

GUIDELINES FOR RE-OPENING

# Business Conference and Business Event Venues



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice



Riailas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



**Fáilte Ireland**  
National Tourism Development Authority

## Note

This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new Government advice and changes to protocols when they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, Work Safely Protocol and the updated COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead, and based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines will be included throughout the document.

The Tourism and Hospitality Sector Guidelines, aligned with the Work Safely Protocol, have been developed to assist businesses to apply guidance to their specific activities. The guidelines are regularly updated by Fáilte Ireland to reflect the imposition or lifting of restrictions as decided by the Government.

## Disclaimer

The information contained within these operational re-opening guidelines can change from time to time. It must not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document must independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarised themselves with the [Work Safely Protocol](#) prior to re-opening and implemented all relevant requirements.

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## Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening

It is recommended that businesses also view the [Fáilte Ireland Overview Guidelines to Re-opening](#) in addition to this sector specific guideline document, as further information relating to COVID-19 control measures, Health & Safety measures, hygiene measures, etc. are outlined.

**Revision History:**

Version	Date Changes	Changes from previous version
1.1	01/03/2021	Update to the COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 – The Path Ahead.
1.0	17/02/2021	Document Published

# COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021

## The Path Ahead



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On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, the Government published an updated plan for managing COVID-19 - [Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#). This document sets out the Government's approach to the next 'Phase' and sets out our path forward as a country. The future trajectory of the virus is subject to uncertainties, and there are unknowns relating to variants, vaccine effectiveness and uptake levels. Ireland's COVID-19 situation will be subject to ongoing review, taking all of these uncertainties into account. Prevailing Public Health advice will determine how and when restrictions can be eased.

The numbered framework of levels outlined in the 'Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19' provides an appropriate mechanism to manage the pandemic, and it will continue to be applied in a flexible manner, adapting measures to address the Public Health risk at a given time. Each numbered level will provide clarity on what restrictive measures are appropriate based on the pattern and progress of COVID-19 in the country, or in a defined geographical area at a particular time.

It will be possible for different geographical areas and counties to be at a different Level to the National Level, depending on the incidence of the virus in that particular region. Businesses must ensure that they keep up to date with the restrictive measures in place within their county or region. The levels outlined in this plan are subject to prevailing Public Health advice. Further measures for each level may be implemented in line with Government advice for certain regions and counties.

To view the latest information on COVID-19 in Ireland click [HERE](#).

Click the levels below for a comprehensive list of  
restrictive measures outlined on Gov.ie



### Protective Measures

Tourism & Hospitality businesses **must** ensure that the ongoing protective measures below are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical Distancing Protocols     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Table Service only               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cleaning & Disinfection Protocols | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Face Coverings / Masks           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maximum Capacity Limits           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 Signage & Communication |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Way Traffic Systems           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise Control Measures           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 Contact Tracing          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Ventilation Measures |

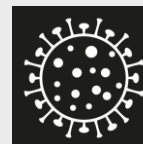
These protective measures are outlined in further detail throughout these Re-Opening Guidelines.



## COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead

Social Gatherings - Outside private homes/ gardens	No social / family gatherings should take place.
Weddings	Up to 6 guests can attend a wedding ceremony and reception (regardless of venue).
Paid Tourist Accommodation	Open only for those with <b>essential non-social and non-tourist purposes</b> .
Gyms, Pools & Leisure Facilities	Closed.
Transport	<b>Capacity restricted to 25%.</b> Avoid Public Transport - Essential workers and essential purposes only. Walk or cycle where possible. <a href="#">Face coverings must be worn.</a>
Domestic Travel	<b>Stay at home.</b> (Exercise within 5km of your home).
Café's, Restaurants & Pubs (including Hotel Restaurants and Bars)	<b>Closed.</b> Take away or delivery only.  Hotels may provide food and beverage services to residents only with a requirement to serve a <b>substantial meal</b> when alcohol is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises.
Wet Pubs	Closed.
Formal & Informal Events	Not permitted.
Live Music & Performances	<b>No live or loud music permitted.</b> No live performances are permitted.
Closing Time	Food & Beverage facility must be cleared of all patrons by <b>11:30pm</b> .
Nightclubs	Closed.
Attractions	Closed.
Activities	Closed.
Outdoor Parks & Play Areas	Open with protective measures.
<b>These are Controlled Environments with a named event organiser, owner or manager.</b> For example: business, training events, conferences, events in theatres and cinemas or other arts events (excluding sport).	
Organised Indoor Events / Gatherings	No organised indoor events or gatherings should take place.
Organised Outdoor Events / Gatherings	No organised outdoor events or gatherings should take place.
Meetings	Non-Social Meetings, Training and Educational programmes only permitted to take place when considered an <b>essential service</b> .

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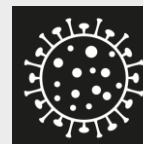


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**NOTE:** These guidelines have been developed for meetings, exhibitions, conferences and business event venues of all sizes. Not all references will relate to each event or venue type. These guidelines should be applied as appropriate to your business or event.

For small meetings, please also consult the Guidelines for Re-opening Hotels and Guesthouses on [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie).

While the term delegate is used throughout this document, this should be taken to refer to delegate, attendee or participant.

Destination Management Companies (DMCs), Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs) and other similar organisations should ensure that all events, venues and suppliers chosen adhere to these and other relevant guidelines. These organisations should ensure they work with tourism and hospitality businesses that are compliant with the [Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Safety Charter](#), reassuring clients that all health and safety protocols are being followed to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



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# 1. Introduction: Meeting & Overcoming the COVID-19 Challenge

## COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge for the tourism sector.

Before re-opening, businesses will need to review how they work and employ new practices and procedures to ensure everyone stays safe. As a result, Fáilte Ireland, has developed operational guidelines in line with the Health Service Executive (HSE), Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

As part of this, Fáilte Ireland has created this set of specific guidelines to help you to re-open your conference and event venue (in co-operation with the Event / Conference Organiser / PCO). You can be reassured that these recommendations are underpinned by advice made available from the HSA, HSE, HPSC, FSAI, World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies.

Businesses must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#) which has been developed under the aegis of the Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005. This protocol was first published in May 2020 and updated in November 2020. Businesses are now required to review their existing advice and guidance to ensure it is in line with the protocol. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) is the compliance body and has full powers as set out in this legislation designated in relation to the implementation of the Work Safely Protocol. Non-compliance can result in the closure of a business.

Venue bars are required to serve a substantial meal under the definition currently in the [Intoxicating Liquor Act 1962](#), as well as meeting other features expected of a restaurant. This definition provides that “the meal is such as might be expected to be served as a main midday or evening meal or as a main course in either such meal” and is of a kind for which it would be reasonable to charge not less than €9.00.

Businesses must keep a record of the time and date of arrival at the premises of a group/sole customer and the name and telephone number of the lead person in a group/sole customer for COVID-19 contact tracing.

Current legislation states, businesses and services where intoxicating liquor is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises must also keep a record of the substantial meals ordered by each group/sole customer.

For further details on food service in the context of this current legislation, please refer to the [Guidelines for Re-Opening Restaurants & Cafés](#).

The guidelines were developed based on the following considerations:

- **Restructuring operations**  
Conference and event venues of all types need to adapt their operations, review employee practices and consider the design of their business to provide a safe environment for delegates and employees and ensure physical distancing\* and the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. Further information on reviewing employee practices can be found in the [Work Safely Protocol](#) e.g. consider any new additional measures for employees who are deemed high risk.
- **Putting dedicated resources in place**  
Conference and event venues must ensure that they have dedicated personnel to implement and operate a robust system that prevents the spread of COVID-19. Equally importantly, businesses need to put processes in place that can deal with individual and multiple cases of the disease that may occur.
- **Adapting and enhancing hygiene practices**  
Conference and event venues must adapt and implement enhanced procedures in HACCP, general cleaning, storage and cleaning of equipment. In particular, they must introduce and implement touchless solutions where possible. References to HACCP in this guidance are for the purposes of food safety and not the prevention of COVID-19.
- **Ventilation**  
The proven importance of ensuring adequate air circulation should be factored into operational practices. Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 2](#).
- **Focusing on best practice in food and beverage service**  
Conference and event venues must follow best practice in service and physical distancing to promote the health of employees and delegates.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.



### ■ Food and beverage service businesses as 'controlled' environments

Public and private venues or workplaces are considered controlled environments. This includes food and beverage businesses such as hotels, restaurants and cafés and pubs and bars that serve a substantial meal. Conference and event venues may be considered 'controlled environments' where delegates are seated, have booked in advance and sessions last no longer than 105 minutes once other mitigating factors as outlined in [Appendix 1](#) are in place.

