

# Keeping your customers safe throughout COVID-19: Infection control and safe working





## Foreword

You know your staff and customers better than anyone. What is going to give them the confidence to come back to you post-lockdown? How are you going to demonstrate to them that your venue offers a safe environment in which to work and socialise? How will you make the measures you put in place obvious and overt but not off-putting? How will you tell people what you are doing?

We have researched the measures that operators in other countries have already used to get their businesses moving again, and picked out the best practice for this guide. Our focus is on safe working and controlling the spread of infection because that is something we know about and we want to do what we can to help.

This pandemic is presenting all of us with a brand new set of circumstances that will require a rethink of how we do things. Many of you will say that your staff and customers won't accept some of the suggestions in this guide. That's fine. You know them better than anyone. If you have acted with their interests at heart and considered what is best for them before you disregard what those who have gone before have found to work, then you have done your job.

I think that at some point in recent times we have all felt overwhelmed by the enormity of it all, but also a huge pride in the amazing initiatives from friends in this industry to support local communities and key workers. No-one, and no business, will come through this without being touched in some way by the pandemic.

I hope that this guide will help you to consider your options as you prepare your venues for the next stage. We will update it to reflect changes to Government guidelines as they happen.

**For now, get ready, take care, and stay safe.**

**Jill Whittaker FCA**

Managing Director - HIT Training



## Maintaining good hygiene and clinical cleaning practices

The COVID-19 outbreak is likely to have an overwhelming change on the way we approach our day-to-day business operations for some time to come. One of the most essential changes will be the introduction of stricter hygiene, clinical cleaning and infection control practices within our establishments.

For example, it's possible that the deep-cleaning of our premises will become much more commonplace and part of our daily routine. Or that seeing our customers and staff members wear face masks or other protective clothing will become 'normal'.



## Breaking the chain of infection

The chain of infection is a model to show how infection, including the COVID-19 virus, spreads. You can stop the spread of infection by breaking one or more links in the chain of infection.

To break the chain of infection, you need to remove or protect either:

### **The reservoir – where the infection grows.**

COVID-19 lives within humans. To break this chain of infection, people should follow social distancing measures, avoid congregating in large groups and limit the number of people able to enter a building at one time.

### **Portal of exit – how the infection leaves the infected host (reservoir).**

To break this chain, people who have symptoms of COVID-19 should not leave their home or enter any public premises. As some people who have COVID-19 don't display any symptoms, everyone should take precautions against the virus by frequently washing their hands and avoiding touching their face.

### **Mode of transmission – how the infection enters the body.**

This chain can be broken by coughing or sneezing into a tissue or the crux of your elbow, you should wash your hands and dispose of the tissue immediately after. All hard surfaces and high-touch areas should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

### **Portal of entry – locations where the infection could enter the body, such as eyes, mouth, nose, broken skin, etc.**

You can break this chain by wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), covering any cuts/wounds, washing your hands as frequently as possible, avoiding touching your face, etc.

### **The susceptible host – a person who is at risk of infection.**

To break this chain, you can remove that person (typically yourself) from the risk by following social distancing measures, frequently washing your hands for 20 seconds, or by taking other protective precautions.

### **The infectious agent – the virus itself.**

This chain would be broken by eliminating the virus. Sadly, this isn't possible for COVID-19 until a vaccine is developed and available, or until the population develops immunity against the virus.

Throughout this guide, we provide advice on ways to break the COVID-19 chain of infection within your venue. It is not an exhaustive list. Its intention is to provide your business with a practical starting point for infection control. In-depth training courses on clinical cleaning procedures and infection control are available with HIT Training.



## Management considerations for good hygiene and clinical cleaning procedures

It's important to remember that COVID-19 or infection, in general, cannot be seen by the human eye. There are a number of precautions your business could take to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

It's good practice to make sure your business:

- Educates all staff members on the [correct method of hand washing](#). This includes washing your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with soap and water, making sure to clean the entire surface of your hands.
- Encourages frequent hand washing by all members of staff. Based on the nature of your business, this could be after every customer interaction, after handling chemicals or food, or at timed intervals.

### Reminder!

Washing your hands with soap and water is much more effective at eliminating viruses and bacteria, than the use of hand sanitiser. Whilst hand sanitiser should be made available, encourage your workforce to prioritise washing their hands where possible.

- Clean and disinfect hard surfaces after each use/contact as COVID-19 can live for up to 72 hours/three days on hard surfaces. The area should first be cleaned using soap and water, followed by a disinfectant. We'd recommend following the eight-sided cloth cleaning technique.

