

Food Alert

Light at the end of
the Covid-19 tunnel
what do I need to do now?



Light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel – what do I need to do now?

The long and winding road out of lockdown and social restrictions has been laid out by the Government, with many caveats in place. But safe to say, there is light at the end of the Covid tunnel, with outdoor hospitality and self-catering holidays (household only) allowed to open from Monday 12th April.

Indoor hospitality and all domestic holidays have cautiously been given the thumbs up from Monday 17th May.

As an operator, what does this mean in terms of being COVID- 19 compliant? What plans do you need to set in motion to make sure you are ready to safely throw open your gardens and then your doors to social hungry customers?

At Food Alert we have been helping our customers throughout the pandemic and here our team of experts offer you their guidance and checklists to create a Covid safe venue in time for opening day.

Stage 1: 8th March onward

- Schools will open for all pupils
- 29th March: outdoors gatherings of six/two households will be allowed
- 29th March: outdoor sports facilities can reopen

Stage 2: 12th April at the earliest

- Non-essential retail and personal care will reopen, including self-catering accommodation, public buildings and hairdressers
- Outdoor hospitality and takeaway will reopen
- Indoor leisure will reopen, including gyms and swimming pools
- Most outdoors settings will reopen

Stage 3: 17th May at the earliest

- Most of social contact rules will be lifted outdoors, aside from a limit of 30 people on the size of gatherings
- Mixing others indoors will be allowed for 2 households
- Indoor hospitality will be able to open with the rule of 6
- Performance and sport events will be back with limits

Stage 4: 24th June at the earliest

- All legal limits on social contact will be removed
- Remaining closed sectors will be allowed to reopen, including hotels and nightclubs
- Restrictions on large events will be lifted
- All limits on weddings and life events will be removed

Preparing your business for re-opening

Opening and closing doors on hospitality has become the norm over the past 12 months, but the hope is we will be back to restriction free trading from June 2021. In the meantime, there are two provisional key dates in our diaries: 12th April for outdoor hospitality and indoors from 17th May.

Maintaining the highest levels of hygiene is going to be key for both customer and employee confidence, and many of the same protocols will still be in place following the Hands, Face, Space mantra.



Hands

Update your cleaning checklists to reflect the increased need for cleaning of high touch areas such as door handles, front of house counters, toilets and back of house areas, using disinfectants and hand sanitisers that comply with BS EN 1276. Digital checklists are recommended.



Face

Face coverings will remain mandatory in all public areas. Staff in customer facing roles must wear face coverings which cover the nose and mouth. Customers will also be required to wear face coverings when on the premises except when seated to eat or drink.



Space

The rule of 6 / two household will be in operation. Social distancing measures will also have to be adhered to, including one-way systems and table service only. From 17th May outdoor hospitality will be extended to 30 persons and indoor hospitality will be rule of 6 / 2 households.



Ventilation

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air and therefore reduces the risks from airborne transmission. This is why outdoor venues are opening first.

Indoors ventilation can be improved by opening windows and vents and airing rooms prior to use.

Mechanical ventilation should be set to fresh air and recirculation should be minimised.



CHECKLIST



- **Assess Risk:** Remember that controls may have changed since you first documented your COVID-19 risk assessments – ensure that these are reviewed and accurately reflect your control measures in place.
- **Limit Suppliers / Allergen Control:** Managing your suppliers is critical, especially as replacement ingredients are likely to be added to your delivery or you may need to use new suppliers as others may no longer be operating. Make sure you have a robust system in place whereby you review and are alerted of new/replacement products and allergens, so the information can be logged to your central allergen management system.
- **Employee Bubbles/Testing:** Once opened, it is recommended that you split your staff into separate team bubbles – Team A and Team B – who work the same shift patterns. This will help to limit the impact if someone is a confirmed case of COVID-19.
If your business has over 50 employees you can register to order tests for your employees without symptoms. Other businesses with less than 50 employees should **contact their local authority** for free tests where available.
- **Recording Contact Details:** In England it is a legal requirement to display the NHS Test & Trace QR Code poster, so that customers with the NHS COVID-19 app can use them to check-in.
- **Team Training:** Use the next few weeks to make sure your teams are fully trained on all hygiene and health & safety topics. Are they clear on the arrangements in place and what is required of them and others? Are you confident that you can provide your team with courses that can be done remotely?

Be Covid compliant

There's so much to think about between now and opening and pulling everything together to be COVID-19 secure is a huge task. But don't worry, we have your back. Our team of safety experts have created the **COVID-19 Standard**, designed specifically to help hospitality business owners get back on their feet and back to business.

The COVID-19 Standard covers key topics such as:

- Cleaning protocols
- Physical distancing
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) Physical distancing
- Compliance documentation and more



Our Standard is supported by a Certification Scheme to verify that the controls laid down have been successfully applied in your business. And when you've completed the scheme, you'll get a 'COVID-19 Standard' certificate and sticker you can display to prove your compliance and give your customers and any inspectors the reassurance they need that you are operating the highest hygiene and safety standards.

A note on inspections

As well as the in-house checks that may have lapsed, inspection schedules may also have drifted. For many during lockdown it was not possible for organisations to have the relevant engineers attend to carry out inspections such as fire alarms, asbestos surveys, legionella checks, thorough examinations of lifting equipment etc. Again, these inspections and checks are essential for protecting the health and safety of people and should be re-established. Overdue inspections should be booked as a matter of priority and plans should be made for future delays in attendance – such as staggering of inspections to ensure there are always items available for use.

How can Food Alert help?

Throughout the pandemic our team of Hygiene and Health & Safety consultants have helped hundreds of **pubs, bars and restaurants** adapt their businesses so they can survive during the pandemic. Whether introducing a take-away model, delivery or home kit service – Food Alert helped to ensure they were on top of their regulatory responsibilities.

If you'd like the support of our expert team, simply give us a call on **020 7244 1900** and we will be happy to discuss your COVID-19 needs and general compliance requirements.

Or **get in touch** with us online and we'll call you back at a time that suits you.