance to assist employers and workers to manage a return to work following COVID-19 testing or infection. The Fitness for Work interim guidance and related checklists are available [here](#).



## Policies & Processes

Restaurant owners and managers need to review all business policies and standard operating procedures across each department to reflect operational changes. In particular, this means:

- Defining and documenting a clear plan of action in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among customers and/or employees.
- Develop a policy and process in line with the Work safely Protocol to prepare your business for management of a case or cases (outbreak) of COVID-19 in the workplace. [Ref. section 9 of the Work Safely Protocol.](#)

An outbreak of COVID-19 is when two or more cases of the disease are linked by time, place or person. The management of an outbreak is managed by the local Departments of Public Health to enable the outbreak to be brought under control as quickly as possible. It also requires close engagement and cooperation between the employer, the LWR, the staff, representatives and in particular with the worker(s) affected. Outbreaks in a single workplace, which are not managed and brought under control quickly, can rapidly spread to other workplaces and/or the wider community. Continuous and effective communication between all parties is essential.

Refer to HPSC guidance on management of outbreaks [HERE](#).

- Defining and documenting the correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required. This must be in line with the Government's Public Health advice.
- Developing and updating current policy for the care of employee uniforms to ensure they are appropriately maintained.
- Reviewing and updating cancellation and refund policies in line with the restaurant's requirements.
- Developing and updating policy relating to the standards of behaviour expected from employees and customers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Strict management controls must be in place to ensure compliance with Public Health advice at all times.
- If adopting the use of Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Tests (RADT) in the workplace, amend the COVID-19 Business Response / Action plan to take account of the agreed testing policy and approach taken and communicate to all employees. For more information see [section D13 of the Work Safely Protocol](#)

## Communication

You must share the plan with all employees, as well as changes to other policies, e.g. sick leave policies, prior to them returning to work. If it's updated at any time, you must make sure everyone knows what has changed.

Giving guidelines to employees on how they must communicate the Action Plan to guests will ensure everyone gives the same message and there is no inconsistency.

Make sure an up-to-date list of the contact information of all employees, including emergency telephone numbers, is always readily available across all departments in the restaurant.

Regularly review all COVID-19 related signage and notices throughout the premises to ensure they display the latest Public Health advice from Government. Signs must be placed in

prominent and relevant positions, be legible and, where appropriate, be offered in [multiple languages](#).

Downloading and using the [HSE COVID-19 tracker app](#) is also an important measure that can be adopted. Employers should provide advice on the tracker and encourage workers to download. Workers should download as it can be used for contact tracing purposes in and out of the workplace.

## Training

The management must inform all employees of the measures being adopted to manage the threat of COVID-19. Use the most appropriate training channels to do this and ensure all employees remain at home and seek medical attention if they have key symptoms such as a high temperature, coughing or shortness of breath.

There is an obligation on employers to ensure that employees are aware that they must not attend work if they have symptoms. This is essential to ensure that the virus does not spread.

You must organise information briefings that cover all the basic protective measures against COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease. For specific procedures, training will be required and this must be tailored to your business. However, in general you must consider training employees in relation to:

- Hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures.
- Correct use of PPE.
- Cleaning & disinfecting regimes (incorporating front and back office areas if relevant).
- Employee health and what to do if feeling unwell.
- Unwell customers/dealing with suspected cases/ liaising with authorities.

First Aid Responders may require further training in light of COVID-19.

For a more comprehensive list of symptoms of COVID-19, please click [HERE](#). If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a [COVID-19 walk-in test centre](#).

## Cleaning & Frequency

Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.

Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for washroom facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning must be performed at least twice per day and if facilities are visibly dirty.

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the ECDC [HERE](#) and from the Government website [HERE](#).

## Ventilation /Air Conditioning

Where possible, windows and doors should be opened to allow for a flow of air throughout the property. When rooms are being cleaned, windows and/or doors where appropriate, should be opened. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.

The spread of the virus is most likely when infected people are in close contact so the risk of getting COVID-19 is higher in crowded and poorly ventilated spaces where infected people spend long periods of time together in close proximity. It is important to maximise ventilation in areas where people are in close contact. While large droplets containing the virus will settle onto the surrounding surfaces within seconds, smaller particles containing the virus can stay suspended for longer periods of time. Dilution of indoor air by opening windows and doors or using mechanical ventilation (HVAC) systems can lower the airborne concentration and remove these smaller particles from the air.

Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 2](#).

## Staffing Resources

Business owners/management should review rotas in line with the Work Safely Protocol, subsection 3 which provides that full consultation on these matters is required to ensure sufficient employees are available to maintain physical distancing while completing the tasks to the required standards. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

Employee scheduling must ensure more time is allocated for cleaning and encourage employees to work alone if possible.

To achieve this, you should:

- Implement phased shifts.
- Schedule small teams.
- Keep the same team combinations where possible to limit employee interaction. This will assist should contact tracing be required.

You will also need to plan for the impact of employee absences; this may involve reallocating employees from non-essential tasks. Where appropriate, cross-training employees will help maintain employee levels within your property. Employees who have not had close contact with a confirmed case should continue taking the usual precautions and attend work as usual.

Further information on [close contacts](#), [casual contacts](#) and [testing](#) is available from the HSE website.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. You must apply the [Work Safely Protocol](#).



\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

### 3. Employee & Customer Health

The health and safety of employees and guests is the number one priority for restaurant owners and managers. The following steps will help ensure everyone remains fit and well:

#### Face Coverings/Masks

Following the HPSC Evidence Summary on the “Efficacy of visors compared with masks in the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 in non-healthcare settings”, Tourism and Hospitality businesses should consider the following recommendations:

- In public settings, expert opinion and international guidance generally favours cloth face coverings over visors or shields.
- There is a rationale and laboratory evidence favouring cloth face coverings over visors where the wearer is at a higher level (standing) than those potentially exposed at a lower level (sitting). This is extremely important for food and beverage service businesses.
- Visors reduce exposure to a certain extent when compared to no face covering and may be considered an alternative in certain circumstances where an individual is unable to wear a face covering/mask. Click [HERE](#) for more information.
- If visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly applied.
- Further information on the handling and care of visors can be found [HERE](#)

Wearing a face covering/mask helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is strongly recommended to wear a face covering/mask in situations where physical distancing is difficult. Face masks are always **in addition to**, and never a substitute for, other Public Health measures including physical distancing, [hand hygiene](#) and practising appropriate respiratory etiquette.