Uncontrolled environments are settings where people have open access to the premises and generally do not know each other and are unlikely to be in close contact with each other for an extended period of time. Examples include supermarkets, retail stores, shopping malls and takeaway-only food outlets.

Additional details on controlled and uncontrolled environments can be found in [Appendix 1](#)

### ■ Food Preparation Area

Current legislation states that a "food preparation area" means an indoor part of such premises which is structurally adapted and used for the purpose of preparing food for consumption by members of the public on or off the premises concerned and, for the avoidance of doubt, does not include a tent, caravan, vehicle, storage container or other temporary structure.

If your business serves food, you are required to have a designated food preparation area as outlined above.

### ■ Food Safety and COVID-19 Safety

There are no reports of transmission of COVID-19 via food. The main mode of transmission is from person to person. Food business operators must continue to apply their food safety management systems, based on the principles of HACCP. References to HACCP in this guidance are for the purposes of food safety and not the prevention of COVID-19.

The requirement in legislation is to have a Food Safety Management System in place based on the principles of HACCP. ISO 340:2007 is one of the available approaches to achieve this. A Health and Safety statement was already required and is still a requirement. The COVID-19 Response plan is also a requirement of the Work Safely Protocol.

In addition, food and beverage business operators will be required to introduce a COVID-19 safety management system which will include enhanced hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, staff training and health checks, as well

as physical distancing. This is to protect against the transmission of the virus to or between staff, customers and other people who enter their premises. Any COVID-19 precautions must not compromise food safety.

For advice and information on food safety during COVID-19 and for food businesses re-opening, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) website is a useful resource which is regularly updated. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

### ● Guidance on International Travel

Current Government advice is available [HERE](#).

The physical distancing measures outlined in these guidelines are based on the HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses. Physical distancing of 2 metres\* should be maintained. However if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre\* in [controlled environments](#) if the risk mitigation requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

These guidelines have been created in line with the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business as well as the updated [COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#). This is a document that will evolve in line with the roadmap, taking into account any changes to the restrictions or physical distancing.

While we have attempted to cover all relevant issues, you must bear in mind that this is a non-exhaustive document and it may not cover all situations that you may encounter. As circumstances change, any procedures you implement must be monitored to ensure they remain up-to-date and in line with international best practice guidance and the Government's Public Health advice.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## 2. Business Response/Action Plan

**Creating an Action Plan will help to clarify what is required to overcome the threat of COVID-19 and give your employees, delegates and all third party personnel on-site at a conference or event confidence that they are safe.**

In developing an Action Plan, the first step the conference and event venue management team must take is to familiarise themselves with the latest guidelines from the following sources:

- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)
- Irish Government Departments
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)
- World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information from these sources will help to shape your plan of action. You must also:

- **Complete a risk assessment** to identify what operational changes you need to make in your business. This should include an occupational health and safety risk assessment. Further information can be found [HERE](#).
- **Review of all standard operating procedures (SOPs)** to define and note what you are changing.
- **Create a communication plan** to inform employees and delegates of what you are changing, what you need them to do and how you expect everyone to act and behave.
- The HSA provides templates, checklists and advice on returning to work safely protocols. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.
- **A number of activities will require review** e.g. workflows, operations, etc. For advice on re-opening, visit the FSAI website. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.
- **Co-operate and communicate** with the conference / event organiser on your Action Plan.

The plan must reassure employees and delegates that safeguarding their health and safety is of the utmost importance. It must also ensure that your operations continue to run in an efficient and safe manner.

You must review the plan regularly and amend it as new regulations, guidelines and procedures come into force. Experience and feedback will inform how appropriate and effective the plan is.

For further information on the development of your Action Plan, visit the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Business Supports Hub [HERE](#).

### Monitoring & Supporting

A COVID-19 Response Team / Coordinator must be appointed to ensure new procedures are adhered to. Adherence to this protocol will only be achieved if employers and workers have a shared responsibility to implement the measures contained in this protocol in their place of work. A collaborative approach to the implementation of the protocol is essential to achieve success and maximum buy in.

Each workplace should appoint at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their workplace. The person(s) undertaking the role must receive the necessary training and have a structured framework to follow within the organisation to be effective in preventing the spread of the virus. Further information and a short online course on the role of [Lead Worker Representative](#) can be found on the HSA website.

Employers should have regular and meaningful engagement with their worker representative, workers and/or their recognised Trade Union or other representative (including health and safety committee where it exists) about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Employers should provide a COVID-19 induction training for all workers on their return.

The number of worker representatives for COVID-19 appointed should, ideally, be proportionate to the number of workers in the workplace and this person(s) should be clearly identifiable in the workplace. Employers and worker representatives will work together to ensure that all the actions in this protocol are fully adhered to in order to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

**Section 3** of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) sets out the steps for employers and workers to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

These provisions include:

- Consulting with the workplace representatives in the development of a COVID-19 response plan.
- Developing/amending policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers who may have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Developing, consulting, communicating, and implementing workplace changes or policies. Specific reference is made to agreeing with workers any temporary restructuring of work patterns that may be required to implement the COVID-19 prevention measures in the workplace. There is also provision for the lead worker representative to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

Conference and event venues should only use suppliers / agents (including Event / Conference Organiser / PCOs) who are compliant with the Work Safely Protocol and that have a COVID-19 Response Team / Coordinator / Lead Worker appointed to ensure all COVID-19 safety procedures are adhered to.

For a more comprehensive list of symptoms of COVID-19, please click [HERE](#).

## Policies & Processes

Conference and event venue owners and management need to review all business policies and standard operating procedures across each department to reflect operational changes. In particular, this means:

- Defining and documenting a clear plan of action in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among delegates and/or employees.
- Develop a policy and process in line with the Work safely Protocol to prepare your business for management of a case or cases (outbreak) of COVID-19 in the workplace. [Ref. section 9 of the Work Safely Protocol.](#)
- Defining and documenting the correct and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required. This must be in line with the Government's Public Health advice.
- Developing and updating a policy for the care of employee uniforms to ensure they are appropriately maintained.
- Review and updating cancellation and refund policies in line with business requirements.

- Developing and updating policy relating to the standards of behaviour expected from employees, delegates and all third party personnel on-site to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Strict management controls must be in place to ensure compliance with Public Health advice at all times.

## Communication

You must share the plan with all employees, as well as changes to other policies, e.g. sick leave policies, prior to them returning to work. If it is updated at any time, you must make sure everyone knows what has changed

Providing guidelines to employees on how they communicate the Action Plan to delegates will ensure everyone gives the same message and there is no inconsistency.

Make sure an up-to-date list of the contact information of all employees, including emergency telephone numbers, is always readily available.

Regularly review all COVID-19 related signage and notices throughout the premises to ensure they display the latest HSE and Government Public Health advice recommendations. Signs must be placed in prominent and relevant positions, be legible and, where appropriate, be offered in [multiple languages](#).

Downloading and using the [HSE COVID-19 tracker app](#) is also an important measure that can be adopted. Employers should provide advice on the tracker and encourage workers to download it. Workers should download the app as it can be used for contact tracing purposes in and out of the workplace.

## Training

Conference and event venue owners and/or management must inform all employees of the measures being adopted to manage the threat of COVID-19. Use the most appropriate training channels to do this and ensure that employees stay at home and seek medical attention if they have key symptoms such as a high temperature or shortness of breath.

There is an obligation on employers to ensure that employees are aware that they must not attend work if they have symptoms. This is essential to ensure that the virus does not spread.

You must organise information briefings that cover all the basic protective measures against COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease. In particular, make sure you cover:

- Hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures
- Correct use of PPE
- Cleaning / disinfection regimes
- Employee health and what to do if feeling unwell
- Unwell guest / dealing with suspected cases/ liaising with authorities.

If training is needed for specific procedures or if your property has specific requirements, it must be included in the training programme. Carry out regular briefings where required with new or updated information.

First Aid Responders may require further training in light of COVID-19.

For a more comprehensive list of symptoms of COVID-19, please click [HERE](#).

## Cleaning & Frequency

In general, cleaning must be carried out at least twice a day. Ensure contact / touch surfaces such as tabletops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily, ideally before, during and after the conference and/or event.

Implement modified cleaning intervals for rooms and work areas. This applies especially for toilet facilities and communal spaces. Cleaning must be performed at least twice per day and all areas must be visibly clean at all times.

Cleaning of work areas must be conducted at regular intervals. Further information on cleaning in non-healthcare settings is available from the ECDC [HERE](#) or from the Government [HERE](#).

## Ventilation / Air Conditioning

Where possible, windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of air throughout the property. When rooms are being cleaned windows and/or doors, where appropriate, should be opened. Care needs to be taken at all times to ensure security and safety measures.

