

GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING Restaurants & Cafés

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Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

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



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 and the Return to Work Safely Protocol, 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.

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 Return to Work Safely Protocol prior to re-opening and implemented all relevant requirements.

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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 and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) 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, FSAI World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies.

The National Protocol has been developed under the aegis of the *Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005*. 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.

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.

■ 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.

■ Focusing on best practice in food & beverage service

Tourism businesses must follow HACCP**, service and physical distancing to promote the health of employees and guests.

■ 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. 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 is a requirement of the Return to Work Safely Protocol.

- In addition, food 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. See [HERE](#) for more information.

These guidelines have been created in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business. This is a document that will evolve in line with the roadmap, taking into account any changes to the restrictions or physical distancing.

While we have attempted to cover all relevant issues, you must bear in mind that this is a non-exhaustive document and it may not cover all situations you may encounter. As circumstances change, any procedures you implement must be monitored to ensure they remain up-to-date and in line with international best practice guidance and the Government's Public Health advice.

Note: The physical distancing measures outlined in these guidelines are applicable between people from different households.

**References to HACCP in this guidance is for the purposes of food safety and the prevention of COVID-19.

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 one, 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)
- 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.
- **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 the Return 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 plan regularly and amend it as new regulations, guidelines and procedures come into force. Experience will also tell you how appropriate and effective the original plan is.

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

Monitoring and Supporting

A COVID-19 Response Team/Coordinator 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. 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 E of the National 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.*

A link for the HSA Templates and Checklists can be found [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 guests and/or employees.
- 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 a policy for the care of employee uniforms.
- Reviewing and updating cancellation and refund policies in line with the restaurant's requirements.

Communication

- You must share the Action Plan with all employees prior to them returning to work. If it's updated at any time, ensure 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 Government recommendations. Signs must be placed in prominent and relevant positions, be legible and, where appropriate, be offered in multiple languages.

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 regimes (incorporating front and back office areas if relevant).
- Employee health and what to do if feeling unwell.
- Unwell guests/dealing with suspected cases/ liaising with authorities.

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](#).

Staffing Resources

Property owners/management should review rotas in line with The National Protocol E, 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. 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.

If you can't ensure that employees can maintain the recommended physical distance apart at all times, you must apply the Return to Work Safely Protocol. For more information, see [HERE](#).

3. Employee & Guest 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

The Irish Government has recommended the wearing of face coverings where it is difficult to practice physical distancing.

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

The Return to Work Safely Protocol states: Make face masks available to the worker in line with Public Health advice. If masks are worn they must be clean and they must not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Employers and employees must keep up-to-date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET.

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

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.

Guests must be advised to stand 2 metres* away from other groups of people who are not travelling with them while standing in lines, using elevators, stairs or moving around the restaurant.

Restaurant tables, seating and couches in public areas and other physical layouts must be arranged to ensure appropriate distancing is adhered to. The same guidelines apply to employees: they must be reminded to stand at least 2 metres* away from guests and other employees whenever possible.



Employee Physical Distancing

If you cannot ensure employees stay the recommended distance apart at all times, alternative protective measures must be put in place. For example, install physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards between 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.

Providing Hand Sanitisers

Hand sanitiser dispensers (touchless whenever possible) must be placed at all restaurant entrances, at employee entrances and at specific points within the public areas of the restaurant.

All hand sanitisers must have a minimum alcohol content of 60%.

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 effectively.

Employee & Guest Health Concerns

When they return to work, employees must be trained on what to do if they or a guest becomes unwell.

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.

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. A suitably trained manager or supervisor must take this responsibility for each shift.

*The 2m physical distancing guidance is in line with current 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

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.

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 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.

Each employee must carry their own pen for any record keeping.

COVID-19 Training

All employees must 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)

If required by their roles, 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 must be mandatory.

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).

Employee Welfare Facilities & Timekeeping

All employers and employees must follow the Return to Work Safely Protocol. Please see [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. The use of a personal stylus could be considered here.

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

If, as a property owner or manager, you are alerted to a suspected case of COVID-19 on your property, a clinician from a local medical centre must be contacted. The clinician will advise on the next steps. Further information is available on the HSE website.

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

The restaurant owner or management needs to meet Public Health advice on maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres* between people. Physical distancing of 2 metres* does not apply to members of the same household.

Queuing

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

Restaurants

- Restaurants and bars need to reduce seating capacities to allow for 2 metres* between each seated group of guests.
- Management must ensure that guests are dispersed avoiding queues throughout the bar and restaurant during service.
- It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers to ensure that guests do not congregate in groups. Where physical distancing is not physically possible, the property must provide an alternative physical barrier.

Self-Service/Buffer Style

Where food is served buffet-style, all items displayed for guest use must be individually wrapped or be a single serve item. Common tongs or ladles must not be used and neither must common distribution containers from which guests help themselves.