- Encourage staff to approach the business' infection control policy as if everyone within the premise has COVID-19. Around 80% of people who have the virus display minor or no symptoms. This will help everyone to maintain high and cautious standards of infection control.
- Frequently clean and disinfect all high-touch areas (for example taps, toilet flushes, till points, etc), preferably in between every use.
- Employs the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all staff members where required. PPE should be changed after each individual use to provide an effective barrier against the virus. Consider using fresh gloves, face masks and/or aprons in between each customer.
- Disposes of used PPE by double-bagging and keeping it separate from all other waste. This helps to contain potentially infected items.
- Introduce different coloured PPE aprons for different tasks within the business to limit the spread of bacteria and contamination. For example, blue for preparing food, white for serving customers, yellow for collection services.
- Provides processes for handling injuries such as cuts or injuries which result in visible bodily fluids. Full barrier protection should be worn by anyone supporting the injured person or clearing up after the incident, this could include splash masks, face masks, aprons and gloves. All items used should be disposed of afterwards by double-bagging and keeping it separate to general waste.
- Consider introducing a business or site-wide 'Infection Control Officer'. Similar to a First Aider or Fire Warden, this designated person will be trained to make sure the correct clinical cleaning procedures are followed within your premises.



## Supporting your workforce

During these difficult times, the health and wellbeing of your workforce will be one of your top priorities. As an employer, you have a statutory duty of care for your employees' health and safety at work and should do everything within your power to support both their physical and mental health.