Further information regarding air conditioning and ventilation can be found in Section 5.d of the [Work Safely Protocol](#) as well as [Appendix 2](#).

## Staffing Resources

Conference and event venue owners/management should review rotas in line with Work Safely Protocol, subsection 3 which provides that full consultation on these matters is required to ensure sufficient employees are available to maintain physical distancing while completing the tasks to the required standards. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

Employee scheduling must ensure more time is allocated for cleaning and encourage employees to work alone if possible.

- To achieve this, you should:
- Consider flexible shifts where appropriate.
- Schedule small teams.
- Keep the same team combinations to limit employee interaction. This will assist should contact tracing be required.

You will also need to plan for the impact of employee absences; this may involve reallocating employees from non-essential tasks. Where appropriate, cross-training employees will help maintain staffing levels within your conference and event venue. Employees who have **not** had close contact with a confirmed case should continue taking the usual precautions and attend work as usual.

Further information on [close contacts](#), [casual contacts](#) and testing is available from the HSE website.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. You must apply the Work Safely Protocol.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

### 3. Employee & Delegate Health

**The health and safety of employees, delegates and all third party personnel on-site at a conference or event is the number one priority for the owners and management of the conference and event venue. The following steps will help ensure everyone remains fit and well:**

#### Face Coverings/Masks

Following the HPSC Evidence Summary on the “Efficacy of visors compared with masks in the prevention of transmission of COVID-19 in non-healthcare settings”, Tourism and Hospitality businesses should consider the following recommendations:

- In public settings, expert opinion and international guidance generally favours cloth face coverings over visors or shields.
- There is a rationale and laboratory evidence favouring cloth face coverings over visors where the wearer is at a higher level (standing) than those potentially exposed at a lower level (sitting). This is extremely important for food and beverage service businesses.
- Visors reduce exposure to a certain extent when compared to no face covering and may be considered an alternative in certain circumstances where an individual is unable to wear a face mask. Click [HERE](#) for more information.
- If visors are used, they should cover the entire face (above the eyes to below the chin and wrap around from ear to ear) and be correctly applied.
- Further information on the handling and care of visors can be found [HERE](#).

Wearing a face covering / mask helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is strongly recommended to wear a face covering / mask in situations where physical distancing is difficult. Face coverings / masks are always **in addition to**, and never a substitute for, other Public Health measures including physical distancing, [hand hygiene](#) and practising appropriate respiratory etiquette.

Under [current legislation](#), management and employees in customer facing roles, who engage in or carry out work relating to the preparation of, or service of, food or beverages for consumption on the premises must wear a face covering / mask. Management must ensure that employees comply with this regulation.

Government Public Health advice states that face coverings / masks must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible. Face coverings / masks must also be worn by delegates when arriving to and leaving their table when in

food and beverage areas. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

Under [current legislation](#), management and employees in customer facing roles, who engage in or carry out work relating to the preparation of, or service of, food or beverages for consumption on the premises must wear a face covering

There are cases where people may be unable to wear a face coverings / masks are and this is deemed as a reasonable excuse. For details on what constitutes a reasonable excuse see [HERE](#). Businesses must ensure that they are familiar with the various reasons why an individual may not be required to wear a face coverings / masks, further details can be found [HERE](#).

The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that face coverings / masks are recommended in public areas in buildings, including receptions/foyers and also when moving throughout buildings.

As part of your business risk assessment, you should determine the requirement for face coverings / masks in all individual business activities. The [Work Safely Protocol](#) states that in settings where 2 metre employee separation cannot be ensured then face coverings / masks should be made available to employees in line with Public Health advice.

Ensure that delegates are clearly informed of your own business policy and government regulations regarding face coverings / masks in advance of arrival. Employers and employees must keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued regarding face coverings / masks.

For more information on the safe use, storage and disposal of face coverings / masks, please click [HERE](#). A face covering should cover your nose and mouth, go under your chin, fit snugly against the side of the face with no visible gaps and be secured with ties or ear loops. For more information on the safe use, storage and disposal of face coverings/masks, please click [HERE](#).

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.



## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing guidelines (in line with the Government's Public Health advice) must be incorporated into the Action Plan for the conference and event venue. Specific areas must also comply with mandatory capacity limits.

Delegates must be advised to stand at least 2 metres\* away from other groups of people who are not from the same household at all times.

In a [controlled environment](#), such as conference facilities, physical distancing of at least 2 metres\* is required, unless the requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met, in which case a minimum of 1 metre\* is sufficient.

Careful consideration needs to be given when using communal areas, while queuing, using elevators, escalators, stairs or moving around the venue. Ensure there are systems in place to prevent intermingling in communal areas (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities). See [Appendix 1](#).

Conference layout, dining tables, coffee areas, seating and couches in public areas and other physical layouts must be rearranged to ensure appropriate distancing.

## Employee Physical Distancing

Where possible, on arrival and departure from work, employees should be able to enter and exit through separate doors.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. Where the food services environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Minimise any direct employee contact and provide hand washing facilities, and other hand hygiene aids such as hand sanitisers, wipes, etc. Ensure these are readily accessible so employees can perform [hand hygiene](#) as soon as a task is complete.

Make face coverings / masks available to employees in line with Public Health advice. You should note that wearing masks is not a substitute for the other measures outlined above.

## Measures to Control Noise Levels

According to the WHO, transmission of COVID-19 can occur through direct, indirect, or close contact with infected people through infected secretions such as saliva and respiratory secretions or droplets, which are expelled when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, etc.

In adherence with WHO evidence, recent Public Health advice states that there must be a restriction on noise levels within the premises to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

High noise levels within a premises can impact conversation negatively and encourage individuals to raise their voice to communicate thus encouraging possible transmission of the virus.

Straining to hear others due to high volumes can cause people to move closer to each other and not adhere to social distancing. To avoid this, businesses must put in place a plan and take appropriate measures to control noise levels, to ensure volumes do not rise to a level where people are required to take such measures to hear others.

Signage relating to these COVID-19 preventative measures must be displayed in visible locations to inform delegates.

Intervention will be required by management in a situation where individuals do not follow this advice. Conference and event venue owners/management should be aware that permitting increased noise levels within their premises is an unnecessary risk as it forces delegates and staff into close proximity and encourages raised voices. Conference and event venue owners/management are responsible for keeping noise at an appropriate level to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Providing Hand Sanitisers

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against COVID-19. Further information on hand sanitisers is available on page 41 of the Work Safely Protocol, found [HERE](#).

## Information Signage

You must display appropriate COVID-19 signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing measures throughout your venue. Where feasible, television screens and monitors can communicate these messages effectively in arrival and common areas.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Employee & Delegate Health Concerns

When they return to work, employees must be trained on what to do if they or a delegate becomes unwell. All employers and employees must follow the Work Safely Protocol. All employers and employees must follow the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

When dealing with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 among employees, following the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

If management is alerted to a suspected case of COVID-19 at the conference and event venue, a clinician from a local medical centre should be contacted. The clinician will advise on the next steps. Further information is available on the HSE website and also on page 5 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

**Note:** Management of conference and event venues need to have the telephone numbers of the health authorities, medical centres plus public and private hospitals readily available in case a delegate or employee falls ill. For a full list of Department of Public Health contact details, please see [HERE](#).

Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return to work. For further details relating to what information should be obtained, please refer to Section 3.D4 of the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Advice is available to business owners and employees on how to support your wellbeing during the COVID-19 crisis. Wellbeing supports can be viewed on the Fáilte Ireland COVID-19 Support Hub [HERE](#).

## Isolation Area

Identify an area/room on the premises where any delegate or employee showing possible COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated from other people. From there, the individual can travel home to seek medical attention elsewhere. It is

essential to clean and disinfect this isolation area thoroughly after it has been used.

If the conference and event venue provides accommodation, and in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19 among resident(s), the room must be removed from service until cleaned and disinfected.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Reopening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing

The conference / event organiser or their appointed agent will be required to retain the names and contact details of their delegates for 28 days to facilitate contact tracing, if required, and must be compliant with GDPR.

The conference and event venue does not have to keep records of every person attending the event but instead they need to retain the name and contact details of the conference / event booker.

The delegates should be advised by the conference /event organiser that the details are to be retained by the business to facilitate contact tracing.





## 4. Employee Responsibilities

**For the purpose of this document, the term ‘employees’ refers to direct employees of the venue, the organiser and all third party personnel on-site at a conference or event.**

**The effective delivery of the Action Plan depends on how employees and management act. Paying attention to the following issues is especially important:**

### Hand Hygiene

Correct hygiene and frequent handwashing with soap is vital to help combat the spread of COVID-19. Conference and event venue management need to ensure that adequate sanitary facilities are provided and that employees thoroughly and frequently clean their hands.

