



CHECKLIST: Re-starting food business operations during COVID-19

FSS has launched a COVID-19 [Risk Assessment Tool](#) for Re-Starting Food Business Operations. This checklist supports the risk assessment tool by summarising the key areas that need to be assessed to ensure the safe re-starting of your food businesses as COVID-19 restrictions are eased in accordance with [Scottish Government's COVID-19 Framework for Decision Making \(Scotland's Route Map through and Out of the Crisis\)](#).

This checklist and the risk assessment tool supplements [the over-arching guidance issued by Scottish Government which is aimed at helping all manufacturing and retailing sectors in adapting to new ways of working which will ensure employees and customers are protected from COVID-19.](#)

Re-starting will involve additional checks on your Food Safety Management System (FSMS) as well as a review of Health and Safety and Infection Prevention and Control measures you will need to apply to prevent the spread of COVID-19 across your business. FBOs should continue to follow existing guidance on food hygiene and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) processes. During this period it is very important that you maintain an up to date awareness of guidelines published by [Food Standards Scotland](#), [Health Protection Scotland](#), and [Scottish Government](#) on COVID-19 control measures and food safety requirements. Further guidance and information on COVID-19 for food businesses is available on the [Gov.UK](#) and [Food Standards Agency](#) websites. [The Institute of Food Science and Technology has also developed a COVID-19 knowledge hub](#) which food businesses can access for scientific advice, guidance and useful links on COVID-19.

Physical distancing rules

Along with personal and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing is the most important measure for preventing the spread of COVID-19, and it is important to understand how this should be applied in your business. 2 metres is the default physical distancing rule, and this should continue to be applied by all food businesses wherever possible.

Exceptions have been made to the 2 metre rule, but these **only** apply to food retail and hospitality businesses (pubs and restaurants) covered by this guidance. All other food businesses are required to apply 2 metre distancing throughout the workplace.

Food retail and hospitality/food service businesses are permitted to move to 1 metre distancing, but **only where additional risk mitigation measures are in place.**

The wearing of face coverings is also mandatory for customers in food retail and take-away establishments. Customer facing staff are also required to wear face coverings in retail and take-away premises where it is not possible to maintain 2 metre distancing, and no other measures are in place to ensure physical separation (e.g. through the use of screening).

Detailed guidance on the mandatory wearing of face coverings can be found in [Scottish Government's Guidance on Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Phase 3: Staying Safe and Protecting Others](#)

It is important that you notify your Local Authority Environmental Health department of your intention to re-start and ask them for specific advice on food safety management and infection prevention and control measures that are relevant to your business.

Key areas to check

Planning/Preparation for Start-up

- Assess the need for deep cleaning
- Check equipment-fridges and cookers
- Ventilation
- Water supplies-flushing of pipes
- Pest control
- Identify measures for preventing COVID-19



Ingredient and Product Checks

- Checking date labels
- Ensuring appropriate storage
- Reviewing allergen risks
- Assessing impacts of changing suppliers
- Ensuring appropriate packaging



Physical Distancing (Staff)

- Staff rotas/workflow changes
- Ensuring appropriate physical distancing in both work and communal areas
- Physical barriers
- Appropriate use of PPE/face coverings
- Minimising contact with essential visitors



Physical Distancing (Customers)

- Floor plans and queue management: shop floor, service areas and toilets
- Mandatory face coverings in shops and take-aways
- Discourage the handling of products and items
- Posters/information
- Contactless payment



Personal Hygiene

- Availability of hand washing facilities
- Regular checks of water supplies
- Stocks of soap and paper towels
- Appropriate use of hand sanitiser
- Training staff in effective handwashing technique



Staff Fitness for Work

- Promote staff awareness of COVID-19 symptoms
- Ensure staff know to stay at home if unwell
- Communicate changes to fitness for work procedures
- Understand obligations relating to Test and Protect strategy



Cleaning and Disinfection

- Chemical checks
- Food contact surfaces
- Identify key touch points
- Review procedures – frequency and methods
- Laundering of uniforms/PPE



Review and update

- On-going review of relevant COVID-19 guidance (NHS, SG, HPS, FSS)
- Ensure staff are aware of any changes to government advice
- Assess impacts on food safety management



The checklist below highlights the areas that need to be considered before re-starting a food business during COVID-19. Completing this checklist will help you to think through the areas of your own business where you may need to strengthen your existing food safety and hygiene controls and introduce new measures to protect your staff and customers from COVID-19.

Planning/Preparation for start-up		
What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Contact your Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before re-starting, call your Local Authority Environmental Health department for advice. 	
Water supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate supplies of hot and cold running water. • Awareness and resolution of increased risk of Legionella when water systems have been stagnant. 	
PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check stock of standard PPE and laundering facilities. 	
Deep clean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough clean is recommended, with consideration for a professional deep clean. 	
Clean work surfaces/equipment/utensils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough cleaning of all surfaces, equipment and utensils required before use. 	
Maintenance of equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and inspect equipment for any repair requirements. • Temperature verification required on some appliances. • Check ventilation/water systems are working appropriately. 	
Ensure fridges, chilled display equipment and freezers are working properly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm temperatures are maintained as appropriate, particularly after cleaning. • Refer to temperature control records where available. 	
Dish/glasswasher check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and run washers empty on hot cycle before use. 	
Temperature probe check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning and re-calibration of all probes required before use. • Ensure probe wipes are available. 	
Pest control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for evidence of pests (e.g. signs of damage to food packaging, markings, droppings, etc), and take any necessary action to eliminate. • Reset pest control schedule. 	
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the need to adjust ventilation and heating/air conditioning systems to improve air flow. 	