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.

Timekeeping Facilities

If your restaurant uses clocking-in machines, a strenuous cleaning and disinfection regime must be put in place. In effect this means cleaning and disinfecting the machine before and after each use.

6. The Guest Journey – Arrival & Departure

- Restaurants must minimise the number of access points for arriving and departing guests. Each access point must be equipped with hand sanitiser plus signage instructing all guests to use it as they enter and leave.
- Where possible, separate doors must be used for guests entering and exiting the restaurant.
- COVID-19 signage must be also be prominently displayed outlining the physical distancing and hygiene practices that apply throughout the restaurant.

- Clear and visible queuing arrangements must allow easy separation of people by clearly showing the 2 metre* physical distance limits. These must be located in reception, elevators, entrance to restaurant and bars.

Guest & Service Elevators

- An employee should be assigned to clean and disinfect the button panels of guest elevators regularly. Increase the frequency of cleaning during busy periods.
- Signage must be displayed to ensure guests understand the procedures that apply within elevators.
- Hand sanitisers must be available both inside and outside elevators.

*The 2m physical distancing guidance is in line with current Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

7. 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.

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.

Laundry

All linen must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with the Government's Public Health advice. Dirty linen must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while it's 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

- 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. The same applies to clocking-in machines which must be accompanied by hand sanitiser.

Isolation Area

If possible, identify an area/room within the restaurant where any guest showing possible COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated from other guests and employees. From there, the individual can travel home to seek medical attention. It's essential to clean and disinfect this isolation area thoroughly after it has been used.

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](#).

8. 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 must not come in close contact with drivers. HACCP is in the context of food safety and re-opening only and not for COVID-19 prevention.

Dealing with Drivers

Delivery personnel must be asked to use hand sanitiser if required to exit their vehicle and enter the premises.

- Drivers must be supplied with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser and use this before passing delivery documents or goods to employees.
- 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 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.



Accepting Deliveries

- Ideally deliveries must 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 must 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 after each delivery and before accepting the next delivery.

9. 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 Return to Work Safely Protocol.

Kitchen & Food Handling Personnel

- 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.
- Employees must be encouraged to maintain 2 metres* from each other. Divide the kitchen into zones with an employee allocated to each zone.
- Control and minimise movement between zones. You must also limit the numbers of people in the kitchen and record the times employees are on duty.
- Display signs that promote physical distancing and revisit all handwashing/good hygiene practice signs. Replace them if they are damaged or outdated.
- Before the start of each shift, clean and disinfect each area of the kitchen at least twice daily and whenever visibly dirty. After each service, disinfect with effective detergents and disinfectants. All cleaning must be recorded by a suitably-trained person.
- 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.



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.

*The 2m physical distancing guidance is in line with current Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

10. Front of House

Bookings

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

Guests' Arrival

- Entrance doors must be propped open where possible, if in line with fire regulations.
- All tables must follow the Government's Public Health advice and be spaced 2 metres* apart.
- Hand sanitiser must be available at the restaurant entrance.
- Train employees in new 'Meet, Greet and Seat' procedures that are compliant with the Government's new Public Health advice.
- When a group arrives at a restaurant and needs to queue, only one member should do so. The others must adhere to physical distancing until the group can be seated.



Bar/Waiting Area

- 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 guests, as not only will this communicate new procedures and practices but will also limit the requirement for queuing.
- The amount of seating and stools must be reduced and guests must order from their seat wherever possible to reduce queues.
- Minimise the number of entrances guests can use to enter and leave the restaurant or waiting area. Managers, supervisors and security personnel must ensure physical distancing always takes place, while clear signage must also ask people to stay 2 metres* apart.

- Separate groups that are not members of the same household must remain 2 metres* apart.
- Divide the bar into areas/zones and allocate a zone to each employee. Minimise and control the movement between these areas.
- 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 must 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.

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.

*The 2m physical distancing guidance is in line with current Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

Order Taking

- Menus must be single use or 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 guests. If so, this should be done.
- Recommended physical distancing must be followed when taking orders.
- It's recommended to use individual pens, pads, or electronic devices.

Table

- Before serving a table and after clearing a table, all employees must wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds or use sanitiser if hands are visibly clean
- Tableside cooking must be suspended if physical distancing cannot be adhered to.

Service of Meal

- Front of House personnel allocated to serve individual tables must adhere to physical distancing where possible.
- Where offered, sharing plates must be served in individual portions from the kitchen.
- All food must be plated in the kitchen.