All employees must wash their hands frequently and as required, for a minimum of 20 seconds or use sanitiser regularly if hands are visibly clean.

Hands must be washed as often as necessary, but always in the following circumstances:

- Before starting work
- Before handling cooked or ready-to-eat food
- Before eating
- After handling or preparing raw food
- After handling waste
- After cleaning duties including sweeping / mopping, etc.
- After using the toilet
- After blowing nose, sneezing or coughing
- After eating, drinking or smoking
- After handling money
- At the end of a shift.

This list is not exhaustive.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the FSAI.

For additional COVID-19 hand hygiene measures, hands must be washed before putting on or after removing PPE. Please see [HERE](#) for more information from the HSE.

### COVID-19 Training

All employees must attend training on COVID-19 safety and disinfection protocols. More comprehensive training must be given to teams in frequent delegate contact. These

include the Front of House Team, Food & Beverage, Maintenance & Operations and Conference & Event Venue Security.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) can be effective in reducing the spread of viruses and disease within the food industry, but only if used properly. If required by their roles, appropriate PPE must be worn by employees. Each section of the conference and event venue must be assessed to decide what is needed. Training on how to properly use, apply and dispose of all PPE is also essential.

As part of the business risk assessment, consideration needs to be given to the level of PPE required for various tasks e.g. power hosing which can cause an aerosol effect.

Handwashing is a greater protective barrier to infection than wearing disposable gloves. Correct hand hygiene is extremely important, whether using gloves or not. However the following must be applied when using disposable gloves:

- Gloves may be used by employees for food handling, according to usual food safety guidance, but they must ensure that the gloves are changed frequently and that hands are washed before putting gloves on, between glove changes and when gloves are removed.
- Gloves must be changed after carrying out non-food related activities such as opening/closing doors by hand, emptying bins, handling money, etc.
- Employees should be aware that wearing gloves can allow bacteria to build up on the surface of the hands, so hand hygiene is extremely important when gloves are removed.
- It is acceptable to prepare and handle food with bare hands provided proper hand washing procedures are in place. Hand sanitisers can be used as an additional measure but should not replace handwashing.

Further information on PPE is available [HERE](#).

In the context of COVID-19 risk, employers should check the [HPSC website](#) regularly for updates regarding use of recommended PPE.

## Employee Welfare Facilities & Timekeeping

On their return to work, employers and employees must follow the Work Safely Protocol. Employers must ensure all employees submit their pre-return to work form before they return for work. Further details relating to what information should be obtained is available [HERE](#) for more information.

It is also essential to display prominent signage relating to hand and respiratory hygiene as well as physical distancing prominently at Back of House.

Employee welfare facilities (such as employee areas and locker rooms) need to be re-organised to suit physical distancing measures and be frequently cleaned and disinfected. Staggered start times and break times can also be very helpful, also a review the use of clocking-in machines.

Employee meetings should be held online if possible. If physical meetings need to take place, physical distancing measures must be taken.

## First Aid Kit

A medical kit must always be available at reception or in the arrival area in smaller premises. Multiple kits must be located at various locations around larger premises e.g. in breakout rooms.

Kits must include:

- Germicidal disinfectant / wipes for surface cleaning tissues.
- Face / eye masks. Note that disposable face coverings / masks can only be used once.
- Gloves (disposable).
- Protective apron (disposable).
- Biohazard disposable waste bags.

# 5. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is very important to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This is achieved by minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals. In a [controlled environment](#), such as conference facilities, physical distancing of at least 2 metres\* is required, unless the requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met, in which case a minimum of 1 metre\* is sufficient.

**The conference and event venue owner / management needs to meet Public Health advice on maintaining current physical distancing guidance between people at all times.**

## Capacity Management

The capacity of the venue must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your business is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the premises.

Seating layout and table plans need to be reviewed to ensure the recommended physical distancing and other protective measures can be strictly adhered to.

The employee and delegate flow must be carefully managed, particularly at entrances, exits and other areas where people might potentially congregate but are not permitted to do so.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the level of their specific region](#) in relation to capacity management. Physical distancing measures required throughout your business are outlined below.

## Delegate Management

The conference and event venue owner / management must ensure there is an employee responsible at the venue for enforcing physical distancing. This should be communicated to the conference / event organisers on booking.

Any area where delegates or employees queue must be clearly marked for the recommended physical distancing.

To facilitate compliance with the physical distancing requirement of 2 metres\*, particularly in high traffic areas, it is vital to control people flows in the following areas: parking areas, pick-up and drop-off areas, queues, entrance halls, entryways, restaurants, catering areas, toilets facilities, coat rooms, exits and within key areas such as the main meeting room, congress room and exhibition room.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

Use vertical signage or floor markings to direct delegates and facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre\* distance.

Both indoor and outdoor areas should be marked with a one-way route to facilitate movement and physical distancing among delegates. Use extensive signage to reinforce the one-way routes within the venue. Reinforcing this with signage, maps or instructions on digital screens will ensure delegate movement and flow is controlled.

All arrangements must be agreed in advance with the conference / event organiser and communicated by them to all participants.

## Arrival / Registration Area

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. This is vital in busy employee-delegate contact points, such as registration desks and information points.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards/plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. These screens do not need to be floor to ceiling but should be of an adequate height (e.g. cover a person in a standing position) and width to block the pathway from the nose and mouth to the face and workspace of the other persons. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements including emergency access. Ref: Section D3 of [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Employees or registration personnel should have a self-sufficient workstation where possible with individual equipment where appropriate. This will ensure physical distancing is maintained among employees during the registration process.

Conference / event organisers should allocate staggered arrival times to delegates and all participants, while ensuring that mandatory capacity limits are not exceeded within the venue at all times. [See Appendix 1](#).

## Conference / Event Layout

Government Public Health advice limits the number of people gathering in a venue at one time. For further information on the Government's capacity limits on indoor and outdoor gatherings see [HERE](#).

According to the HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses (see [Appendix 1](#)), multiple gatherings, including conferences and events, are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate defined spaces and there are

systems to prevent intermingling of delegates in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).

Seating capacities and floor plans should be reviewed on an event-by-event basis to ensure recommended physical distancing requirements are adhered to. Develop examples of physically distanced floor plans for Event Management use. Block off rows or sections of seating in order to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\*. [See Appendix 1](#). Where fixed seating is in place, delegates must be seated 2 metres\* apart unless physical barriers are in place between seating.

For workshops, break-out sessions, etc. consider the above conference style layouts for seating use to maintain physical distancing.

Install signage to remind delegates to follow the recommended physical distancing within key areas such as the main meeting room, congress room, exhibition room, etc.

Designated employees, where possible, should be stationed within the room to control physical distancing measures among delegates.

Conference / event layout details must be agreed in advance with the conference / event organiser and communicated by them to all delegates and employees.

Consider offering online attendance options in addition to in-person attendance to help reduce the number of delegates in the venue.

Conference / event organisers should be aware that it may be necessary to book larger rooms / venues in order to facilitate physical distancing requirements.

## Dining Areas / Bars

Physical distancing of 2 metres\* should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre\* in controlled environments if the other risk mitigation requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met.

Seating capacities should be reduced to meet the current physical distancing guidance outlined by HPSC between each seated group of delegates.

It is the responsibility of supervisors and managers to ensure that delegates do not congregate in groups. While in the dining area, delegates should be seated at a table except when using the toilet, paying and departing.

Consider staggering dining times for delegates to facilitate reduced capacity due to physical distancing.

*\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

Consider exclusive use of dining or bar areas for groups of delegates and provide separate defined spaces to prevent intermingling i.e. no venues with shared foyer break areas.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they implement the required measures, subject to the level of their specific region, in relation to maximum capacity at a table. These measures are applicable in all situations.

Businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the level of their specific region](#), in relation to formal or informal events within their premises.

## Buffet Style

This style of service must only be provided where physical distancing and other Public Health advice can be followed.

Physical distancing guidance must be followed while queuing. See [Delegate Management](#) section above to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.

Delegate access to tea or coffee station / buffet / open food display should be staggered and a one-way system introduced.

## Smoking Areas

In these areas, the capacity must be in line with Government Public Health recommendations at any one time, while ensuring that the recommended physical distancing measures are adhered to.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that [they implement the required measures, subject to the level of their specific region](#), in relation to the capacity of the smoking area.

## Back of House

Physical distancing protocols that follow the Government's Public Health advice must be observed in the shared office spaces, employee locker rooms, storerooms, delivery areas, stock rooms, IT areas, bar support areas such as cold/keg rooms, kitchens and other areas where employees gather and work.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Where the food service environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Examples of practical measures to adhere to physical distancing guidance in the food services environment are to:

Stagger workstations so that workers are not facing one another.

