

HELP US CONTROL THE VIRUS

Guidance for Safely Operating your Business

It is important that businesses help their customers keep to social distancing guidelines both inside and outside your premises. Keep yourself, your staff and your customers safe. This way, we can build confidence in our high streets and parades as safe spaces.

Remember to carry out your risk assessment and keep a copy available on site.

Staff

- Consult with staff as part of the risk assessment
- Ensure staff are aware of the social distancing measures in place and that they are trained on how they should support these measures being observed.
- Ensure regular and visible written or verbal communication of the government messages and reminders that staff should not come to work if they have symptoms of coronavirus.
- Staff should be provided with hand sanitiser or PPE as determined by your risk assessment and regular handwashing encouraged and facilitated.
- If a business has many employees staff shifts start, end and break times should be staggered when possible.
- It would be preferable to maintain the same staff working together, rather than have staff working with many different people.
- Have available enough gloves, masks and/or visors for staff who require them. If reusable visors are used they should be cleaned regularly before, during and after use.
- Staff should be reminded not to share items.
- If staff breaks are taken outside the store they must be reminded to maintain social distancing from colleagues and the public.



Outside and Queuing

Making your premises Covid secure is likely to mean limiting numbers inside which will mean queues outside. Effective management of queuing is an important consideration for the safety of your customers and encouraging them to make return visits.

- If possible, limit the number of ways into and out of your business. Keep exit and entrance points separate if you can.
- Limit the number of customers at any one time, based on the size and layout of the space
- If possible, greet customers at the entrance and explain the social distancing measures inside – the number of customers allowed inside can be controlled at the same time (the number of baskets available at the door entrance is another way of keeping track of how many people inside)
- Put up clear social distancing signs outside, so customers will understand your layout
- If customers have to queue, make sure the queue runs along the longest side of the front of your premises rather than out onto the footpath
- Place markings outside the store to assist correct queue spacings.
- Consult with your neighbouring businesses to agree on how you will set up queues. You may be able to agree on a shared queuing space
- Actively manage your queues and stop people from joining it if you have reached your space limit
- Consider using additional security staff or have employees acting as queue marshals when queues are long.
- Consider whether temporary barriers should be available in case it is necessary to stop people joining a queue or use end of queue stickers.
- Consider using an appointment system to avoid queues, consider an electronic queueing system by using an app.
- Consider offering on-line shopping/services and deliveries if possible or appropriate
- Consider earlier or later opening hours to alleviate crowding
- Do not put A-boards or other signs outside or anywhere on public footpaths

Inside

Your premises need to be 'Covid secure' to be able to trade legally. This is done through a risk assessment which should consider the following. Customers will want to know you have considered all aspects of their safety.

- Consider one-way systems inside the premises using floor markings as indicators
 - Use social distancing floor markings especially in the areas where crowding is likely or queuing takes place.
 - Keep aisles and walkways as clear as possible - consider removing furniture or fixtures if necessary.
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- Remove or limit customer seating in store. If seating is provided, space it out.
 - Consider using flexiplastic to provide a barrier for staff working on the tills. These should be included in store cleaning programmes.
 - Assess whether till points are too close together. .
 - Customers have to be able to stay 2m apart at order collection points, otherwise limit the number of customers that can wait at a time.
 - Consider restocking after hours to avoid congestion.
 - Encourage cashless purchases.
 - If keypads are used they should be wiped regularly

Consider what steps will be taken by managers and staff where customers are not following social distancing measures Formulate clear policy to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

Browsing / Touching items

Decide what your policy will be. Possible options are:

- a)** Do not allow touching and/or browsing
- b)** Provide disposable gloves to enable touching and/or browsing
- c)** Provide hand gel to enable touching and/or browsing.

Bag up small items in clear plastic pockets (e.g. croissants) to avoid cross contamination.

Hygiene and cleaning

When considering your risk assessment, cleaning regime and hygiene measures, think about:

- person to person
- person to surface
- person to point of sale
- Consider providing cleaning stations near the entrance of your premises including hand sanitiser or disinfectant wipes or spray and tissue for basket handles.
- Identify and regularly clean key touch points e.g. door handles, lift buttons, keypads, hand rails.
- Carry out frequent deep cleaning of work areas including flexi plastic barriers
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean all equipment before and after each use

Toilets

- Consider whether it is safe to keep customer toilets open or if these should be available on request. If open, regular cleaning should include manual multi-person touch points such as door handles, flushes, taps, rails etc.
 - Baby changing facilities should be available but consider frequency of cleaning.
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Policy on changing rooms

- If you keep changing rooms open, discourage queues - no more than one person to be allowed in a cubicle
- All surfaces to be cleaned after use

Further advice

For more advice see www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches

Food businesses

- Follow a Food Safety Management System (FSMS) that includes existing food hygiene guidance and HACCP processes.
- Frequent handwashing should be encouraged and facilitated. Handwashing should last for at least 20 seconds and is especially important after being in a public place or after coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose.
- As always, good hygiene should be maintained in food preparation and handling areas.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products. Food businesses can refer to the Food Standards Agency's safer food, better business (SFBB) guidance for further guidance on food hygiene standards.

The FSA's guidance and their HACCP processes guidance is intended to ensure staff follow good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of disease to food. Key safety points include being fit for work, washing hands and wearing aprons or other clean clothing as appropriate.

The FSA Safe Method checklist is available here:

www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/personal-hygiene-fitness-to-work.pdf and allows employers to assess the personal hygiene and fitness to work practices in their workplace.

www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19

Offices

See www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres

For help and advice: 020 8545 3969 or rsp@merton.gov.uk.
