

# COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR PUB, CAFÉ OR RESTAURANT



**Re-starting your business after a temporary shutdown or reduction in operations can present specific hazards, which if not planned or managed properly, may result in damage, injury, legal action and further disruption to your business.**

## HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Where activities are either scaled up or scaled down compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be increased risk of:

- fire/explosion
- machinery/plant damage or breakdown
- injury.

These may be caused by a variety of factors including delayed maintenance cycles and/or frequent start up and shut down procedures.

Your business operations and activities may have changed particularly around premises layout, staffing, capacity and opening hours, for example.

Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk management measures should all be re-assessed and adapted. These may include:

- safe systems of work/working procedures (including food safety management)
- training
- cleaning/disinfection/sanitisation
- fire and security protection systems.

If you've furloughed staff, you'll need to consider the timeframe agreed for returning them to the workplace, so allow for this in planning arrangements.

If you're unable to create a safe working environment on site, those operations should be postponed until corrective measures can be put in place.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following provides a checklist of key considerations to safely recommence your operations:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance regarding both employees and others (customers and contractors for example) potentially impacted by your activities, including those relevant to:
  - travel to work
  - welfare provision
  - cleaning and sanitisation
  - social distancing
  - floor markings
  - digital rather than paper use
  - personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - staggered working hours and breaks
  - ventilation
  - regulations and guidance relating to premises use, capacity and access
  - face coverings
  - managing records of employees and visitors to support test and trace.

Where the regulations and guidance can't be met, work activities should either be revised to achieve them or stopped altogether. Guidance is available from:

- **UK Government**, including **COVID Secure guidance** specific to Construction and other outdoor work
- **Public Health England**
- **Health Protection Scotland**
- **Public Health Wales**
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE).**



Information relating to testing and vaccinations can be found in [our testing and vaccination PDF](#) and the [People FAQs section](#) of our Coronavirus Resource Hub. Further information can also be found via the above referenced government websites.

- **Consider how and when to communicate to employees**, regarding re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations:
  - Can electronic/remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
  - Before activities start, should the first days of re-opening be used to communicate expectations, deliver training, deal with maintenance/inspection issues, and the practicalities of managing challenges relating to social and physical distancing? Can appointed contractors meet your requirements pre and post opening?
  - Use the first days to integrate employees back into their job role and activities. Consider the potential impacts of a significant period of time away from work, with some employees likely to benefit from a gradual/phased reintroduction.
- **Review existing risk assessments and actions**, including safe systems of work/working procedures to check they're relevant to your business' operation and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe environment for your employees, customers, appointed contractors and other visitors.

Where your business operations and activities are required to change, plans should be updated and careful consideration given to whether:

- new risk assessments should be completed and the results and consequent actions shared with your employees (including any new, temporary and agency personnel), customers, contractors and other occupants or users where premises are shared.



- fire, security, general premises safety (including management of slip, trip and fall risks), people safety/wellbeing, IT and cyber security and COVID-19 specific precautions are in your review, implementing changes and/or enhancements where necessary to maintain an appropriate level of protection.

Specific COVID-19 considerations will depend on the range of facilities and activities provided and may include:

#### Customers

- re-assessing the layout of external and internal areas and maximum occupancy levels to ensure that social distancing guidance can be met. Also reviewing terms and conditions for booking, recognising the likely need to restrict access/numbers
- controlling the number of customers allowed inside the premises and within any external areas provided, at any time through the allocation of pre-booked time slots
- only permitting access to customers

that have pre-booked, with all bookings to be confirmed electronically

- limiting the number of entry and exit points with separate entry and exit points to both internal areas, and external areas (such as gardens, where provided), if possible
- providing customer-facing social distancing coordinators proximate to entry and exit points to highlight the social distancing requirements and control the numbers entering and leaving. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for coordinators to include SIA registered personnel
- encouraging customers (other than children under the age of 3 and anyone with a pre-existing condition that would render the use of a face covering inappropriate or not safe) to wear face coverings where practical, and in line with latest government recommendations and guidance
- providing clear signage and markings outside (including in car park areas) and inside of the premises to explain the social distancing measures that customers should follow
- establishing one-way routes to assist with social distancing
- providing cleaning stations at entrance and exit points and other strategic locations, with signage to remind customers of the importance of washing hands and hygiene
- establishing cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation procedures for items used by customers