- Provide PPE if required, such as face coverings / masks, disposable gloves and clean aprons / uniforms. The use of PPE would be routine in high-risk areas of food premises that produce ready-to eat and cooked foods. When employees are dressed in PPE it is possible to reduce distance between workers.
- Limit the number of employees in a service area at any one time.
- Organise employees into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards / plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart, for example in kitchens and at cash registers, host stands or food pickup areas. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

## Timekeeping Facilities

If you use clocking-in machines, a strenuous cleaning and disinfection regime must be put in place. In effect this means cleaning and disinfecting the machine regularly. If queuing takes place at the machine, have clear floor markings that illustrate the recommended physical distancing between employees. See [Delegate Management](#) section to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.

*\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.*

## 6. Cleaning Products & Protocols

**Cleaning products and protocols need to be suitable and manufacturer approved for use against viruses, bacteria and similar risks.**

It is important to follow manufacturer instructions with regard to dilution, application and duration of use. Management must review cleaning procedures within all departments and update these if any cleaning and disinfection procedures are changed.

It is also important to work with suppliers, vendors and distribution partners to ensure an uninterrupted supply of cleaning supplies.

Further information is available in the Overall Guidelines for Re-opening of All Sectors, found [HERE](#).

### Public Spaces and Communal Areas

It is important to focus cleaning efforts on 'high touchpoint' areas and areas where delegates or employees are likely to come into close proximity to one another, including toilets, narrow corridors, and lifts / elevators.

Cleaning and disinfection should be carried out with increased frequency in all public spaces, at least twice a day, but more frequently depending on the through-put of delegates at a given time, and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched surfaces, which must be visibly clean at all times. These includes door handles, ATMs, handrails, elevator buttons, seating, counters and tables.

### Conference / Event Room

Cleaning and disinfection protocols must be followed at all times. Particular attention must be paid to frequently touched items and surfaces within the main conference / event room, including tables, chairs, door plates and handles, switches, ledges and shared equipment (e.g. microphones).

All shared equipment and meeting amenities must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. If this is not possible, they must be replaced by single-use alternatives.

If linen is used, replace linen after each use. Clean and soiled linens must be transported in tied single use plastic bags into and out of the meeting rooms.

### Accommodation

If the conference and event venue offers accommodation, please review the appropriate accommodation re-opening guidelines for your business [HERE](#).

### Laundry Facilities

All linen must be washed at a high temperature and in accordance with HSE guidelines. Dirty linen must be bagged immediately to eliminate excess contact while it is transported to the conference and event venue's laundry facility. For more information on managing laundry, see [HERE](#).

Cleaning and disinfection must happen at least twice per day and whenever the laundry facilities are visibly dirty, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces (e.g. washing machines, dryers, etc.). While doing this, employees must wear appropriate protective garments such as disposable gloves and aprons.

### Back of House & Employee Areas

Back of House areas must also be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily but more frequently depending on the through-put of employees and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Particular attention must be paid to employee areas including the canteen, employee entrances, employee bathrooms, uniform control rooms, loading areas, offices, kitchens and employee relations service desks as they must be visibly clean at all times.

### Equipment Shared by Employees

Appropriately clean and disinfect shared equipment and tools after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.

This includes items such as phones, computers and other communication devices, keys, payment terminals, kitchen implements, tools, safety buttons, cleaning equipment, time clocks and all other direct contact items used.

Shared food and beverage equipment in Back of House areas (e.g. kettle, microwave, etc.) needs to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

## Control of Waterborne Hazards

It is critical that the conference and event venue reviews guidance on 'Control of Legionella Bacteria During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic' and reviews their own systems in line with this.

This guidance highlights the requirement to continue managing Legionella control to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease.

The following is a non-exhaustive list relevant to the tourism sector of potential sources of aerosols which may contain Legionella bacteria: wet cooling systems (for example, cooling towers and evaporative condensers); spa pools; showers, taps and toilets; machine cooling systems; spray booth water curtains; humidifiers in food cabinets; ornamental fountains and water features; dust suppression systems; horticultural misting systems, lawn sprinklers; clinical humidifiers; sprinklers and hose reels; and power hoses.

Legionnaires' disease hospitalisation is generally required to treat symptoms. With the health service currently dealing with a Public Health emergency, it is vital that employers take appropriate action to maintain and operate their water systems especially wet cooling systems, so far as reasonably practicable.

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

For HSE advice on managing water systems in a shutdown, please see [HERE](#).

## 7. Locations for Distribution of PPE

If required, PPE (gloves, plastic aprons, etc.) must be distributed at the following locations:

### Front of House

All of the venue's entry and exit points, including entrances to meeting and breakout rooms.

### Back of House

- Employee entrances
- Specific department offices
- Cleaning and maintenance supply stations
- Storerooms and cellars
- Food preparation areas
- Location in proximity to the Isolation Room.

**Note:** Hand sanitiser must be provided in each venue and at all entry and exit points of the public areas including arrival areas, dining areas, bars and at entrances to toilet facilities, etc.

Following updated Government advice for businesses serving food, consider providing hand sanitiser on each table for customer use.

Hand sanitiser must only be used on visibly clean hands. If hands are visibly dirty/contaminated they must be washed.



## 8. Employee Uniforms

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

The policy on the care of uniforms must be updated to ensure every employee is clear on the standards of appearance and dress expected while at work. It is recommended that uniforms should be worn appropriately as outlined by the venue management.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

If a locker or changing room is provided, mark the floors to indicate available and unavailable spaces that must be used when changing into work attire or PPE. It may be necessary to revise roster schedules to allow for staggered access times to these rooms so physical distancing can take place.

## 9. Technical & Maintenance Services

### Water Disinfection

Maintain the concentration of disinfectant in water for consumption and in pools within the limits recommended according to international norms and standards. Preferably this should be at the upper limits of the range.

### Dishwashing & Laundry Equipment

Dishwashing and laundry equipment must be checked to ensure it is operating properly. You must pay particular attention to operating temperatures, as well as using correct dosage of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals.

### Dispensers

Soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices must be regularly checked. Defective units must be rapidly repaired or replaced and, where possible should be touchless.

The Action Plan should include installing units to dispense hand sanitiser as required throughout the premises, paying particular attention to public areas, employee areas and locker rooms, etc.

Please ensure that these are readily available and accessible to all at each access point.

### Additional Recommendations

It is the responsibility of each individual conference and event venue to provide sufficient facilities throughout the premises and ensure these facilities are appropriately maintained to minimise the risk of infection.





## 10. The Delegate Journey

**As the central link with all delegates, the conference / event organiser should co-ordinate with the venue and suppliers to ensure all Health and Safety procedures are in place and that the arrival schedule plus the programme timings will be agreed to facilitate compliance and adherence to Government Public Health advice.**

Guidance will regularly evolve and change in line with the Government's updated [COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#).

### Prior to the Event / Pre-Registration

At pre-registration, and when they arrive, delegates must be informed of the guidelines that apply. Details of the COVID-19 preventative policies and protocols that you have in place should be outlined in detail on registration, as well as on online platforms, marketing or via email. This information may include:

- Physical distancing measures,
- Hand and respiratory hygiene,
- Requirement for face covering/mask,
- Stay at home policy for any delegates with symptoms,
- Cancellation or refund policy,
- [Specific government measures in place](#).

Delegates should confirm at pre-registration that they are familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19 and will not attend if they have symptoms or are close contacts of people with COVID-19.

People who are particularly vulnerable to severe disease should generally avoid attending large gatherings and if attendance is necessary, they should adhere to all protocols and precautions in place.

Consider offering online attendance options to those who identify as vulnerable.

Instructions and guidance on what to expect, where to go and the protocols in place should be provided to delegates, if possible, at pre-registration via email or video (for instance posting short films on the event website).

### Arrival by Taxi, Drop Off or Parking at the Venue

Delegates should be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors before they enter the venue. They should declare if they have had any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

In line with Government Public Health advice, venues should minimise the number of access points for arriving and departing delegates. Where possible, delegates should be directed to enter and exit through separate doors that are automated or manually operated by an employee. Doors may be propped open if fire regulations allow.

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based. Signage must encourage all delegates to use this when they enter and leave.

Prominent signage must explain current physical distancing and hygiene protocols. This should be accompanied by clear and visible markings that illustrate the safe distancing protocol.

Signs must be placed in prominent and relevant positions, be legible and, where appropriate, be offered in [multiple languages](#).

Install clear markings to minimise contact between employees and delegates. Queues in arrival areas, venue dining areas and bars and entrances to toilets must all adhere to physical distancing requirements. [See Delegate Management section](#).