Under [current legislation](#), management and employees in customer facing roles, who engage in or carry out work relating to the preparation of, or service of, food or beverages for consumption on the premises must wear a face covering. Management must ensure that employees comply with this regulation.

There are cases where people may be unable to wear a face covering and this is deemed as a reasonable excuse. For details on what constitutes a reasonable excuse see [HERE](#). Businesses must ensure that they are familiar with the various reasons why an employee or customer may not be required to wear a face covering/mask, further details can be found [HERE](#).

The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that face coverings/masks are recommended in public areas in buildings, including receptions/foyers and also when moving throughout buildings.

Government Public Health advice states that face covering/masks must be worn by customers when arriving to and leaving their table when in the restaurant and bar. Please see [HERE](#).

As part of your business risk assessment, you should determine the requirement for face coverings/masks in all individual business activities. The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that in settings where 2 metre\* employee separation cannot be ensured then face coverings/masks should be made available to employees in line with Public Health advice.

Ensure that customers are clearly informed of your own business policy and government regulations regarding face coverings/masks in advance of arrival. Employers and employees must keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued regarding face coverings/masks.

A face covering should cover your nose and mouth, go under your chin, fit snugly against the side of the face with no visible gaps and be secured with ties or ear loops. For more information on the safe use, storage and disposal of face coverings/masks, please click [HERE](#).

#### Physical Distancing

Physical distancing guidelines (following Government’s Public Health advice) must be incorporated into the Action Plan for each department within a restaurant. Specific areas must also comply with mandatory capacity limits.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to maximum capacity at a table. These measures are applicable to pre-bookings and walk-in customers.

In a [controlled environment](#), such as pubs, bars, gastropubs, restaurants and cafés, physical distancing of at least 2 metres\* is required in an indoor setting, unless the requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met, in which case a minimum of 1 metre\* is sufficient.

In an outdoor setting, physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair), as long as the business adheres to the protective measures.

Careful consideration needs to be given when using communal areas. Ensure there are systems in place to prevent intermingling in these areas (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities). See [Appendix 1](#).

Restaurant tables, seating and couches in public areas and other physical layouts must be arranged to ensure appropriate distancing is adhered to.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Employee Physical Distancing

Where possible, on arrival and departure from work, employees should be able to enter and exit through separate doors.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. Where the food services environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids such as hand sanitisers, wipes, etc. Ensure these are readily accessible so employees can perform [hand hygiene](#) as soon as a task is complete.

Make face coverings/masks available to employees in line with Public Health advice. You should note that wearing masks is not a substitute for the other measures outlined above

## Measures to Control Noise Levels

According to the WHO, transmission of COVID-19 can occur through direct, indirect, or close contact with infected people through infected secretions such as saliva and respiratory secretions or droplets, which are expelled when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, etc.

In adherence with WHO evidence, recent Public Health advice states that there must be a restriction on noise levels within restaurants to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

High noise levels within a premises can impact conversation negatively and encourage customers to raise their voice to communicate thus encouraging possible transmission of the virus.

Straining to hear others due to high volumes can cause people to move closer to each other and not adhere to social distancing. To avoid this, businesses must put in place a plan and take appropriate measures to control noise levels, to ensure volumes do not rise to a level where people are required to take such measures to hear others.

Signage relating to these COVID-19 preventative measures must be displayed in visible locations to inform customers.

Intervention will be required by management in a situation where customers do not follow this advice. Restaurant owners and management should be aware that permitting increased noise levels within their premises is an unnecessary risk as it forces customers into close proximity and encourages raised voices. Restaurant owners and management are responsible for keeping noise at an appropriate level to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Providing Hand Sanitisers

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all, at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available in the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

## Information Signage

You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout the restaurant. Where feasible, television screens and monitors can communicate these messages effectively.

## Employee & Customer Health Concerns

When they return to work, employees must be trained on what to do if they or a customer becomes unwell. All employers and employees must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

When dealing with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 among employees, follow the Work Safely Protocol.

If management is alerted to a suspected case of COVID-19 at the restaurant, a clinician from a local medical centre should be contacted. The clinician will advise on the next steps. Further information is available on the HSE website and also page 5 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#). Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

**Note:** Your restaurant needs to have the telephone numbers of the health authorities, medical centres plus public and private hospitals readily available in case a guest or employee falls ill. For a full list of Dept of Public Health contact details, please see [HERE](#).

Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return to work. For further details relating to what information should be obtained, please refer to Section 3.D4 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Advice is available to business owners and employees on how to support your wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis. Wellbeing supports can be viewed on the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Support Hub [HERE](#)

## Isolation Area

Identify an area / room on the premises where any customer or employee showing possible COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated from other people. From there, the individual can travel home to seek medical attention elsewhere. It is essential to clean and disinfect this isolation area thoroughly after it has been used.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Re-opening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.



## 4. Employee Responsibilities

For the purpose of this document, employees refers to food workers and non-food workers. Food workers include food handlers, kitchen staff, waiting staff and people who directly touch open food as part of their work. It also includes employees who may touch food contact surfaces or other surfaces in rooms where open food is handled. The term can therefore also apply to managers, cleaners, maintenance contractors, delivery workers, etc.

The effective delivery of the restaurant's Action Plan depends on how management and employees act. Paying attention to the following issues is especially important:

### Hand Hygiene

Correct hygiene and frequent handwashing with soap is vital to help combat the spread of COVID-19. Food and beverage businesses need to ensure that adequate sanitary facilities are provided and that employees thoroughly and frequently wash their hands.

This involves hand washing with soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds or the use of hand sanitiser (if hands are visibly clean), as required and frequently.

Hands must also be washed as often as necessary and always:

- Before starting work
- Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food
- Before eating
- After handling or preparing raw food
- After handling waste
- After cleaning duties including sweeping/mopping etc.
- After using the toilet
- After blowing nose, sneezing or coughing
- After eating, drinking or smoking
- After handling money
- At the end of a shift

This list is not exhaustive.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the FSAI.

For additional COVID-19 hand hygiene measures, hands must be washed before putting on or after removing PPE.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the HSE.

### COVID-19 Training

All employees need to receive training on COVID-19 safety and disinfection protocols. More comprehensive training must be given to teams in frequent guest contact including Front of House, Operations and Security.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE), can be effective in reducing the spread of viruses and disease within the food industry, but only if used properly. If required by their roles, appropriate PPE must be worn by employees. Each section of the restaurant must be assessed to decide what is needed. Training on how to properly use, apply and dispose of all PPE is essential.

As part of the business risk assessment, consideration needs to be given to the level of PPE required for various tasks e.g. power hosing which can cause an aerosol effect.