- identification and regular cleaning of touchpoints including door handles, stair handrails etc.
- limiting the need for face-to-face contact by introducing technology (apps for example) to facilitate orders being placed from smart devices
- encouraging contactless payment whenever possible
- removing or limiting touchpoints, e.g. providing no menus or condiments that are reusable
- making regular announcements reminding customers of social distancing and hygiene expectations
- installing physical barriers/screens at bar areas and between tables. Any such barriers must be subject to appropriate cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation
- limiting numbers (to one at a time) using lifts
- removing or closing off any children's play equipment and/or play areas
- removing or closing off any gaming machines and vending machines
- removing games (pool, darts, table football), jukeboxes etc., both to limit touchpoints and create space to assist social distancing
- limiting access to customer toilets and welfare facilities (one in/one out policy for example)
- installing sliding locks with 'occupied' indicators on the outer/external doors to customer toilets and welfare facilities
- ensuring ventilation systems operate properly and increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, providing this doesn't introduce additional health and safety risks
- prohibiting smoking and/or vaping in outdoor areas used by customers
- reviewing arrangements for collection, if click and collect/take-away services are provided, recognising the importance of social distancing, limiting touchpoints and the importance of hand washing and cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation
- using social media, websites and apps to inform customers of policies and procedures relevant to social distancing, hygiene etc., use of face coverings, click and collect/take-away and delivery (where provided) including specific reference to any of the usual services not available.

#### Employees, suppliers and contractors

- encouraging employees to avoid using public transport if possible, and where use can't be avoided, to comply fully with government regulation and advice, and the advice of the transport operator



- discouraging car sharing or employees from different households travelling to work together
- considering the health and wellbeing of those returning to work and any specific anxieties individuals may have. Communication is key and it may be potentially beneficial for those employees who have already returned to share experiences (travel, the working environment etc.) with those who will be expected to return at a later date
- reviewing staffing levels, recognising the challenges with social distancing, particular in bar and kitchen areas
- limiting access to walk-in fridges, freezers and pantries (no more than one person at a time)
- reviewing provision of personal protective equipment and requirements for the use of face coverings both by premises-based employees and employees involved in delivery
- reviewing arrangements for first aid provision (including personal protective equipment, hand washing and hygiene and maintaining social distancing where possible) and the guidance provided to first aiders
- establishing safe working procedures for customer deliveries and/or click and collect/take-away services, where offered, with online ordering arrangements, social distancing, personal protective equipment, face coverings, cleaning, disinfection, sanitisation (including vehicles) and hygiene clearly key
- the need for careful and clear communication with suppliers specific to goods-in delivery arrangements, including timings, avoiding contact and arrangements for social distancing
- considering the potential for non-contact goods-in deliveries
- scheduling goods-in deliveries to avoid the potential for overcrowding in delivery areas and interaction with customers
- limiting those involved in loading and unloading, and where more than one person is needed, using the same pairs
- encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this doesn't compromise their safety and existing safe working practice
- managing breaks and welfare provision
- providing adequate and suitable welfare facilities for employees and visiting drivers, including areas for safely changing and storing clothing and personal protective equipment. Where overalls and other personal protective equipment are provided, laundry arrangements and provision should be specifically reviewed
- removing/restricting of touchpoints in staff areas where practical e.g. vending machines and other canteen equipment for general employee use
- continued support (practical and wellbeing) for any employees who continue to work from home.

Further support can be found on our [health & safety risk assessment](#), [mental health in the workplace](#), [safe systems of work](#), [fire risk assessment](#), [escape of water](#) and [cyber security](#) pages. See also external guidance provided by the [HSE](#) and [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers \(CIBSE\)](#). Our other trade sector guidance may also be relevant to your business, particularly [hotels and guest houses](#), and [leisure](#).