The conference / event organisers should allocate staggered arrival times to delegates and all participants, while ensuring that mandatory capacity limits are not exceeded within the venue at all times. [See Appendix 1](#).

### Registration

On registration, delegates must be informed of the guidelines that apply throughout the venue. Consider adding confirmation of compliance to your registration process. At this stage, delegates should declare that they have not had symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Adapt the registration process and manage set-up to reduce contact onsite. Encourage online registration wherever possible and consider using technological solutions to collect information rather than hard copy. This will limit shared usage of pens, etc.

Consider inviting delegates to print badges at home prior to the event or bring an existing name tag.

Consider making the agenda or event schedule available for delegates to view on-line.

Physical barriers or partitions can be useful, particularly at the registration area where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. These screens do not need to be floor to ceiling but should be of an adequate height (e.g. cover a person in a standing position) and width to block the pathway from the nose and mouth to the face and workspace of the other persons. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements including emergency access. Ref: Section D3 of [Work Safely Protocol](#).

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained at all times. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place. This is vital in busy employee-delegate contact points.

Employees or registration personnel should have a self-sufficient workstation where possible with individual equipment where appropriate. This will ensure physical distancing is maintained among employees during the registration process.

Designated employees, where possible, should be stationed at the registration area to control physical distancing measures among delegates. They should act as a key point of contact while delegates are on site, be available to answer questions and to disseminate up-to-date information. These employees should be fully trained in all Health & Safety and COVID-19 Safety protocols.

Where registration is required for workshops, breakout sessions, etc. ensure that capacity limits are adhered to and the correct number of people are pre-booked into each session.

## The Conference / Event

Seating capacities and floor plans should be reviewed on an event-by-event basis to ensure recommended physical distancing requirements are adhered to. Block off rows or sections of seating in order to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\*. See [Appendix 1](#). Where fixed seating is in place, delegates must be seated 2 metres\* apart unless physical barriers are in place between seating.

For workshops, breakout sessions, etc. consider the above conference style layouts for seating use to maintain physical distancing.

Install signage to remind delegates to follow the recommended physical distancing within the main meeting room, congress room, exhibition room, etc.

Designated employees, where possible, should be stationed within the room to control physical distancing measures among delegates.

Ensure delegates who choose to leave the venue to smoke or to take phone calls practice physical distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene protocols.

All reusable information material must be removed; place critical information on single-use leaflets and/or email it to delegates. Stationary, such as pens and notepads, should not be provided.

## Refreshment Breaks

Areas for coffee breaks / refreshments must be broken into zones which accommodate the maximum number of people at an indoor gathering in line with Government Public Health advice, allowing for adequate spacing between delegates to allow for physical distancing. Toilet facilities should be available per zone, to prevent intermingling of groups.

Any area where delegates queue for refreshments must be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. Use floor markings to facilitate compliance with the physical distancing advice of 2 metres\*, particularly in high traffic areas.

Use vertical signage to direct delegates to facilitate movement within the venue while maintaining 2 metre\* distance.

It is important to maintain good hygiene practices at refreshments areas. Both delegates and employees should strictly observe good personal hygiene practices at all times around these areas. Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene.

Service of refreshment must be managed by employees. There must be no self-service stations.

Employees should take orders in a time efficient manner and at a suitable distance to minimise time spent in close contact with delegates. Close contact can mean spending more than 15 minutes in face-to-face contact within 2 metres\* of an infected person. For more information see [HERE](#).

Individual bottled water should be provided rather than water carafes on meeting tables and at water stations.

Remove as much loose furniture (e.g. sofas, etc.) where possible from the room to ensure maximum space for physical distancing.

Remove decorative furnishings (cushions, etc) where possible.

## Exhibition Area

Where the conference / event contains an exhibition area, careful consideration must be given to the layout to ensure Government Public Health advice on physical distancing are met both between stands and between delegates and exhibitors at stands.

Use vertical signage or floor markings to direct delegates and facilitate movement within the exhibition area while maintaining 2 metre\* distance.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

Both indoor and outdoor areas should be marked with a one-way route to facilitate delegate management and physical distancing among delegates. Use signage to reinforce the one-way routes within the exhibition area. Reinforcing this with signage, maps or instructions on digital screens will ensure delegate movement and flow is controlled.

Designated employees, where possible, should be stationed within the exhibition area to control physical distancing measures among delegates.

All arrangements must be agreed in advance with the conference / event organiser and communicated by them to all delegates and staff.

Exhibitors must ensure that hand sanitiser is available on their stand both for their own and for delegate use.

Each stand must contain a lidded waste bin.

Exhibitors should be discouraged from having food, sweets or edible product samples for delegates. Where handouts and giveaways are provided, they must be individually packaged.

### **Dinner / Evening Reception (If provided as part of the event)**

Government Public Health advice limits the number of people gathering in a venue at one time. For further information on the Government's capacity limits on indoor and outdoor gatherings see [HERE](#).

According to the HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses (see [Appendix 1](#)), multiple gatherings, including conferences and events, are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate defined spaces and there are systems to prevent intermingling of delegates in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).

Limit the number of service personnel per group of delegates to the smallest number that is practical.

Where at all practical, service personnel should provide services to only one gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations.

Where possible, facilities such as toilets should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However, if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

Dinner / evening receptions within a conference / event must be restricted to a maximum duration of 105 minutes, after which all delegates and conference / event staff must leave the room or area to allow for cleaning and disinfection to take place.

Areas for receptions must be broken into zones which accommodate the maximum number of people at an indoor gathering in line with Government Public Health advice, allowing for adequate spacing between delegates to allow for physical distancing. Toilet facilities should be available per zone, to prevent intermingling of groups. Each zone should be cleaned and disinfected after each session.

Entrance doors should be opened whilst delegates are entering the dining area.

Review the seating capacities to meet the current physical distancing guidance. There must be adequate spacing between delegates at each table in accordance with Government's Public Health advice on physical distancing.

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all at each access point. Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 may be alcohol or non-alcohol based. Signage must encourage all delegates to use this when they enter and leave.

Management must ensure appropriate signage is in place to welcome delegates and reassure them that staff have been trained in line with Government Public Health advice.

Management must implement enhanced procedures in the cleaning of equipment. For the evening reception or throughout the conference, if microphones are used it is suggested that microphones are clearly marked regarding which speakers have used which microphone, and cleaned and disinfected after each session.

There should be no shared items at the table. Water jugs should be poured by service personnel only. Salt and pepper shakers, butter dishes should be available only on request. Instead each delegate should be given individual portions / sachets.

For the meal service, there should be no family-style service of food (i.e. no shared vegetable/gravy dishes, etc.).

Canapés, if being served, should be in individual portions. Options include individually boxing the canapés. [See Food & Beverage / Banqueting Services section](#) for further details.

## Social and Entertainment Aspects

Overall capacity in the entertainment venue must be in line with the Government's Public Health advice on indoor and outdoor gatherings.

Government Public Health advice on physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene must be adhered to at all times by employees, entertainers and delegates.

The conference / event organiser must work with the venue to ensure that the venue is laid out in a manner that adheres to physical distancing requirements. This includes physical distancing for the band / music group / entertainers (when permitted) as well as for delegates and employees in all scenarios.

In designing floor plans, consider the use of different sizes of tables e.g. trestle tables versus the use of round tables.

Under the Government's current public health restrictions (December 2020), live music or live performances are not permitted in tourism and hospitality businesses. Each level of the Government's Plan for Living with COVID-19 contains a 'basket' of measures which are intended, collectively, to contribute to lowering the risk of transmission in line with risk levels at a particular time. The 'basket' of measures is informed by public health understanding of the disease therefore some activities are prioritised over others.

Please refer to [Suppliers of Goods & Services](#) for further details on Conference and Event Entertainment.

## Delegate Elevators / Escalators

An employee should be assigned to clean and disinfect the button panels of delegate elevators and the handrails of escalators at regular intervals during the event, and more frequently depending on the through-put of people and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Physical distancing must be adhered to in elevators and while using escalators except among members of the same household.

Signage must be displayed to ensure delegates understand physical distancing requirements that apply within elevators and while using escalators.

## Car Park & Outdoor Areas

All outdoor areas, grounds, gardens, greens, verges, roads and car parking areas within the conference and event venue must be kept clean and well maintained.

This means ensuring that lidded bins are available for the disposal of gloves, masks, tissues, etc. that may be

contaminated. You must ensure all rubbish bags are disposed of in an appropriate external facility such as a waste removal skip.

## Payment

Delegates should be encouraged to use card / contactless payment and pay in advance where possible. If handling cash, employees should be provided with gloves. Good hand hygiene is essential whether wearing gloves or not when handling cash.