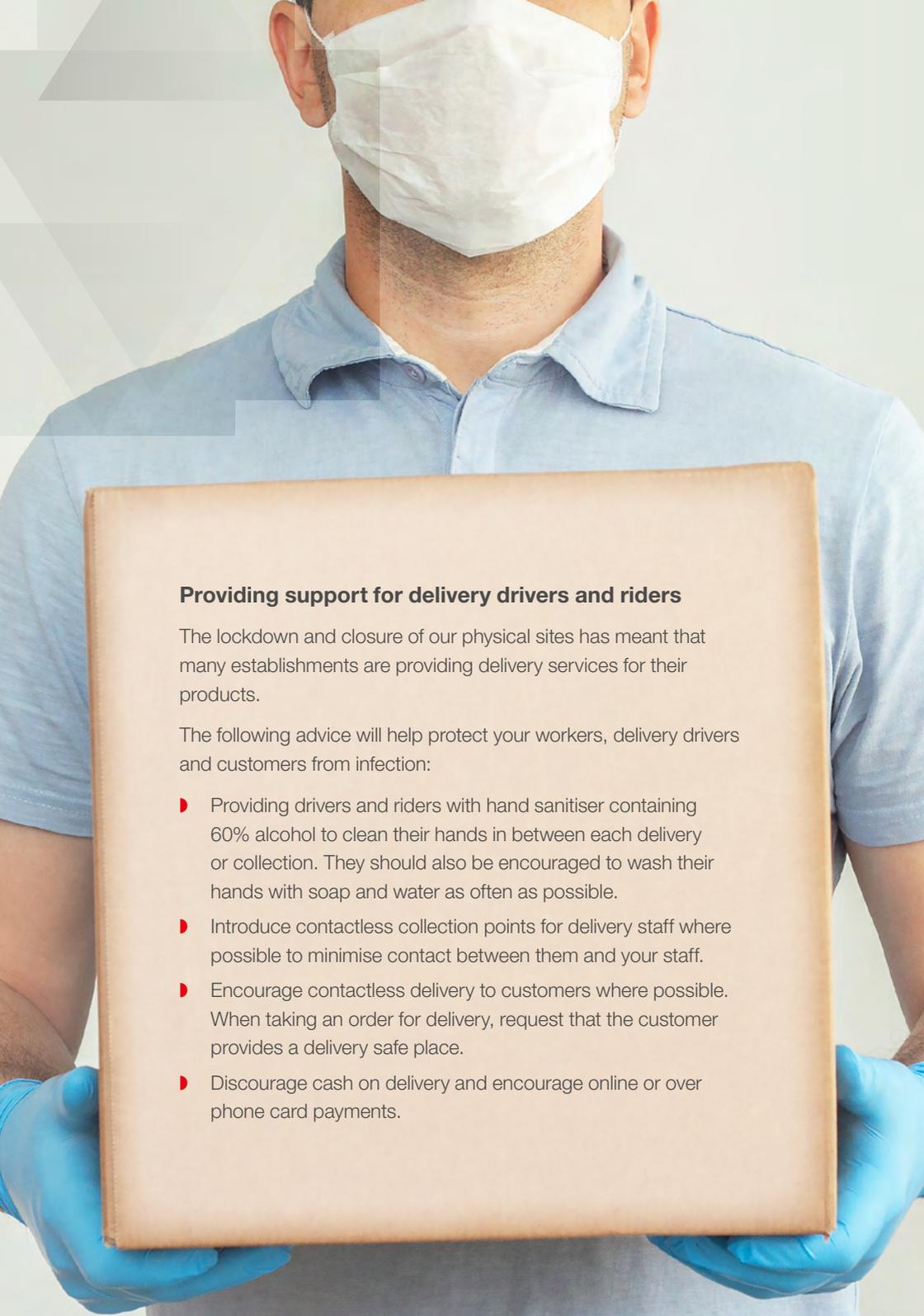
## Communicating with your workforce

By coming into work, your staff members will be putting themselves at risk of catching COVID-19. It's therefore essential that you regularly communicate updates with your employees and reassure them of the measures the business is taking to keep them safe.

You should make sure your entire team are aware of:

- The latest government and NHS advice, your response as an employer and what you're doing to protect people's health and reduce the risk of infection spreading.
- The newly introduced health, safety and infection control procedures in place at their place of work. We'd recommend that all staff are provided with independent training on infection control and safe working.
- Ways they can personally minimise the risk of catching and spreading infection both within their role and business-wide. For example, disinfecting POS systems in between use by different team members, or washing their hands at regular intervals.
- What to do if they suspect they, or another team member, has caught COVID-19. This should include who they should notify, where the nearest testing centre is, and when it will be safe for them to return to work.
- All staff will be supported by the business if they need to self-isolate. They will not be put under any pressure (by management or team members) to return to work before they are fit/ready to do so.
- Who workers can speak to if they have any concerns regarding COVID-19 or the new procedures in place.
- Ways to access mental health support if required. This could be signposting employees to locally available mental health support, to an internal Mental Health First Aider, or providing all employees with [mental health first aid training](#).





### Providing support for delivery drivers and riders

The lockdown and closure of our physical sites has meant that many establishments are providing delivery services for their products.

The following advice will help protect your workers, delivery drivers and customers from infection:

- ▶ Providing drivers and riders with hand sanitiser containing 60% alcohol to clean their hands in between each delivery or collection. They should also be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water as often as possible.
- ▶ Introduce contactless collection points for delivery staff where possible to minimise contact between them and your staff.
- ▶ Encourage contactless delivery to customers where possible. When taking an order for delivery, request that the customer provides a delivery safe place.
- ▶ Discourage cash on delivery and encourage online or over phone card payments.

### Management considerations to support your workforce throughout COVID-19

You'll want to make your workforce feel safe and comfortable at work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help you do this, we've pulled together some inspiring ideas from the UK and abroad that other employers are currently implementing to support their workforces during COVID-19:

- ▶ Display posters in staff areas to remind teams of the health, safety and infection control procedures in place at work. These could also include details of the best person to contact, for example an Infection Control Officer, if they have any concerns.
- ▶ Make sure staff members' phone numbers and emergency contact details are kept up to date.
- ▶ Reduce the number of available menu items for food and drink serving establishments. This will allow kitchen staff to follow safe distancing procedures by streamlining production lines. It's worth noting, it is highly unlikely that COVID-19 can be transferred by food products.
- ▶ Introduce creative resourcing solutions so there are fewer people in the workplace at any one time to reduce the risk of infection. This could include staggering shifts or having A and B teams.
- ▶ Recommend that staff members only wear their uniforms or work clothes whilst on the premises. They shouldn't travel to and from work in their workwear.
- ▶ Ask staff members to consider avoiding or minimising the time they spend using public transport to get to work for their own safety. There may be an opportunity for them to work at the nearest available business site for the time being (which may not be their usual place of work).
- ▶ Consider using contactless thermometers to check staff members' temperature before entering the premises. If they have a temperature, government guidelines advise they should self-isolate for 7 days.

## Keeping your servers and customers safe

We understand that you'll be eager to welcome customers back into your establishment as soon as possible. Your customers and those entering your premises will want to see that you're implementing all the right measures to help protect both themselves and your staff that they're interacting with.