Handwashing is a greater protective barrier to infection than wearing disposable gloves. Correct hand hygiene is extremely important, whether using gloves or not. However the following must be applied when using disposable gloves:

- Gloves may be used by food workers for food handling, according to usual food safety guidance, but they must ensure that the gloves are changed frequently and that hands are washed before putting gloves on, between glove changes and when gloves are removed.
- Gloves must be changed after carrying out non-food related activities such as opening / closing doors by hand, emptying bins, handling money, etc.
- Food workers should be aware that wearing gloves can allow bacteria to build up on the surface of the hands, so hand hygiene is extremely important when gloves are removed to avoid subsequent contamination of food.
- It is acceptable to prepare and handle food with bare hands provided proper hand washing procedures are in place. Hand sanitisers can be used as an additional measure but should not replace handwashing.

Further information on PPE is available [HERE](#).

In the context of COVID-19 risk, employers should check the [HPSC website](#) regularly for updates regarding use of recommended PPE.



*\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*



## Employee Welfare Facilities & Timekeeping

On their return to work, employers and employees must follow the Work Safely Protocol. Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return for work. Further details relating to what information should be obtained is available [HERE](#) for more information.

It's also essential to display signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene as well as physical distancing prominently at Back of House.

Employee welfare facilities (such as employee areas and locker rooms) need to be re-organised to suit physical distancing measures and be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Staggered start times and break times can also be very helpful and you must review the use of clocking-in machines.

Staff meetings should be held online if possible. If physical meetings need to take place, physical distancing measures must be taken.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

## Reception Desk

The reception desk must always have a medical kit available that includes:

- Germicidal disinfectant/wipes for surface cleaning, tissues.
- Face/eye masks. Note that disposable face coverings can only be used once.
- Gloves (disposable).
- Protective apron (disposable).
- Biohazard disposable waste bag.

# 5. Physical Distancing

**Physical distancing is very important to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This is achieved by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals.**

**The restaurant owner or management needs to meet Public Health advice on maintaining current physical distancing guidance between people at all times.**

## Capacity Management

The capacity of your business must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your business is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the premises where customers will be seated.

Seating layout and table plans need to be reviewed to ensure the recommended physical distancing and other protective measures can be strictly adhered to.

The employee and customer flow of the business must be carefully managed, particularly at entrances, exits and other areas where customers might potentially congregate but are not permitted to do so.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to capacity management. Physical distancing measures required throughout your business are outlined below.

## Queuing

Any area where guests or employees queue must be clearly marked for appropriate recommended physical distancing. This includes tills, stairs, elevator lobbies, public areas, drop off areas, etc.

Use floor markings inside the premises to facilitate compliance with the physical distancing advice of 2 metres\*, particularly in the most crowded areas. Use vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre\* distance.

## Restaurants

Physical distancing of 2 metres\* should be maintained between tables in an indoor setting. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre\* in [controlled environments](#) if the other risk mitigation requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met.

If all risk mitigation requirements have been met, and physical distancing is reduced to 1 metre\*, pre-booked time limited slots must be in place for customers, which are a maximum of 105 minutes duration plus 15 minutes to allow for adequate cleaning.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

Pre-booking and time limited slots of 105 minutes duration are not a requirement if physical distancing of 2 metres\* is strictly maintained.

In an outdoor setting, physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair), as long as the business adheres to the protective measures.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to maximum capacity at a table. These measures are applicable to pre-bookings and walk-in customers.

Businesses should ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to formal or informal events within their premises.

Restaurants and bars need to reduce seating capacities to meet the current physical distancing guidance outlined by HPSC between each seated group of customers.

It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers to ensure that customers do not congregate in groups. Customers should be seated at a table except when using the toilet, paying, and departing.

### Self-Service/Buffer Style

This style of service must only be provided where physical distancing and other Public Health advice can be followed.

Physical distancing guidance must be followed while queuing. See [Queuing section](#) above to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place. Customer access to carvery / buffet / open food display should be staggered and a one-way system introduced.

### Back of House

Physical distancing protocols that follow Government's Public Health Advice must be observed in the staff room, shared office spaces, employee locker rooms, retail store rooms, delivery areas, stock rooms, IT areas, bar support areas such as cold/keg rooms, kitchens and other areas where employees gather and work.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Where the food service environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what

measures to put in place to protect employees.

Examples of practical measures to adhere to physical distancing guidance in the food services environment are to:

- Stagger workstations on either side of service area so that food workers are not facing one another
- Provide PPE if required, such as face masks, disposable gloves and clean aprons / uniforms. The use of PPE would be routine in high-risk areas of food premises that produce ready-to eat and cooked foods. When employees are dressed in PPE it is possible to reduce distance between workers
- Limit the number of employees in a food preparation area at any one time
- Organise employees into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards / plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart, for example in kitchens and at cash registers, host stands or food pickup areas. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

### External Smoking Areas

In these areas, the capacity must be in line with Government Public Health recommendations at any one time, while ensuring that the recommended physical distancing measures are adhered to.

### Timekeeping Facilities

If queuing takes place at the clocking-in machine, ensure that physical distancing guidance between employees is maintained. See [Queuing section](#) above to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place. If you use clocking-in machines, a strenuous cleaning and disinfection regime must be put in place.



\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## 6. Locations for Distribution of PPE

If required, PPE should be distributed at the following locations:

### Front of House

- All entrances and exits.
- Reception area.

### Back of House

- Employee entrances.
- Specific department offices.
- Food preparation areas
- Store rooms and cellars
- Location in proximity to the Isolation Room

**Note:** Hand sanitiser must be provided in all entry and exit points of the public areas including reception. Following updated Government advice for businesses serving food, consider providing hand sanitiser on each table for customer use.

Hand sanitiser must only be used on visibly clean hands. If hands are visibly dirty/contaminated they must be washed.

## 7. Employee Uniforms

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The policy on the care of uniforms must be updated to ensure every employee is clear on the standards of appearance and dress expected whilst at work.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

If a locker or changing room is provided, mark the floors to indicate available and unavailable spaces that must be used when changing into work attire/PPE. It may be necessary to roster access times to these rooms so physical distancing takes place.

## 8. Cleaning Products & Protocols

**Cleaning products and protocols must be suitable and manufacturer approved for use against viruses, bacteria and similar risks.**

It's important to follow manufacturer instructions with regard to dilution, application and duration of use. Restaurants must review cleaning procedures within all departments and update these if any cleaning products are changed.