Self-Service Carvery/Buffer

- This style of service must only be provided where physical distancing and other Public Health advice can be followed. Maintain physical distancing by staggering service and placing 2 metre* markings on the floor to highlight distance if queuing is unavoidable.
- All foods in the bain-marie or hotplate must be shielded from guests. Employees must plate up and serve food.
- All trays used by guests must be cleaned between use.
- All goods/foods, visual displays, etc. must be covered and only handled by appointed employees.
- There must be no shared items on countertops or at the carvery or buffet. Examples of shared items include:
 - Water jugs (water must only be served directly to tables)
 - Salt and pepper shakers
 - Unwrapped butter, etc.

Service Stations

- Service stations must also be cleaned and disinfected as required but at least twice a day. These include countertops, shelving, equipment, storage containers, etc.
- At service stations, Front of House personnel must be encouraged to maintain the recommended 2 metre* physical distance from each other. Limit the number of Front of House 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 and disinfecting supplies (disinfectant, disposable paper towels, etc.).
- Cutlery must be stored in a clean disinfected cutlery drawer or covered cutlery container.
- All Front of House personnel must have their own stationery items and equipment (e.g. pens, order book). If equipment and tools are shared, they must be washed and disinfected after each use or before being given to another employee.

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.



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Cellars, Cold Rooms & Store Rooms

- Hand sanitiser (touchless where possible) should where required 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. If the size of cellars, cold rooms and storerooms means a physical distance of 2 metres* can't be maintained, the number of employees allowed in one area at the same time must be limited.
- Access systems such as biometric touchpads, keypads or swipe cards must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- 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.

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 or used just once and disposed of.
- Follow in-house standard operating procedures regarding food preparation and service. These must adhere to HACCP standards.

Physical Distancing Protocol

- Supervisors must manage physical distancing at all entrances, waiting areas and queues. Clear signage must also be displayed to remind guests and employees to observe physical distancing requirements.

- Peak-period queuing procedures must be put in place if guests cannot be seated immediately.
- If queuing isn't possible, a table reservation system or online reservation system should be considered.
- Appropriate recommended physical distancing must be adhered to between different groups that are not members of the same household.
- Reduce seating/bar stool count to reflect the Government's Public Health advice on physical distancing guidelines.

Guest Considerations

- All self-serve condiments and utensils must be removed. These must only be supplied by restaurant employees.
- Remove all 'grab and go' offerings.
- All food and beverage items should be placed on the table, counter or other surface instead of being handed directly to a guest.
- No self-serve food available.
- Beverage dispensers must only use single use cups. There must be no refills using same beverage holder.
- Cashless payment systems should be used where possible.

Payment Facilities

Where possible, guests 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 be provided with gloves and observe the Government's Public Health advice on hand hygiene measures.



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11. Locations for Distribution of PPE

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

Front Office

- All entrances and exits.
- Reception area.

Back Office

- Employee entrances.
- Specific department offices.

Note: Hand sanitiser must be provided in all entry and exit points of the public areas including reception.

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

12. 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.



13. 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

- Employees should where possible have separate counters and use individual stations so that devices and equipment are not shared.
- The restaurant must ensure physical distancing guidelines are followed. If space doesn't allow the 2 metre* rule to be followed, physical barriers may need to be installed to separate workspaces in Front of House and Back of House areas.
- In all shared offices, physical distancing measures must be followed. Where necessary, workspace dividers must be installed.
- The sharing of office equipment should be avoided and each workstation should be self-sufficient with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment.
- In offices where meetings/consultations take place, the physical distancing protocol is to be adhered to and entry numbers limited. 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.
- After bringing the debit/credit card machine to the table (if possible), it must be cleaned and disinfected before being used again.
- Cashless payment systems are recommended.



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14. Public Areas

Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The following areas must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily and be visibly clean at all times:

- Stair handrails
- Restaurant entry doors
- Employee smoking areas
- Exterior seating/benches
- Exterior of refuse bins
- Front of House toilet facilities.

Physical Distancing Protocol

Physical distancing requires a strict queuing system and the number of users within public toilet facilities must be limited to ensure that physical distancing takes place.

Air Conditioning & Ventilation

COVID-19 is transmitted from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth when an infected person coughs or exhales. As during normal circumstances, the condition of air conditioning filters must be monitored and maintained to ensure the proper replacement rate of indoor air.

- The number of air exchanges per hour must be increased and as much outdoor air as possible must be used. Depending on the business, this can be achieved by natural or mechanical ventilation.
- Ensure that air conditioning filters are cleaned at regular intervals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- When air conditioned air is used for ventilation, minimise its recirculation as much as possible. For more information see [HERE](#).

Dispensers

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

The Action Plan should include installing hand sanitiser dispenser units where required around the restaurant. Key areas include areas with heavy footfall and entrances and exits.



Additional Recommendations

It is critical that soap dispensers are functioning to minimise the risk of viral transmission. Waste bins are required, these require regular cleaning.



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Advice

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