People entering your establishment won't just want to be told that you're doing all the right things and following all the right procedures - they'll want to see it happening too:

- ▶ Cleaning and disinfecting your premise used to be something that was hidden from the customers' view. Now, it's likely that people will feel safer walking into a building if they see comprehensive cleaning taking place frequently.
- ▶ Customers should have free, easy access to hand sanitiser containing 60% alcohol when entering your premises to clean their hands.
- ▶ Introducing visible social distancing measures for your premises. For example, using plexiglass screens at serving locations, social distancing markers on the floor, someone on the door to manage the number of people entering the building, etc.
- ▶ Provide your servers with appropriate disposal protective personal equipment (PPE) for their job, for example, gloves and face masks. Whilst previously this may have been alarming, in the current situation this can help reassure and protect both your workforce and customers against the spread of the virus.
- ▶ Encourage payment transactions to be completely contactless. This could include requesting that customers use contactless card payments (the contactless payment limit was recently increased to £45 per transaction), mobile payments, disinfecting a chip and pin pad after every use, and offering e-receipts instead of paper to reduce potential contact.
- ▶ Disinfectant and disposable cleaning wipes should be made available for customers to use alongside self-service/touch screen terminals.
- ▶ If you provide a food or drink delivery/collection service, orders should not be taken in person on the premises. Orders can be submitted online or over the phone prior to collection and you should offer staggered collection times. To mitigate the risk of infection, you could introduce an app-based digital menu, ordering and payment system with an instore contact-free designated collection point.





## Communicating with your customers and others entering your premises

It's important that you make your customers and others feel safe and comfortable when walking into your premises. Many will likely be concerned about spreading and catching COVID-19 for some time to come, so communicating clearly, visibly and honestly is likely to reassure them.

Recommendations for communicating with customers and those entering your premises:

- ▶ Be open, transparent and honest about all the new clinical cleaning and infection control procedures your establishment is now following. Make these easily available to view on your website, social media, e-newsletters and within your premises.
- ▶ Promote the training that your workers have undertaken in clinical cleaning procedures and other relevant subject areas. Show your customers that your workforce is constantly being upskilled and share what training is taking place.
- ▶ Make cleaning schedules and completion details visible for customers to view.
- ▶ Display information posters for customers about how they control and reduce the risk of spreading infection/disease whilst they're at your venue.
- ▶ Educate your workforce on how to answer any FAQs that may be asked about what precautions and actions your business is taking with regards to COVID-19.
- ▶ Teach your workforce what actions to take if they suspect someone on the premises may have COVID-19. This could include refusing entry, asking for someone to leave, or requesting management intervention.

## Management considerations to keep your servers and customers safe throughout COVID-19

We've collated a handful of ideas that other establishments are currently implementing to try to reassure their customers. You'll know your customer base better than everyone, so you'll know what will work best for them.

Some of the ideas include:

- ▶ Those attempting to enter a premise have been asked to sign a health declaration form by some establishments in Hong Kong. This shows that you're taking the health of those entering the building, including your staff, seriously.
- ▶ Contactless thermometers are being used by some establishments to check the temperature of everyone attempting to enter a premise. If someone has a temperature, they're turned away from entering the establishment.
- ▶ In some countries, table service businesses have introduced safe distancing measures between their covers (World Health Organisation recommend 1 metre). This has been done by either reducing the overall number of tables within an establishment or by keeping every other table empty during service.



## Training for your workforce

HIT Training has developed two training courses aimed at supporting your workforce to understand the principles of infection control and safe working. These courses include specific measures that can be implemented to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within your establishment.

## **Principles of Infection Control and Safe Working**

HIT Training's experts use their in-depth knowledge and skills to deliver this unique online course on the Principles of Infection Control and Safe Working. The course adapts infection control and prevention measures used within healthcare settings for a more commercial setting to limit, control and prevent the spread of infection in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This half-day course provides delegates with the knowledge to confidently follow infection prevention and control principles within the workforce, including how to keep themselves, the working environment and customers safe. Attendees will learn how to instil confidence in customers attending establishments about the measures to keep them and others safe.

This online course is suitable for employees of all staff levels as it provides delegates with the solid foundations to limit, control and prevent the spread of infection in the workplace.

## **Level 2 Award in the Prevention and Control of Infection**

Aimed at Supervisory and Managers of establishments, the Level 2 Award in the Prevention and Control of Infection is a distance learning course that allows learners to develop comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the prevention and control of infections, including COVID-19. This includes knowing how to adhere to and implement various legislation, policies, systems and procedures relating to prevention and control of infections.

Learners will also understand the importance of conducting risk assessments, using personal protective equipment (PPE) effectively, the causes and transmission of infection, cleaning best practice, good waste management practice and decontamination.

**To enquire about either of these courses please contact HIT Training via our freephone 0800 093 5892 or email [info@hittraining.co.uk](mailto:info@hittraining.co.uk)**





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