It's also important to work with suppliers, vendors and distribution partners to ensure an uninterrupted supply of cleaning supplies.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Re-opening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

### Public Spaces & Communal Areas

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting must be increased in all public spaces to at least twice daily. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces which must be visibly clean at all times. These include counters, door handles, public bathrooms, stair handrails, dining surfaces and seating areas.

\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Laundry

All linen must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with HSE guidelines. Dirty linen must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while it is transported to the restaurant's laundry facility.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

## Back of House & Staff Areas

Back of House areas must be cleaned and disinfected as regularly as required but at least twice a day. Particular attention must be paid to employee areas including the canteen, employee entrances, employee toilet facilities, uniform control rooms, loading areas, offices, kitchens and employee relations service desks.

## Equipment Shared by Employees

Appropriately clean and disinfect shared equipment and tools before, during and after each shift or anytime the equipment is transferred to another employee.

This includes items such as phones, computers and other communication devices, keys, payment terminals, kitchen implements, tools, safety buttons, cleaning equipment, time clocks and all other direct contact items used.

Shared food and beverage equipment in Back of House areas (e.g. kettle, microwave, etc.) need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

## Water Disinfection

Maintain the concentration of disinfectant in water for consumption within the limits recommended according to international norms and standards. Preferably this should be at the upper limits of the range.

## Control of Waterborne Hazards

It is critical that restaurants review the guidance on 'Control of Legionella Bacteria During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic' and review their own systems in line with this.

This guidance highlights the requirement to continue managing Legionella control to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease.

The following is a non-exhaustive list relevant to the tourism sector of potential sources of aerosols which may contain Legionella bacteria: wet cooling systems (for example, cooling towers and evaporative condensers); spa pools; showers, taps and toilets; machine cooling systems; spray booth water curtains; humidifiers in food cabinets; ornamental fountains and water features; dust suppression systems; horticultural misting systems; lawn sprinklers; clinical humidifiers; sprinklers and hose reels; and power hoses.

Legionnaires' disease can be fatal and hospitalisation is generally required to treat symptoms. With the health service currently dealing with a Public Health emergency, it is vital that employers take appropriate action to maintain and operate their water systems especially wet cooling systems, so far as reasonably practicable.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

For further advice please visit [HERE](#).



## 9. Front of House

### Definition of an Outdoor Space

1. An outdoor place or premises that is covered by a roof, so long as not more than 50% of the perimeter (outside) is covered by a wall, windows, gate or similar \*
2. When creating an outdoor area, it must not be wholly enclosed or substantially enclosed which in practice means it must not have sides (including windows, doors, gates or other fittings that can be opened or shut) that enclose more than 50% of the perimeter of that area. For example, a marquee or gazebo with a roof and four sides would not be an outdoor space and would be required to have at least 50% of its wall area open to the external air, calculating this 50% wall area figure also applies to trellis, windbreakers, netting or other types of partition. Consideration should also be given to the location, a tent with only a roof would in itself be considered an outdoor area, but if placed in for example a courtyard area with four surrounding walls within close proximity, the area may no longer be considered outdoors. When considering the use of tents, marquees, gazebos or other similar structures, operators should review and update risk assessments, safety statement and a weather safety plan drafted with final plans in compliance with all local bye laws or restrictions.

\* The Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2004

### Food & Beverage Outdoors

This guidance is subject to ongoing review based on Government decisions relating to the reopening, regulations governing public health restrictions and general Government guidance.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the current Public Health advice.](#)

- Service is permitted for a maximum of 6 persons aged 13 or over per table. This limit of 6 does not include accompanying children aged 12 or younger. The total combined capacity at a table cannot exceed 15 overall (max. 6 persons aged 13 and over)
- The outdoor space will be controlled and manned by premises personnel ensuring a managed flow.
- Table service only.
- Recommend segmented food and beverage areas to allow for smokers and non-smokers.
- Physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair)
- Contact tracing and enhanced hygiene measures must be adhered to.
- Measures to control noise levels e.g. no live/loud music permitted.
- Employees wear face coverings/masks at all times.
- Patrons must wear face coverings/masks when circulating around the outdoor dining and serving areas and using indoor facilities. Face coverings/masks mask wearing must be enforced.
- Premises/outdoor areas must be clear of all patrons by 11.30pm.

### Food & Beverage Indoors

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the current Public Health advice.](#)

**Currently, indoor restaurant and bar services must be restricted to residents of paid tourism accommodation until Government restrictions are lifted**

- Service is permitted for a maximum of 6 persons aged 13 or over per table. This limit of 6 does not include accompanying children aged 12 or younger. The total combined capacity at a table cannot exceed 15 overall (max. 6 persons aged 13 and over)
- Multiple tables cannot be booked indoors.
- No parties/ social gatherings are permitted indoors.
- Table service only.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between tables indoors. If all risk mitigation requirements outlined in Appendix 1 have been met, then a minimum of 1 metre is permitted. The physical distancing of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair)\*\*
- Contact tracing, ventilation and enhanced hygiene measures must be adhered to.
- Measures to control noise levels. e.g. no live/loud music permitted.
- Face coverings/masks must be worn by customers at all times other than when sitting at their table.
- Employees wear face coverings/masks at all times.
- Patrons must have vacated the licenced premises by 11.30pm.

\*\* In line with HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses. See [Appendix 1](#)



**The restaurant owner or management must follow the Government's Public Health advice throughout Front of House. To achieve this, the following steps should be taken:**

If serving food, [a food preparation area is required on site / on the premises](#)

Where possible, customers should be able to enter and exit through separate doors. Minimise the number of access points for arriving and departing guests. Doors should be propped open if fire regulations allow.

Hand sanitiser (touchless where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all, at each access point. Consider providing hand sanitiser on each table. Signage must encourage all customers to use this when they enter and leave.

Any area where customers queue must be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. Use floor markings inside the premises to facilitate compliance with the physical distancing advice of 2 metres\*, particularly in the most crowded areas. Use vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre\* distance. This includes elevators, the entrance to bar and lounge areas, at entrances to toilets, function rooms, smoking areas, etc.

When a group arrives and needs to queue, only one member should do so. The others must adhere to physical distancing until the group can be seated.

Train employees in the Government's Public Health advice to ensure compliant procedures for the Meet, Greet and Seat process. For example, a friendly verbal greeting should replace a physical greeting.

## Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting must be increased to at least twice daily and all areas must be visibly clean at all times.

