



Image: Ginger Monkey, Torquay

# Minimum Standard Guidelines for the Management of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Food & drink businesses open for take-away and delivery services

Version 1.0

Date: 9 April 2020

## Introduction

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) advises that restaurants and cafés must close unless they offer takeaway or food and beverage delivery services. This ruling also applies to restaurants, cafés, workplace canteens within workplaces and shopping centres.

If you offer takeaway or food and beverage delivery services the following guidelines will assist you with managing your business during this challenging time. The following content includes protection measures to keep you and your workers safe and how to comply with the government's current restrictions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Physical distancing and prevention of spread of COVID-19 via contaminated surfaces is important in your business. These guidelines have been developed to help support and provide advice for businesses within the Southern Grampians Shire to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

As you would be aware **this situation is changing rapidly**, and it is difficult to keep up to date with the latest information and advice so please ensure you regularly visit the [Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Disease Website](#).

## Business support

Businesses are facing unprecedented challenges as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, but there is support available. Take a look at options available on Council's webpage dedicated to supporting business during the COVID-19 pandemic at <https://www.visitgreaterhamilton.com.au/business-support/>

## Required actions

As a minimum you must comply with the requirements set out by the Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with the Deputy Chief Health Officer Directions.

Please visit and read the following DHHS coronavirus (COVID-19) webpages:

### Directions from the Chief Health Officer

- Restricted Activity Directions - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/state-emergency>

### Physical distancing and other transmission reduction measures - coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Actions for organisations, workplaces or employers - [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures#actions-for-organisations-workplaces-or-employers](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures#actions-for-organisations-workplaces-or-employers)
- Actions for food and beverage services - [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures#actions-for-food-and-beverage-services](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-transmission-reduction-measures#actions-for-food-and-beverage-services)

If you are unable to comply with these measures then you must close your business.

## Takeaway / home delivery services and your food registration

Take away and home deliveries can be carried out under your existing food registration. Food safety information for transporting/delivering food is available in your Food Safety Program (FSP).

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) FSP for Class 2 retail and food service businesses, no. 1, version 3 includes this information in Section 9.

Other FSP templates will have similar information. Refer to your program for detailed information.

In particular, when transporting or delivering food it is important to:

- Protect the food from contamination by ensuring the food is sealed in food grade packaging. Ensure vehicles used for deliveries are regularly cleaned.
- Maintain the food at a temperature that keeps it safe i.e. minimising time in transit or for longer deliveries consider using eskies and ice for cold deliveries, or thermal insulated bags for hot foods.
- Provide relevant information about the food. Take away foods are generally not required to be labelled, however if a customer declares an allergy than ensure you have a system to manage this and associated risks.

Please refer to the latest version of the [DHHS food safety program template](#).

## Food delivery requirements

For the safety of both staff and customers, consider some of these options for your home delivery process:

- Minimise the sharing of cars wherever possible. This could be by allowing staff to use their own vehicle or assigning one staff member to do the home deliveries.
- If the one car is to be used by multiple staff then implement procedures for cleaning the car surfaces between staff members.
- Provide hand sanitiser in the car.
- Implement a cashless payment system (over the internet or payment over the phone). Do not accept cash payments on delivery.
- If the customer is someone who is quarantined or self-isolating then arrange to drop the meals at the door without any person to person contact (you may wish to implement this procedure for all customers).
- Delivery drivers need to take extra precautions and ensure that when returning to the food business that they thoroughly wash hands with soap and water and dry with paper towel.
- The use of an alcohol based hand sanitiser may be used when back in the vehicle.
- Consider the use of online delivery platform and services.

## Takeaway requirements

Implement measures to promote social distancing when customers arrive to pick up their orders as follows:

- In an enclosed space there should be on average no more than one person per four square metres of floor space. This is a directive by the Victorian Chief Health Officer and Victorian Government.

- Provide a clearly visible sign for customers and staff stating how many people are allowed in your premises.
- Place tape or a physical barrier in front of the counter area to help keep the 1.5m distance between customers and staff.
- Request that customers don't congregate in the front server area and that a 1.5m distance be kept between people at all times.
- Remove tables and chairs (including on the footpath) so people aren't encouraged to sit together. If tables and chairs are not removable, place tape around them.
- Place markers on the floor 1.5m apart where customers are required to stand whilst waiting for orders.
- Instruct customers to wait outside once their order has been placed maintaining the 1.5m separation from others.
- Implement a cashless payment system or handle money with gloves or wash hands immediately after handling money. Online payments prior to entering the premises is another good option to minimise interaction.
- Provide hand sanitiser at the cash register to allow staff to use if required.

## Food handler hygiene

Food handlers and staff must pay special attention to their health and hygiene practices as follows:

- Clean your hands frequently with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash them with soap and water and dry with paper towel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.
- Minimise the risk of cross contamination by avoiding touching areas that have been in direct contact with the customer.
- Management should provide training on food handler hygiene practices.
- Maximise separation of your staff from each other and from customers.

The Food Safety Program and Food Safety Supervisor are good resources for this information.