- **Develop and carry out enhanced cleaning programmes** for all customer-facing and staff areas both pre and post re-opening. Pay particular attention to touchpoints such as washing facilities, toilet flushes and seats, door handles, push plates, hand rails and vehicles (where delivery is accommodated for example), with food safety management procedures reviewed and maintained based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP).

If you're introducing alcohol-based hand sanitisers, remember they're flammable. Update your fire risk assessment to keep your premises and people safe, ensure storage and use is clear of ignition sources (for example, electrical equipment, hot surfaces, smoking areas etc.) and ideally store within purpose designed flammable liquid cabinets, or otherwise, steel cabinets. Further support can be found on our storage and use of flammable/explosive materials page.

- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site**, including:
  - all buildings (interior and exterior communal areas for example)
  - boundary fences, gates and barriers
  - utility services (including water systems and any other potential sources of legionella, power facilities, ventilation/air conditioning systems and any measures for isolation of utility supplies in the event of an emergency)
  - plant/equipment (including kitchen equipment and extraction systems),
  - emergency back-up systems and safety equipment to establish and correct any unsafe or abnormal conditions, such as damage, maintenance issues, leaks, faulty safety and emergency systems, improper housekeeping or storage, signs of vandalism or theft etc.

Our kitchen fire safety and legionella bacteria pages and equipment checklist may assist you. The HSE has released specific guidance on legionella risks.

- Review emergency response procedures to verify:
  - they're up-to-date
  - adequate coverage for assigned positions on all shifts, including for example first aiders and security personnel.

Further support can be found on our [emergency procedures](#) page.

- **Plan sufficient time to recommission previously shutdown machinery/plant and processes** in line with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and manufacturers' guidelines.
- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including those of a statutory nature that may have lapsed since the shutdown. This could include utility services, machinery/plant (for example passenger lifts and escalators) and emergency systems.

Competent persons should verify that all protection/detection systems, including fire sprinkler/suppression systems, fire pumps, water supplies, fire alarm systems, intruder alarm systems, CCTV, access control, barriers, gates etc., are in service and functioning correctly.

Further support can be found in our [equipment checklist](#) and external guidance provided by the [HSE](#).

- **Ensure work competence and capability** of employees for the activities to be carried out checking all:
  - possess the necessary and appropriate skills
  - have received appropriate information, instruction and training, and hold the correct and up-to-date certificates and licenses, where required.

Additional training programmes and/or certification, instruction, information and supervision may be required where there is an insufficient number of competent personnel with regard to your return-to-work-policy (where in place). This can help provide structure and a framework to ensure your personnel are fit for work and consider issues such as mental health, wellbeing and physical fitness.

When reviewing the training arrangements and competency requirements, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- Availability and responsibilities of key personnel
  - senior managers
  - premises managers
  - senior kitchen personnel
  - Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
  - first aiders
  - fire marshals
  - cleaning personnel (internal and externally appointed contractors)
  - security personnel (where relevant).

- Formal induction/re-induction
  - specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19 and any amendment to rules
  - consider the specific requirements of any vulnerable workers (young persons, new and expectant mothers, any groups identified as being at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19)
  - address changes in methods of work, and associated expectations and challenges.
- Other training needs
  - conflict resolution/management training to address potential customer challenges in implementing COVID-19 measures
  - familiarisation (site, plant and machinery) to be specifically considered, with returning furloughed employees and operatives potentially not having operated plant or been in a site environment for a significant period of time.
- Training delivery
  - requirements for social and physical distancing for example are likely to impact the practicalities of training delivery, including induction and toolbox talks. This should be considered as part of the risk assessment process, including available facilities, numbers that can be safely accommodated, duration, potential barriers to communication etc.

Further support can be found on our [training](#) page.

- **Review your business continuity plan** including:
  - supply chain resilience
  - implementation and mitigation measures, to reflect any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary shutdown.

Visit our [business continuity](#) page for further support.

- **Further information and support is available:**
  - Allianz UK's [risk management portal](#) and [Coronavirus resource hub](#).