- Greeting podiums at the entrance (plus all associated equipment) must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Service stations, service trolleys, beverage stations, counter tops, handrails and trays must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Dining tables, bar tops, stools and chairs must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Storage containers must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
- Food preparation stations to be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Bill tip trays, pens and all other reusable guest contact items must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Follow in-house standard operating procedures regarding food preparation and service. These must adhere to HACCP standards.

Ensure regular checks are carried out to ensure the proper functioning of soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices throughout the restaurant. Repair or replace any defective units.

## Capacity Management

The capacity of your business must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your business is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the premises where customers will be seated. For further guidance on Capacity Management click [HERE](#).

## Physical Distancing Protocol

Management is responsible for minimising the number of arrival and departure points for customers. Managers and supervisors must always monitor and manage physical distancing between people and groups rather than simply rely on signage.

Peak-period queuing procedures must be implemented if guests can't be seated immediately. If queuing isn't possible, a table reservation system must be considered. Consider an online reservation option for customers, as not only will this communicate new procedures and practices, but it will also limit the requirement for queuing.

The amount of seating must be reduced and customers must order from their seat.

## Outdoors

In an outdoor setting, physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair), as long as the business adheres to the protective measures.

## Indoors

Physical distancing of 2 metres\* should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre\* in [controlled environments](#) if the other risk mitigation requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met.

If all risk mitigation requirements have been met, and physical distancing is reduced to 1 metre\*, pre-booked time limited slots must be in place for customers, which are a maximum of 105 minutes duration plus 15 minutes to allow for adequate cleaning.

Pre-booking and time limited slots of 105 minutes duration are not a requirement if physical distancing of 2 metres\* is strictly maintained

In a [controlled environment](#) physical distancing of at least 1 metre\* should be maintained between people seated at tables.

\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Businesses must keep a record of the time and date of arrival at the premises of a group/sole customer and the name and telephone number of the lead person in a group/sole customer for COVID-19 contact tracing.

Details must be securely retained for 28 days and be compliant with GDPR. The name and contact details of one person in each party must be recorded for both walk-ins and pre-bookings.

## Bookings

Encourage bookings rather than walk-ins and allocate specific times people will spend in the restaurant. Doing so will assist physical distancing, contact tracing and maximise revenue.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to maximum capacity at a table. These measures are applicable to pre-bookings and walk-in customers.

Businesses should ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the current Public Health advice](#), in relation to formal or informal events within their premises.

## Bar/Waiting Area

It is recommended to divide the bar into areas/zones and allocate a zone to each employee. Minimise and control the movement between these areas. As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

All employees must wash their hands frequently and as required. The following must also be cleaned and disinfected more frequently:

- Beer taps, handles and optics
- Drip trays and washable bar mats
- Glass mats
- Handheld measures
- Cocktail equipment
- Ice buckets, scoops and tongs
- Fruit preparation equipment
- Storage containers, etc.

Straws should be individually wrapped. Embellishment or decoration of glasses (e.g. cocktail umbrellas) should be minimised.

Where fruit garnishes are required, good hand hygiene practices must be in place while preparing the fruit. Keep garnishes refrigerated and in a covered container until required and serve using tongs/scoop. Each scoop must have its own covered receptacle.

In advance of re-opening, the cleaning of beer lines must be arranged as a notice period may be required by breweries or suppliers.

## Table Service

There must be adequate spacing between customers at each table in accordance with Government physical distancing guidelines and HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses.

Customer facing personnel allocated to serve individual tables must adhere to physical distancing where possible. Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene during order taking and table service.

Customers must remain seated and order from their seat. The bar counter cannot be used for seating or service to customers.

[Face coverings/masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible.

Before serving a table and after clearing a table, all employees must wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser if hands are visibly clean.

Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene during order taking and service.

Orders should be taken in a time efficient manner and at a suitable distance to minimise time spent in close contact with customer. Close contact can mean spending more than 15 minutes in face-to-face contact within 2 metres\* of an infected person. For more information see [HERE](#).

Where offered, sharing plates can be served per table, they should not be served as catering platters to larger groups.

Menus should be made of a material that can easily be cleaned. Electronic menus, phone apps and menu boards are an alternative option. It may be possible to verbally recommend food and drinks to customers. If so, this should be done.

It's recommended to use individual pens, pads, or electronic devices when taking orders.

\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Self-Service Carvery/Buffer

This style of service must only be provided where physical distancing and other Public Health advice can be followed.

Physical distancing guidance must also be followed while queuing. See [Queuing section](#) above to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place. Customer access to buffet / carvery / open food display should be staggered and a one-way system introduced.

It is important to maintain good hygiene practices if this style of service is offered. Both customers and employees should strictly observe good personal hygiene practices at all times around open food areas. Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene.

[Face coverings/masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible. Face coverings/masks must be worn by customers when accessing this style of service.

Where possible, employees should serve and plate food to limit shared use of utensils at open food areas.

All trays used by customers must be cleaned between each use.

Where food is served buffet-style, all items displayed for customer use should be individually wrapped or be a single-serve item.

If items are not individually covered and buffet service is offered the following guidance must be adhered to

- Sneeze guards or protective measures in place
- Pre-prepared covered portions where possible.
- Lidded dishes not over-filled and replaced regularly
- A dedicated staff member manages the buffet to ensure physical distancing and to encourage hand hygiene.
- Hand sanitiser available at various parts of the buffet and signage encouraging use of this after using utensils.
- A selection of utensils on the buffet which are regularly changed.

## Glassware

To prevent cross-contamination, fresh glasses must be used for each new drink, particularly from optics and beer taps.

When pouring drinks, employees must handle glasses by the stem or base and place on clean service trays or bar counter before serving. Avoid touching the nozzle, tap optic or bottle against the glass.

Similarly, there must be minimal handling of glassware when clearing glasses. Here, service trays must be used where appropriate.

## Service Stations

Cleaning and disinfection must be carried out with increased frequency at service stations, at least twice a day, but more frequently during busy periods and whenever facilities are visibly dirty. Surfaces to clean include counter tops, shelving, equipment, storage containers, etc.

At service stations, customer facing personnel must be encouraged to maintain the recommended physical distance from each other. Limit the number of customer facing personnel at service stations at any one time. Minimise movement between service stations and ensure customers don't have access to these areas.

Ensure service stations are stocked with all necessary equipment (e.g. cutlery, condiments, etc.) and cleaning supplies (disinfectant, disposable paper towels, etc.).

All customer facing personnel must have their own stationery items and equipment (e.g. pens, order book.). If equipment and tools are shared, they must be cleaned and disinfected before, during and after each use or before being given to another employee.