## Notification to management of illness

***Do not work if you are unwell. Send any sick staff home immediately.***

Inform your staff of the responsibility to notify you of them becoming a confirmed case of COVID-19, close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, recent overseas travel or other respiratory related illness.

They should also inform you of any other illness that may impact them being a food handler, for example influenza and gastrointestinal related illness.

In this instance food handlers must ***immediately stop working*** and seek medical attention if necessary.

## Minimise staff contact

You may like to consider forming teams with your staff who work together on the same shift, and do not cross over with other teams working different days.

This **may** mean that if a staff member from one team gets sick and close contacts need to self-isolate, only that group of workers would have to self-isolate, leaving your other teams to continue operating and filling the shifts of the isolated staff.

This has not been a guideline provided to us by DHHS, and in the event this happens, DHHS may consider all staff in one business to be close contacts regardless, and direct all staff from the premises to self-isolate – this would ultimately be a DHHS decision, one which Councils will have no input into.

## Do staff have to wear masks and/or gloves?

Masks – the current advice is that masks are not necessary. For people that can practice good physical distancing and hygiene in their workplace, masks are not required.

Gloves - Gloves should only be used if part of the businesses normal procedures for food safety i.e. when handling ready to eat foods. Similarly to masks, the focus should instead be on good physical distancing and hygiene. Gloves can cause more of an issue as they are often not changed regularly enough and can become a source of contamination.

## Disposable gloves best practice

Disposable gloves may be used for one task only, to prevent the transfer of pathogenic microorganisms or other contaminants. For example, gloves should be changed between handling raw food and handling ready-to-eat food, or between activities such as cleaning or removing garbage and handling food.

Once a glove is removed from a hand, it cannot be reused. Hands should be thoroughly washed between glove changes to prevent transferring contamination from the used gloves to the fresh ones. (Reference: Safe Food Australia - A guide to the Food Safety Standards)

## General food safety advice

It is important that food businesses maintain good food handling practices at all times.

Things to remember are:

- Wash hands between handling raw and cooked foods.
- Avoid cross contamination between raw or undercooked foods and cooked or ready to eat foods in the kitchen.
- Thoroughly cook and properly handle potentially hazardous foods.
- Use all food within use-by dates and adequately rotate stock in the kitchen.
- Regularly clean and sanitise all food contact surfaces.
- Practice good hand hygiene – wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds and dry with paper towel.
- Take all practicable measures to prevent food contamination by food handlers.

- Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, and wash your hands thoroughly after.
- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness, such as coughing and sneezing.
- Replace plastic fly strips at your shop entrance with alternative pest control measures. Otherwise, ensure fly strips are cleaned and sanitised regularly as these are often touched by customers and can become contaminated.

Resources can be found here: [food safety rules poster](#) and [keep hands clean and food safety poster](#)

## Cleaning advice

You must keep your place of business clean and sanitised by taking the following measures:

- If you think a surface may be contaminated, clean it with a common household disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others.
- Clean shared surfaces more frequently. This could include door handles (front door, vehicle doors and other surfaces inside the vehicle that are frequently touched, fridges/freezers, toilets/bathrooms), front servery counter and EFTpos keypad.
- Increase cleaning regimes for all other areas within the food business.
- Wash and sanitise all food preparation containers, utensils, chopping boards etc in the dishwasher or as per guidelines in the Food Safety Program.

Please refer to the DHHS [cleaning procedures](#).

## Cleaning Products

Use a disinfectant for which the manufacturer claims antiviral activity (meaning it can kill viruses). Chlorine-based (bleach) disinfectants are one product that is commonly used. Other options include common household disinfectants or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol (for example, methylated spirits).

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for appropriate dilution and use.

### Chlorine dilutions calculator

Household bleach comes in a variety of strengths. The concentration of active ingredient — hypochlorous acid — can be found on the product label.

Contact time is usually 10–30 seconds but check the manufacturer's instructions.

Throw diluted bleach away after 24 hours.

Table 1. Dilutions using household liquid bleach (with 4% available chlorine as written on the label).

<i>Household bleach 4% available chlorine</i>	<i>Add the following amounts of bleach to the water to give the required concentration</i>
<i>Volume of water to which chlorine is added</i>	<i>1000ppm</i>
1 litre	26.3ml
5 litres	125ml

<i>Household bleach 4% available chlorine</i>	<i>Add the following amounts of bleach to the water to give the required concentration</i>
<i>Volume of water to which chlorine is added</i>	<i>1000ppm</i>
10 litres	250ml

Table 2. Dilutions using household liquid bleach (with 12.5% available chlorine as written on the label).

<i>Commercial grade bleach 12.5% available chlorine</i>	<i>Add the following amounts of bleach to the water to give the required concentration</i>
<i>Volume of water to which chlorine is added</i>	<i>1000ppm</i>
1 litre	8.4ml
5 litres	42ml
10 litres	84ml

For other concentrations of chlorine-based sanitisers not listed in the table above, a dilutions calculator can be found on the [department's website](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/chlorine-dilutions-calculator) <www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/infection-control-guidelines/chlorine-dilutions-calculator> .

Please also refer to the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, [Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce COVID-19 transmission](#).

