

Section: Food and Safety Team
Date : June 2020
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To the Business Operator

Dear Sir / Madam

**Re: The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Operating a COVID secure business**

I am writing to update you with the most recent guidance for operating a 'COVID secure' business. With the reopening of non essential shops on 15th June and the likely reopening of the hospitality sector in July there are many new things you need to consider in order to protect the safety of your staff, customers and the general public.

You have a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of yourself, your employees and others affected by your business activities.

Guidance

There is a range of guidance on the GOV.UK website relating to different types of businesses. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19> including guidance for shops.

There is additional guidance on the Health and Safety Executive's website particularly on how to undertake a COVID risk assessment.
https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=covid-landing&utm_content=home-page-popular

We also have Slough Borough Council coronavirus webpages which include a range of other information including support available to businesses - www.slough.gov.uk/coronavirus

Risk Assessment

You must carry out a risk assessment to consider the risk of coronavirus infection at your workplace. You will need to introduce a range of controls to reduce the risk. The guidance documents referred to above give you information about the sort of controls you need. If you employ five or more people (even if they do not all work at the same time) you must write the risk assessment down.

Controls could include (but are not limited to) separate workstations for staff, controlling the number of customers coming into the shop, increased cleaning and disinfection of work areas, hand contact surfaces and work equipment, more frequent handwashing, screens

(where needed) floor markings to guide customers around the premises. You should be aiming to maintain 2m social distancing at all times wherever possible.

You must give information and instructions to your staff on the risks and how you want them to work to ensure their safety. You need to remind them they must not come to work if they are unwell or should be self isolating. You also need to supervise them to make sure they are working safely at all times.

Queuing and spaces outside your business.

You need to think carefully about how you manage customers coming into your business and also queuing outside. This is going to be especially important now more businesses will be opening. You will need to talk to the businesses near you to work out where any customers can queue without coming too close either to customers for other business or those wanting to walk on pavements. If you are based in a shopping centre you also need to speak to the people who manage the shopping centre.

You may need to have someone outside to ensure your customers are queuing safely. Our Highways teams will be doing their best to mark pavements to ensure public safety; please do not put any permanent markings on the pavement outside your shops.

If large numbers of people gather outside your business (not in your queues) in a way that you think breaches the current restrictions then please notify Thames Valley Police at the time by calling 101.

Please note that if you run licensed premises and customers take away alcohol, and gather in the immediate area to drink it, leading to breaches of the Coronavirus Regulations, the Licensing Act 2003 or Anti Social Behaviour controls, the premises could be subject to enforcement action.

We are working hard to help businesses operate safely, if you have any queries please email the team on foodandsafety@slough.gov.uk and we will get back to you.

We will be carrying out monitoring of businesses as they start to reopen. If we receive complaints or we see evidence of unsafe working practices then we will contact you to discuss this further.

Yours faithfully

Ann Stewart
Food Team Leader