\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Ice Machines

Before your restaurant re-opens, ice machines must be emptied, recalibrated and refreshed with new ice. The water lines to ice machines must be cleaned out prior to refreshing with new ice. To avoid cross-contamination, each ice scoop must be stored in a separate covered receptacle and washed and disinfected regularly.

## Payment Facilities

Where possible, customers should use card/contactless payment. After bringing the debit/credit card machine to the table (if possible), it must be cleaned and disinfected before being used again.

If handling cash, employees should observe the Government's Public Health advice on hand hygiene measures.

## Customer & Service Elevators

An employee should be assigned to clean and disinfect the button panels of elevators regularly and increase the frequency of cleaning during busy periods.

Physical distancing must be adhered to in elevators.

Signage must be displayed to ensure customers understand the physical distancing requirements that apply within elevators.

## Toilet Facilities

Clear signage should indicate the location of and route to the bathrooms.

Patrons must wear face coverings/masks when using indoor facilities. Face covering/mask wearing must be enforced.

A strict queuing system and limitations on number of users must be enforced to ensure physical distancing.

Install clear markings to minimise contact between customers and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements. Encourage the use of alternate sinks.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in toilet facilities to at least twice daily. Ensure splashes are avoided while cleaning these facilities.

Ensure soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers and other similar devices are regularly checked, cleaned and maintained. Repair or replace defective soap units.

## Smoking Areas

In these areas, the capacity must be in line with Government Public Health recommendations at any one time, while ensuring that the recommended physical distancing measures are adhered to. It is recommended to have segmented food and beverage areas to allow for smokers and non-smokers.

# 10. Kitchen

**There is a requirement in legislation to have a Food Safety Management System in place based on the principles of HACCP. ISO 340:2007 is one of the available approaches to achieve this. A Health and Safety statement was already required, and is still a requirement. The COVID-19 Response plan is a requirement of the Work Safely Protocol.**

## Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

At the end of each shift, clean and disinfect each area systematically with effective detergents and disinfectants. All cleaning must be recorded by a suitably trained person.

## Physical Distancing Protocol

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Where the food service environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Examples of practical measures to adhere to physical distancing guidance in the food services environment are to:

- Divide the kitchen into zones with an employee allocated to each zone. Control and minimise movement between zones
- Stagger workstations on either side of service area so that food workers are not facing one another
- Provide PPE if required, such as face masks, disposable gloves and clean aprons / uniforms. The use of PPE would be routine in high-risk areas of food premises that produce ready-to eat and cooked foods. When employees are dressed in PPE it is possible to reduce distance between workers
- Limit the number of employees in a food preparation area at any one time and record the times that employees are on duty
- Organise employees into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards / plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart, for example in kitchens and at cash registers, host stands or food pickup areas. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Display signs that promote physical distancing and review all handwashing / good hygiene practice signs. Replace them if they are damaged or outdated.

## Kitchen & Food Handling Personnel

The same food law requirements apply now as did before COVID-19. Any changes to the nature and extent of the business must be reflected in the food safety management system/HACCP documentation.

Ensure that all employees have been trained in any new COVID-19 standard operating procedures adopted by the restaurant. Keep a record that this training has taken place.

Ensure that the HACCP system is up-to-date. All new protocols need to be reflected in records, food flow diagrams, cleaning schedules, zoning, allergen updates on menus and delivery & takeaway services, etc. HACCP based procedures are required for food safety and not for the prevention of COVID-19.

## Wash-Up

Prior to re-opening, ensure all mechanical dishwashers operate at optimum levels and reach the correct temperature. Ensure all heads of spray taps are cleaned and disinfected. Use adequate and safe chemicals. If equipment is being hand washed, use the correct double sink method with a drain area and wash at the correct temperature and using the correct chemicals.



\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.



# 11. Back of House

## Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in all areas to at least twice daily. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces which must be visibly clean at all times. These include:

- Entry/exit doors
- Handrails
- Smoking areas
- Exterior seating/benches
- Exterior of refuse bins
- Toilets
- Desks, chairs and office furniture
- Computers, printers and communication devices
- Tables and seating in employee rest rooms
- Door release buttons
- Light switches throughout the property
- Lockers, etc.

## Physical Distancing Protocol

Physical distancing protocols that follow the Government's Public Health advice must be observed in shared office spaces, employee locker rooms and other relevant employees facilities.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Where the food service environment makes it difficult to be physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Examples of practical measures to adhere to physical distancing guidance in the food services environment are to:

- Stagger workstations on either side of service area so that food workers are not facing one another;
- Provide PPE if required, such as face masks, disposable gloves and clean aprons/uniforms. The use of PPE would be routine in high-risk areas of food premises that produce ready-to eat and cooked foods. When employees are dressed in PPE it is possible to reduce distance between workers;
- Limit the number of employees in a food preparation area at any one time;
- Organise employees into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards/plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in back of house areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Employees should have a self-sufficient workstation where possible, with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment.

In offices where meetings/consultations take place, the physical distancing protocol must be adhered to and entry numbers limited. Seats and tables of all visitors must be cleaned and disinfected after each visit.

## Employee Toilet Facilities

A strict queuing system and limitations on number of users within toilets must be established to ensure physical distancing.

Install clear markings to minimise contact between employees and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements. Encourage the use of alternate sinks.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in toilet facilities to at least twice daily. Ensure splashes are avoided while cleaning these facilities.

Ensure soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers and other similar devices are regularly checked, cleaned and maintained. Repair or replace any defective units.

## Cellars, Cold Rooms & Store Rooms

Hand sanitiser (touchless where possible) should be placed at all entrances to cellars, cold rooms and storerooms with instructions that they be used on entering and leaving.

Clear signage must tell employees to observe physical distancing. A distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between staff if the size of cellars, cold rooms and storerooms allows. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect staff should be in place.

Access systems such as biometric touchpads, keypads or swipe cards must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Beer lines will require cleaning before re-opening. Breweries recommend giving at least 3 weeks' notice.

Clean and disinfect the dispense head and keg neck at every keg change.