## Delegate Sanitation Amenities

Hand sanitiser must be provided at public entrance and exits and at key locations throughout the conference and event venue.

## Outdoor Structures

Where outdoor structures such as a marquees are used e.g. for receptions, they must adhere to Government guidelines. Physical distancing must be adhered to and hand sanitising facilities provided.

## Practical Considerations

There is a limit on the number of people gathering in a venue at one time in line with Government Public Health advice on indoor and outdoor gatherings. Multiple gatherings are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate defined spaces and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).

Limit the number of service personnel per group of delegates to the smallest number that is practical.

Where at all practical, service personnel should provide services to only one gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations.

Where possible, facilities such as toilets should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However, if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

Seated sessions\*\* within a conference / event must be restricted to a maximum duration of 105 minutes per session, after which all delegates and conference / event staff must leave the room or area to allow for cleaning and disinfection to take place before they return.

Pre-booking and time limited slots of 105 minutes duration are not a requirement if physical distancing of 2 metres\* is strictly maintained at all times. In the context of a lunch or dinner which forms part of the schedule for a business conference / event, it is understood that the booking is made by the conference / event organiser.

Areas for coffee breaks / refreshments must be broken into zones which accommodate the maximum number of people at an indoor gathering in line with Government Public Health advice, allowing for adequate spacing between delegates to allow for physical distancing.

Toilet facilities should be available per zone, to prevent intermingling of groups. Each zone should be cleaned and disinfected after each session.

### Additional Information

All third party suppliers for the conference and event venue must ensure they adhere to the Government's Public Health advice. Please refer to [Suppliers of Goods & Services](#) for further details on supplier management.

If the conference and event venue offers accommodation, please refer to the appropriate Fáilte Ireland guidelines for information on accommodation services / housekeeping. See [HERE](#) for details.

## 11. Arrival Area & General Offices

**Appropriate COVID-19 signage must be prominently displayed that explains the physical distancing and hygiene practices currently in use throughout the venue.**

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

In the arrival area, cleaning and disinfecting must take place regularly during the day and more frequently during busy periods. This must focus on frequently touched surfaces especially counters, desks, equipment, communication devices, door release buttons, etc.

If they are provided on the premises, clean and disinfect internet stations, ATM machines and cigarette machines.

The sharing of office equipment should be avoided. Where shared equipment is necessary, it must be cleaned and disinfected after each shift or any time the equipment is transferred to another employee.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

Physical distancing protocols that follow the Government's Public Health advice must be observed in shared office spaces, employee locker rooms and other relevant employees facilities.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards/plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in back of house areas

where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. These screens do not need to be floor to ceiling but should be of an adequate height (e.g. cover a person in a standing position) and width to block the pathway from the nose and mouth to the face and workspace of the other persons. Screens may be fixed or mobile depending on requirements including emergency access. Ref: Section D3 of Work Safely Protocol.

Employees should have a self-sufficient workstation where possible, with an individual computer, telephone and all ancillary equipment.

Employees sharing workspaces must, where possible, be grouped in fixed teams that are as small as is reasonably practicable. They must consist of individuals who also work together.

In offices where face to face meetings or consultations take place, they must be arranged in line with the Government Public Health advice that is in place at the time of holding the meeting. The length of the meeting and the number attending should be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain physical distancing at all times. Seats and tables of all visitors must be cleaned and disinfected after each visit.

A designated employee, where possible, should be stationed at Front of House to control physical distancing measures.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

\*\* Longer sessions will be required to break into 105 minute intervals.



### Delegate Considerations / Payment

Delegates should be encouraged to use card / contactless payment and pay in advance where possible.

Debit / credit card machines should be moved to the front of the counter and cleaned and disinfected after each use. The use of cashless / contactless payment systems is recommended where possible. Online payment should also be considered.

If handling cash, employees should be provided with gloves. Good hand hygiene is essential whether wearing gloves or not when handling cash.

## 12. Public Areas

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Cleaning and disinfection should be carried out with increased frequency in all public spaces, at least twice a day, but more frequently depending on the through-put of delegates at a given time and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Particular emphasis must be placed on the following items and areas, and scheduled more frequently during busy periods:

- Internal and external doors (e.g. door plates, handles, releases)
- Hard surfaces (e.g. tables, countertops, light switches)
- Stair handrails
- Interior seating (e.g. arms of chairs)
- Exterior seating / benches
- Toilet facilities
- Smoking areas
- Public amenities (e.g. internet station, ATM machine, cigarette machine, vending machine).
- Interior and exterior refuse bins must be emptied, cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

Clear markings must be put in place to ensure that contact between delegates and employees is minimised and delegates adhere to physical distancing in all public areas.

Signage referring to COVID-19 physical distancing measures must be installed in visible locations (e.g. notice boards).

Within public toilet facilities, a queuing system and limitations on the number of users should be in place to ensure physical distancing.

### Toilet Facilities

Clear signage should indicate the location of and route to the facilities.

A strict queuing system and limitations on number of users must be enforced to ensure physical distancing.

Install clear markings to minimise contact between delegates and to ensure that queues follow physical distancing requirements. Encourage the use of alternate sinks.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection must be increased in toilet facilities.

Ensure splashes are avoided while cleaning these facilities.

Ensure soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, disposable tissue dispensers and other similar devices are regularly checked, cleaned and maintained. Repair or replace defective soap units.

Where possible, facilities such as toilets or smoking areas should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

### Bar & External Smoking Areas (if provided)

In these areas, the capacity must be in line with Government Public Health recommendations at any one time, while ensuring that the recommended physical distancing measures are adhered to.

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures subject to the level of their specific region](#) in relation to capacity management.

The amount of seating and stools must be reduced to ensure appropriate physical distancing measures, and customers must order from their seat.

Where possible, facilities such as toilets or smoking areas should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

## 13. Food & Beverage / Banqueting Services

### Government Public Health advice requires the following measures:

Following updated Government Public Health measures, businesses must ensure that they [implement the required measures, subject to the level of their specific region](#)

- Maximum of 6 people per table.
- Multiple tables cannot be booked .
- Table service only. Customers not permitted to sit at the bar counter.
- Physical distancing, contact tracing and enhanced hygiene measures must be adhered to.
- A substantial meal to the minimum value of €9.00, prepared on-site, within the premises, where intoxicating liquor is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises.
- Measures to control noise levels.
- Face coverings/masks worn by customers at all times other than when sitting at their table.
- Employees wear face coverings/masks at all times.
- No work or business related parties/social gatherings including office parties

**Management must aim to follow the Government's Public Health advice throughout all food and beverage areas including refreshment and break areas, dining rooms, bars, etc.**

If serving food, a food preparation area is required on site / on the premises.

Where possible, delegates must be directed to enter and exit through separate doors. These should be propped open if fire regulations allow.

Hand sanitisers (including touchless dispensers where possible) must be readily available and accessible to all at each access point. Consider providing hand sanitiser on each table. Signage must encourage all delegates to use this when they enter and leave.

Prominent signage must explain current physical distancing practices. This must be accompanied by clear and visible markings that illustrate the safe distancing protocol throughout food and beverage areas. This includes elevators, entrance halls, entryways, restaurants, catering areas, refreshment / coffee zones, toilets facilities, smoking areas, etc.

Train relevant employees in the Government's Public Health advice to ensure compliant procedures for the Meet, Greet and Seat process. For example, a friendly verbal greeting must replace a physical greeting.



## Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

Cleaning and disinfection should be carried out with increased frequency in Food & Beverage areas, at least twice a day, but more frequently depending on the through-put of delegates and employees at a given time and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.

Pay particular attention to key areas and items including:

- Entry / exit doors
- Greeting podiums
- Service stations
- Countertops and bar tops
- Handrails
- Smoking areas
- Exterior seating / benches
- Exterior of refuse bins
- Toilets, etc.

The following items must be cleaned and disinfected regularly during the day:

- Dining tables, stools, chairs and seating
- Trays
- Bill / tip trays, pens and any other reusable items that delegates come into contact with.

## Capacity Management

The capacity of your venue must be reviewed prior to re-opening and at all times when your venue is operational. Overall capacity will depend on the size of the floor space within the venue where delegates or employees will be seated. For further guidance on Capacity Management click [HERE](#).

When permitted under the level / restrictions applying it should be noted that multiple gatherings in venue facilities are only permitted if they are in separate defined spaces and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).

## Physical Distancing Protocol

Management is responsible for minimising the number of arrival and departure points for delegates. Managers and supervisors must always monitor and manage physical distancing between people and groups rather than simply relying on signage.

Any area where delegates queue for refreshments must be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing.

Use floor markings to facilitate compliance with the physical distancing advice of 2 metres\*, particularly in high traffic areas.