## Physical distancing

Ensure physical distancing within you work area, which means at least 1.5 metres and no more than one person per 4 square metres.

### One way traffic flow

Where possible promote a one way flow throughout the store. If you have multiple entrances, dedicate one as an entrance and the other as an exit.

Consider arrow markings on the floor to indicate the direction customers should walk throughout the store. The purpose of this is to avoid customers having to walk around each other or towards one another. This will hopefully minimise congestion.

### Social distancing markings

Discourage people queuing where possible. Where people may queue e.g. entrances, service counter and pick up area, provide space markings on the floor at a minimum of 1.5m apart to indicate where people are to stand. Markings need to be bright coloured or of a pattern that stands out. Also advise customers to always maintain 1.5m distance between other people. Signage should be used to reiterate the message and bring this requirement to the customer's attention.

## Physical Barriers

If practical to do so, you may want to consider providing a physical barrier such as Perspex between customers and staff. This is particularly effective in narrow areas where 1.5m separation is not possible.

Where physical barriers are not practical to install, you may want to use barrier tape or furniture which can be placed between customers and service counter to ensure 1.5m can be maintained.

## Communication with customers

It is important that you maintain contact with your customers and the community via means such as social media and website updates. This is an opportunity for you to advise the community of any policy and procedure changes, in particular ones that will impact your customers.

We have seen social media being used to update customers on stock supply issues, changes in procedures such as moving to cashless payments only, and asking the community to do the right thing by maintaining physical distancing and whenever possible sending 1 family member to the premises at a time.

The use of these platforms can be beneficial in demonstrating to the community that you are taking the COVID-19 issues seriously. Providing regular updates to your customers, particularly as things change, will help them stay informed and know what to do when they visit your premises.

## Closure of a food business

We understand the difficulty our food premises have at this time.

We are currently not closing any registrations on our systems and will continue to keep you informed via email as this situation continues.

If you have closed your business voluntarily for a period of time and are looking to re-open in line with the restrictions it would be good to hear from you so that we can provide you advice to get started again and discuss the extra procedures you need in place to manage the spread of COVID-19.

If your business is closing it is important to ensure that the premises is left in a manner that will not attract pests or cause odour concerns. Some things to consider are:

- Ensure all food is removed, in particular perishables that may rot and cause odour and attract pests. Check with suppliers regarding certain long life products as to whether they will take some products back e.g. soft drink or crisp companies may take back some products.
- Take home food items that can be used at home, or send home with staff who will use the items.
- Make arrangements for all bins to be emptied and all waste removed from the premises.
- If for whatever reason food or waste cannot be removed, consider freezing it in a chest freezer until such time as it can be removed from the premises (provided power is not to be disconnected).
- Make an inventory and take photos of all products you discard for potential insurance claims, this will need to be discussed with your individual provider.
- If power will be disconnected, or you are planning to turn off refrigerators/freezers, ensure each unit is thoroughly cleaned and the door left ajar to prevent mould growth.

- Remove oil from any fryers.
- Clean all cooking equipment inside and out.
- Deep clean floors, walls and benches particularly under and behind cooking equipment to remove any build ups of food waste.
- Arrange for sanitary receptacles to be emptied in any toilet facilities.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. Can businesses continue to use re-usable cups?

There is currently no evidence to suggest the need to change a business' policy and there is no evidence to suggest there is any benefit in switching to disposable cups. However, a food handler does not have to accept reusable containers from customers, especially if they are dirty. This is a risk that should already be managed for other foodborne illnesses and viruses.

### Q. Are tables and chairs permitted outside fixed premises for customers to choose whether they wish to consume their takeaway onsite?

No. Takeaway food by its very definition, is to be taken away and consumed elsewhere.

### Q. If suppliers have run out of alcohol swabs, what can be used instead?

Boiling water can be used to sanitise equipment, including probe thermometers. The business should refer to its food safety program.

### Q. Can a customer place an order online and pick up in the store?

Yes. Physical distancing must be maintained.

### Q. Are food premises allowed to use outdoor furniture if those using the furniture have takeaway and meet physical distancing requirements?

No.

### Q. How long are these guidelines in effect?

Until further notice. The guidelines will continue to be reviewed as further information about COVID-19 is available or further restrictions that affect this advice is applied. You will be notified of any change accordingly.

### Q. Where can I find more information?

- Southern Grampians Shire at [www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.sthgrampians.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
- Stay informed directly with DHHS via [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus) or the 24 hour hotline 1800 675 398.
- [Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce COVID-19 transmission](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au), available at [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au)
- [Vic Health](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au) [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand - FSANZ at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- [World Health Organisation](http://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus) at [www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus](http://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus)
- [Premier of Victoria](http://www.premier.vic.gov.au) at [www.premier.vic.gov.au](http://www.premier.vic.gov.au)

- Business Victoria at [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au)

## References:

- Department of Health and Human Services - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand - <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au>

You can contact the Southern Grampians Shire Environmental Health Team on 5573 0244.

*Environmental Health Professionals Australia wishes to thank and commend the Surf Coast Shire Council for developing and allowing us to provide this document to EHPA members.*