\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## 12. Reception Desk & Offices

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Cleaning and disinfection must take place regularly, particularly in high contact areas such as the reception area. This must focus on frequently touched surfaces especially counters, desks, equipment, communication devices, door release buttons, etc.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

Physical distancing protocols that follow the Government's Public Health advice must be observed in shared office spaces, employee locker rooms and other relevant employees facilities.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

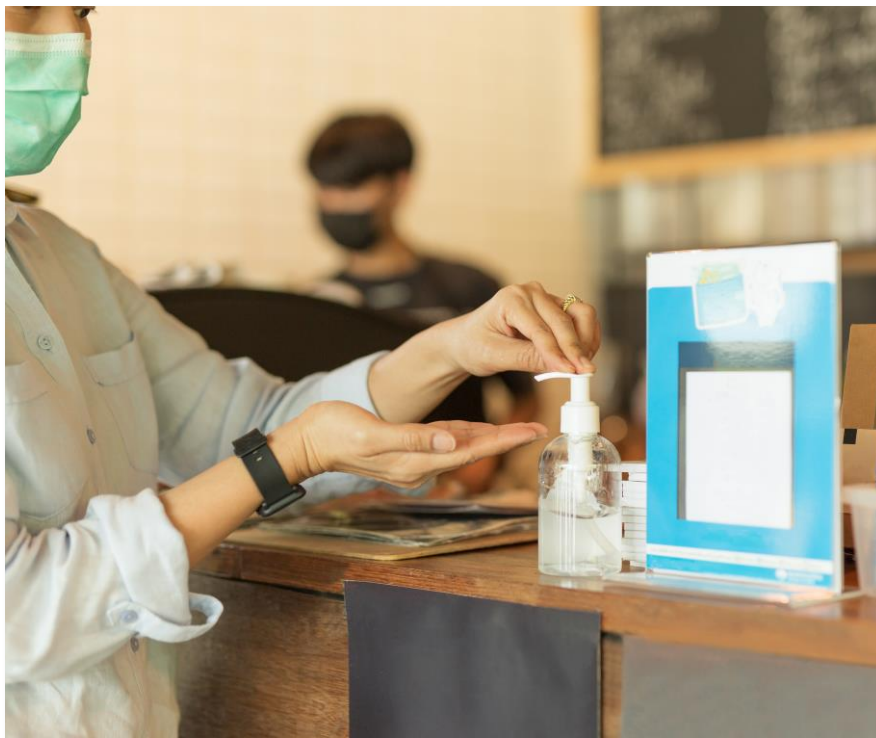
Physical barriers such as sneeze guards / plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in back of house areas

where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. These screens do not need to be floor to ceiling but should be of an adequate height (e.g. cover a person in a standing position) and width to block the pathway from the nose and mouth to the face and workspace of the other persons. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements including emergency access. Ref: Section D3 of [Work Safely Protocol](#)

Employees should have a self-sufficient workstation where possible, with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment.

In offices where face to face meetings/consultations take place, they must be arranged in line with the Government Public Health advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting. The length of the meeting and the number attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Seats and tables of all visitors must be cleaned and disinfected after each visit.

A designated employee, where possible, should be stationed at Front of House to control physical distancing measures.



\* Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

# 13. Suppliers of Goods & Services

**Restaurants must contact all suppliers to ensure that they have put all necessary protocols in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

**Note:** Fresh food deliveries must be treated separately to other deliveries. HACCP only refers to food deliveries.

## Deliveries

An employee must meet each supplier who is delivering to the restaurant.

All delivery personnel must follow the Government's Public Health advice on physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to guests:

- Wear suitable, clean and protective clothing where necessary.
- Maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness.
- Clean hands before and after each delivery transaction. The use of gloves is not recommended as this can give a false sense of security. Hand washing is best practice.

If possible, delivery drivers should not be allowed to enter the site (with the exception of food deliveries which adhere to HACCP delivery protocols). Employees should not come in close contact with drivers. HACCP is in the context of food safety only and not for COVID-19 prevention.

## Dealing with Drivers

Provide hand sanitisers (alcohol or non-alcohol based) in the delivery area.

Hand hygiene, in conjunction with physical distancing, is also of paramount importance.

Drivers must comply with HACCP procedures and ensure that all transport containers delivering food products are kept clean and frequently disinfected.

Disposable containers and packaging, where possible, must be used to avoid the need to clean any returns. In the case of reusable containers, appropriate hygiene and disinfection protocols must be followed by employees.

## Entering the Restaurant

Delivery personnel must use hand sanitisers if required to exit their vehicle and enter the buildings.

Signage must make drivers aware of 1) physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to employees 2) the need to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and 3) the need to wear clean protective clothing.

A system for recording visits to the site/property by employees/others should be put in place as required (contact log). Ref. Section D9 of [Work Safely Protocol](#). The same system should be implemented for suppliers who are required to enter the site/property.

## Accepting Deliveries

Ideally deliveries should only be made before opening. However, if the restaurant is open, delivery drivers must not enter through public areas and drivers must not come in close contact with guests.

A goods reception area must be set up that is large enough to ensure physical distancing for both driver and restaurant employees. HACCP procedures must be strictly implemented and observed there at all times. HACCP based procedures are required for food safety and not for the prevention of COVID-19.

All excess packaging must be removed by the driver. All outer packing must be removed (if possible) and placed in a suitable disposal unit.

When signing for deliveries, employees should only use their own pens. In case of electronic devices, both device and pen must be cleaned and disinfected prior to signing.

The delivery area must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

# Appendix 1

*COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses, (Current Version)*  
(HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

## Controlled and Uncontrolled Environments <sup>1</sup>

### CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS

Public and private venues or workplaces are considered 'controlled' environments. Examples are workplaces, schools, museums, swimming pools, galleries, cinemas, stadiums, conference facilities and casinos. Food businesses are considered 'controlled' environments, which includes restaurants and cafes.

#### Requirements (for food businesses) in controlled environments

- Use additional signage to ask customers not to enter if they have symptoms.
- Regulate entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded. Encourage pre booking as much as possible. A text may be sent to remind the guest to stay away if unwell.
- Use floor markings inside the premises to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as tills.
- Use vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre distance.
- Make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly.
- Place plexiglass barriers at tills and counters if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers and customers.
- Adequate hand hygiene and toilet facilities. Provide additional pop-up hand hygiene stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser.
- Establish and supervise a schedule of frequent cleaning of bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces.
- Customers should be seated at a table except when using the toilet, paying, and departing.
- Clear signage should indicate the location of and route to the bathrooms.
- Limit the number of servers per group of guests to the smallest number that is practical.
- There is a limit of on the number of people gathering in a venue at one time – in line with NPHET guidance on indoor gatherings. Multiple gatherings are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate 'defined spaces' and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g., entrances, exits and toilet facilities).
- Keep contact details for the person making the booking. Explain that the reason for keeping these records is to provide them to Public Health for contact tracing in the event that someone becomes ill with COVID-19. These

records should be kept for 28 days and be compliant with GDPR.