Ingredient and product checks

What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Ingredients supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with suppliers that raw materials and ingredients are still available which enable you to produce according to specifications. • If you are required to make changes to raw materials and ingredients check that you are purchasing them from reputable suppliers. 	
Check use by/best before dates and discard any food as necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure food is within date and has been stored correctly before use, in-line with manufacturer's instructions. 	
Allergen and labelling information is accurate for all items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review allergen risks - identify allergens in your products. Also consider deliveries, storage of ingredients and preparation of dishes, including potential for cross contamination. • Ensure appropriate documentation if using new suppliers or alterations to products. • Assess all labels, ensure menus and packaging accurately reflect the allergens present. • Ensure staff know what allergens are in each dish so they can provide customers with the necessary information. • Consider allergen risks when packaging and transporting food (e.g. don't have a product with a sauce containing an allergen in the same bag/box as an allergen-free meal). • Review new takeaway or delivery services to ensure accurate allergen information can be provided at point of sale and upon delivery. 	
Check for damage to any food packaging that could affect the contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard as appropriate to ensure food safety and quality. 	
Check for any evidence of temperature abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to temperature control records where available. • Discard any food that is not within the required temperature parameters. 	

Physical (Social) distancing measures (staff)

What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Ensure 2m physical distancing in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeworking for office staff. • Re-designing of workflow. • Measures to prevent non-essential movement between work areas. • Floor markings. • One-way systems/additional signage. 	
Implement steps to maintain 2m distancing between staff preparing food and minimise opportunities for contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce line speed and workflow. • Protective screens/physical barriers. • Promote online/phone ordering/payment systems for customers and suppliers. 	
Changes to workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider 'working teams' to avoid unnecessary staff interaction. • Review staff numbers and staff interaction with customers. • Staggered working/break hours. 	
Assess the need for additional measures where 2m distancing is difficult to maintain, or in certain sectors with exceptions to the 2m rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear one-way systems with appropriate signage. • Physical barriers (e.g. Perspex screens) between work stations. • Risk assessment on need for any additional PPE and face coverings during food preparation and to ensure appropriate use. • Increased ventilation. • Mandatory wearing of face coverings by food retail staff where no other measures are in place. 	

Personal hygiene measures (staff)

What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Provide adequate handwashing and cleaning materials for staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display posters on effective handwashing technique • Ensure ample stock of soap, paper towels, hand sanitiser. • Check soaps and sanitisers are within date for use. • Create additional hand washing/sanitising stations where appropriate. • Check hot running water is available at all hand washing facilities. • Check hand sanitisers are available for customer use where appropriate. 	
Provide updated staff training on hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff are trained on effective handwashing technique and implement at increased frequency. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational resources as reminders (e.g. posters). • Monitor adherence to increased hand washing requirements. 	
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Physical (Social) distancing and hygiene measures (customers)

What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Design measures for ensuring 2m distancing (or where appropriate, 1m with additional mitigation measures) between customers and staff in service areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure customers are reminded of the need to wear a face covering in appropriate circumstances (retail and take-away) • Queue management systems to restrict the number of customers able to enter at any one time and avoid congestion. • Review seating and table plans to separate different groups of customers. • Implement floor markings, signage and table plans which allow 2m distancing (or where appropriate, 1m with additional mitigation measures). • Where it is not possible to implement distancing (e.g. at payment areas), use screening to separate customers and staff. • Restrict the unnecessary movement of customers within service areas. 	
Minimise common touch points throughout the premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep doors open where it is possible and safe to do so. • Designate points for customer collections. • Discourage the handling of products in the premises. • Keep tables clear, do not leave menus or cutlery on tables and provide disposable condiments. • Encourage contactless payment. 	
Ensure customers practice effective hand hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote effective hand hygiene throughout the premises e.g. posters. • Review toilet facilities to ensure adequate supplies of hot water, soap and paper towels. • Provide hand sanitiser at entry and exit points, and at payment areas to be used following transactions. 	

Effective cleaning and disinfection		
What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Adequate access to cleaning/disinfectant supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check supply chain of cleaning/disinfectant materials. • Ensure cleaning/disinfection products are appropriate for purpose. • Ensure chemicals are used within their use by date. 	
Use appropriate cleaning methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure products are purchased from reputable suppliers and are effective. • Follow instructions for dilution and contact times. 	
Increased regular cleaning throughout workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection, paying close attention to shared spaces and toilets • Clean payment devices regularly using alcohol wipes. 	

Staff fitness for work, test and protect and contact tracing		
What to do	Details of check	Date completed and signed
Check staff are fit for work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider any adjustments required to fitness for work procedures, related to COVID-19 symptoms. • Check that all staff who may be at increased risk of infection are provided with the appropriate support. 	
Ensure staff understand what to do when symptomatic, or in a household with those who have symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate fitness for work procedures and actions to be taken regarding COVID-19 symptoms to all staff, regardless of location. Review staff knowledge. • Promote awareness of Scotland's Test and Protect Strategy and record keeping to support contact tracing. 	
Maintain customer records where appropriate to support contact tracing (hospitality sector).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of Scottish Government Guidance for the Hospitality Sector. • To comply with the mandatory requirement within hospitality, ensure contact information is collected for all customers on the premises. • Raise awareness to customers through the use of posters. 	
Additional staff training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff on changes within the workplace. • Provide understandable system for reporting illness and ensure all staff are aware of the process. 	