- Physical distancing of 2-metres should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre in controlled environments if all of the other risk mitigations requirements outlined have been met AND pre-booked time-limited slots are in place, which are a maximum of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. There should be a minimum of 15 minutes between bookings in order to allow for adequate cleaning and to allow customers to leave and enter, without mixing.
- Physical distancing of at least 1 metre should be maintained between people seated at tables \*
- Encourage the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers
- Use disposable menus or laminated menus that can be adequately cleaned after each use.
- Unnecessary items should be removed from tables and single use rather than shared condiments should be provided.

#### Considerations:

Where at all practical, workers should provide services to only 1 gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations (e.g. two different function rooms).

Where possible, facilities such as toilets should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However, if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

### UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS

These are settings where people have open access to the premises and generally don't know each other and are unlikely to be in close contact with each other for an extended period of time. Examples are supermarkets, retail stores, shopping malls, and takeaway-only food outlets.

#### Requirements:

- Physical distancing of 2 metres for customers (who are not close friends or family).
- As far as reasonably possible, physical distancing of 2 metres – and a minimum of 1 metre – should be maintained between workers.
- Keep contact tracing records for workers.

#### Considerations:

As much as possible use contactless payment systems to limit physical contact.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ministry of Health, New Zealand. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/guidelines-businesses-and-services-alert-level-1#newal2>

\* Physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair)

## Appendix 2

### Ventilation

The ventilation of enclosed places of work is a requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Application) Regulations, 2007. Natural means (via windows and doors) or mechanical means (Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition systems – HVAC) significantly improves hygiene and better air quality. The ability to adequately ventilate an indoor setting including opening windows and doors where possible is a key mitigating measure to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

General recommendations contained with *HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19 (Version 2.0)* are listed below. This document provides an overview of the current literature examining the association between ventilation and COVID-19 and is aimed at commercial and public buildings.

While ventilation reduces the amount of virus in the air and the aerosol risk, it will have minimal impact on droplet transmission where people are less than 2 metres from each other, or contact transmission (touching surfaces), which is why it is not a standalone measure and continued adherence to other public health advice is absolutely essential.

Any planned changes to ventilation should consider regulatory requirements under building, food and/or health and safety regulations along with other consequences such as cost, energy use, noise and security.

Reoccupying workplaces should not, in most cases, require new ventilation systems but improvements to ventilation will help increase the quantity of clean air and reduce the risk of exposure to airborne concentrations of the virus.

Determining ventilation of enclosed workplace settings should be considered as part of the workplace risk assessment. For more information see [Section D of the Work Safely Protocol](#)

### Manual (Natural) Requirements

#### Considerations:

- Windows and doors should be opened to allow for a flow of fresh air throughout the premises.

### Mechanical Requirements

#### Considerations:

- Make sure that any mechanical ventilation systems are adequately maintained as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional maintenance cycles beyond the routine maintenance.
- Where filters are used in the central HVAC system, ensure that these are replaced regularly as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional cleaning or changing beyond routine maintenance.
- If filters are used as part of a central ventilation system, consideration should be given to installing the most efficient filter for the system (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value - MERV – 13 to 16; ISO 16890 ePM1 rating 60-90%). HEPA filtration should be considered where air is re-circulated. Increase air filtration to as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow/fresh air amount.
- Increase the outdoor air fraction of air inside buildings as much as possible. This can be done by fully opening outside air dampers in mechanical systems or opening windows where available, taking into account weather and comfort level of room occupants.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces by increasing number of air exchanges per hour. The overall objective should be to increase the ventilation in the building thereby improving the existing ventilation without impacting on the occupants' comfort.
- Ceiling mounted, desk and portable fans do not provide fresh air and can mask poor ventilation issues. They are difficult to keep clean, and could increase the duration of suspended particles by creating air currents in confined spaces. Such fans merely recirculate air in a room if there is no source of fresh air. Therefore, a fresh air supply, as required by building regulations, or 10L per second per person (whichever is greater), should be provided when using a fan. Fans should only be used where there is a single occupant in a room. When used, fans should be directed to exhaust directly to the exterior environment (e.g. open window), to minimise potential spread of pathogens.



- Disable demand controlled mechanical ventilation if possible. These types of HVAC systems are set to only circulate air when a certain threshold is passed, usually the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> build-up in the room, or the ambient room temperature. If it is not possible to bypass this system, then set the threshold to the lowest possible setting (e.g. 400ppm or less of CO<sub>2</sub>) so that the system remains ventilating at a nominal speed.
- Keep ventilation running at all times (i.e. 24/7), regardless of building occupancy. When unoccupied, ventilation can be reduced to the lowest setting.
- Extend the hours of nominal HVAC operations to begin two hours before the building is occupied, and to only reduce to lowest setting 2 hours after the building has emptied. This ensures that rooms are well ventilated before occupancy each day.
- Ensure extractor fans in bathrooms are functional and running 24/7. When the building is occupied, they should operate at full capacity. As with the central HVAC, they can be set to the lowest speed 2 hours after the building is emptied and ramped up again 2 hours before occupancy if the system allows.
- Avoid directing air flow directly onto individuals or across groups of individuals, as this may facilitate transmission of pathogens between individuals.

Avoid the use of air-recirculation systems in HVACs as much as possible. Use 100% outdoor air if supported by the HVAC system and compatible with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations. If it is not possible to disable the air recirculation system, then HEPA filtration or the highest efficiency filter possible according to the HVAC

manufacturer's specifications should be considered (MERV – 13 to 16; ISO 16890 ePM1 rating 60-90%). Increase air filtration to as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow/fresh air amount.

- While there is evidence in experimental settings that coronaviruses like the SARS-CoV-2 virus deteriorate faster in high temperatures and humidity, the levels that need to be achieved are not attainable or acceptable in buildings. In addition, indoor humidification is not a common feature in most HVAC systems, and would incur additional maintenance and equipment costs. However, low relative humidity (<20%) is known to increase an individual's susceptibility to infection. Where such systems do exist, the advice is to maintain a relative air humidity of 30-50% if feasible.
- Create "clean" ventilation zones for staff that do not include high-risk areas (e.g. guest reception). This can be done by re-evaluating the positioning of the supply and exhaust air diffusers and adjusting flow rates to establish measurable pressure differentials.

For other information on the use of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors and other equipment and systems, please see [section D of the Work Safely Protocol](#)

Further information on a Ventilation checklist is available in Section 5 of the REHVA COVID-19 guidance document, available [HERE](#).



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

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