Use vertical signage to direct delegates to facilitate movement within the venue while maintaining 2 metre\* distance.

Table capacity and floor plans should be reviewed on an event-by-event basis to ensure recommended physical distancing requirements are adhered to. Develop examples of physically distanced floor plans for Event Management use.

Physical distancing of 2 metres\* should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre\* in [controlled environments](#) if the other risk mitigation requirements outlined in [Appendix 1](#) have been met.

In a [controlled environment](#) physical distancing of at least 1 metre\* should be maintained between people seated at tables. Physical distancing is required between individuals who are not from the same household. It is not required between members of the same household.

Physical distancing at a table does not apply within members of a household.

The amount of seating and stools must be reduced and guests must order from their seat.

Peak-period queuing procedures must be implemented if guests cannot be seated immediately.

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Businesses must keep a record of the time and date of arrival at the premises of a group/sole customer and the name and telephone number of the lead person in a group/sole customer for COVID-19 contact tracing.

Current legislation states that businesses and services where intoxicating liquor is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises must also keep a record of the substantial meals ordered by each group/sole customer.

Details must be retained for 28 days by the business and must be compliant with GDPR. This information must be recorded for both walk-ins and pre-bookings.

## Practical Considerations

There is a limit on the number of people gathering in a venue at one time in line with Government Public Health advice on indoor and outdoor gatherings. Multiple gatherings are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate defined spaces and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g. entrances, exits and toilet facilities).

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

Limit the number of service personnel per group of delegates to the smallest number that is practical.

Where at all practical, service personnel should provide services to only one gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations.

Seated sessions\*\* within a conference / event must be restricted to a maximum duration of 105 minutes per session, after which all delegates and conference / event staff must leave the room or area to allow for cleaning and disinfection to take place before they return. This also applies to lunch, dinner and receptions.

Pre-booking and time limited slots of 105 minutes duration are not a requirement if physical distancing of 2 metres\* is strictly maintained at all times. In the context of a lunch or dinner which forms part of the schedule for a business conference event, it is understood that the booking is made by the conference / event organiser.

Areas for coffee breaks / refreshments and receptions must be broken into zones which accommodate the maximum number of people at an indoor gathering in line with Government Public Health advice, allowing for adequate spacing between delegates to allow for physical distancing. Toilet facilities should be available per zone, to prevent intermingling of groups. Each zone should be cleaned and disinfected after each session.

If linen is used on tables, replace linen after each use. Clean and soiled linens must be transported in tied single use plastic bags into and out of the dining areas.

## Buffet

This style of service must only be provided where physical distancing and other Government Public Health advice can be followed.

Physical distancing guidance must also be followed while queuing. See [Delegate Management](#) section above to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.

Access to the buffet / carvery / open food display should be staggered and a one-way system introduced.

It is important to maintain good hygiene practices if this style of service is offered. Both delegates and employees should strictly observe good personal hygiene practices at all times around open food areas. Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene.

[Face coverings/masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible. Face coverings / masks must be worn by customers when accessing this style of service.

All foods in the bain-marie or hotplate must be shielded from delegates. Employees must serve up and plate food to limit shared use of utensils at open food areas.

All trays used by delegates must be cleaned between uses.

All goods / foods, visual displays, etc must be covered and only handled by appointed employees.

Where food is served buffet-style, all items displayed for delegate use must be individually wrapped or be a single serve item. Common tongs or ladles must not be used.

## Table Service

There must be adequate spacing between delegates at each table in accordance with Government Public Health advice on physical distancing and HPSC COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses.

Service personnel allocated to serve individual tables for service should adhere to physical distancing where possible.

[Face coverings / masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible.

There must be minimal handling of glassware when serving drinks or clearing glasses. Service personnel must handle glasses by the stem or base.

Tablesides cooking must be suspended if physical distancing cannot be adhered to.

Before serving a table and after clearing a table, all employees must wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds or use sanitiser if hands are visibly clean.

There must be no shared items at the table. Water jugs must be poured by service personnel only. Salt and pepper shakers, butter dishes etc should be available only on request. Instead each diner should be given individual portions/ sachets.

There must be no family-style service of food (i.e. no shared vegetable / gravy dishes, etc.).

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Order Taking

Where required for main course choices and bar service, menus must be single use or made of a material that can easily be cleaned. Menu boards are an alternative. Menus on apps should also be considered.

It may be possible to verbally recommend food and drinks to delegates. If so, this should be done.

Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene during order taking and service. Orders should be taken in a time-efficient manner and at a suitable distance to minimise time spent in close contact with delegates. Close contact can mean spending more than 15 minutes in face-to-face contact within 2 metres\* of an infected person. For more information see [HERE](#).

[Face coverings / masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible.

It is recommended to use individual pens, pads or electronic devices.

## Venue Bar(s)

Employees must maintain the recommended physical distance from each other behind the bar.

To help achieve this:

- Limit the number of employees behind the bar at one time.
- Keep a record of who is on duty and when.
- Divide the bar into areas / zones (where possible) and allocate a zone to each employee to safeguard against cross-over. Minimise movement between these areas.

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees behind the bar. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

[Face coverings/masks](#) must be worn by staff in customer facing roles where no other protective measures are in place e.g. protective screens and where physical distancing of 2 metres\* is not possible.

All employees must wash their hands frequently and as required with soap and water, for a minimum of 20 seconds or use sanitiser regularly if hands are visibly clean. Hands must be cleaned as often as possible.

The following must also be cleaned and disinfected frequently:

- Beer taps, handles and optics
- Drip trays and washable bar mats
- Counter mounts and nozzles
- Glass mats
- Handheld measures
- Cocktail equipment
- Ice buckets, scoops and tongs
- Fruit preparation equipment
- Storage containers, etc.

Straws should be individually wrapped.

Embellishment or decoration of glasses (e.g. cocktail umbrellas) should be minimised.

Where fruit garnishes are required, good hand hygiene practices must be in place while preparing the fruit -follow HACCP Guidelines. Keep garnishes refrigerated and in a covered container until required and serve using tongs / scoop. The scoop must have its own covered receptacle.

In advance of re-opening, the cleaning of beer lines must be arranged as a notice period may be required by breweries or suppliers.

## Glassware

To prevent cross-contamination, fresh glasses must be used for each new drink, particularly from optics and beer taps.

When pouring drinks, employees must handle glasses by the stem or base and place on clean service trays or the bar counter before serving.

Similarly, there must be minimal handling of glassware when clearing glasses. Here, service trays must be used where appropriate.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## Service Stations

Service stations must also be cleaned and disinfected frequently. These include countertops, shelving, equipment, storage containers, etc.

At service stations, employees must be encouraged to maintain the recommended physical distance from each other. Limit the number of employees at the service stations at any one time. Minimise movement between service stations and ensure delegates do not have access to these areas.

Ensure service stations are stocked with all necessary equipment (e.g. cutlery, condiments, etc.) and cleaning and disinfecting supplies (disinfectant, disposable paper towels, etc).

Cutlery must be stored in a cutlery drawer or similar until required.

All employees must have their own stationery items and equipment (e.g. pens, order book). If equipment and tools are shared, they must be cleaned and disinfected after each use or before being given to another employee.

Guidance updates are available on the FSAI website. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

If you cannot ensure that employees stay 2 metres\* apart at all times, you must apply the Work Safely Protocol. Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

## Ice Machines

Before your venue re-opens, ice machines must be emptied, recalibrated and the water lines to ice machines must be cleaned out prior to refreshing with new ice. To avoid cross-contamination, each ice scoop must be stored in a separate covered receptacle and washed and disinfected regularly.

## Cellars, Cold Rooms & Storerooms

Hand sanitiser (touchless where possible) should be placed at all entrances to cellars, cold rooms and storerooms with instructions that they be used on entering and leaving.

Clear signage must tell employees to observe physical distancing. A distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees if the size of cellars, cold rooms and storerooms allows. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Access systems such as biometric touchpads, keypads or swipe cards must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Beer lines will require cleaning before re-opening. Breweries recommend giving at least 3 weeks' notice.

Clean and disinfect the dispense head and keg neck at every keg change.

## Payment Facilities

Where possible, delegates should use card / contactless payment. After bringing the debit / credit card machine to the table (if possible), it must be cleaned and disinfected before being used again.

If handling cash, employees should be provided with gloves and observe the Government's Public Health advice on hand hygiene measures.

## Third Party Food Production and / or Food Service Suppliers

Where the conference / event organiser or venue is using external food vendors for the production and/or delivery of food and beverage services including for example ice-cream vans, food trucks, etc these suppliers must adhere to the Government's Public Health advice and the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Businesses must ensure that food suppliers and their drivers comply with HACCP procedures.

## Refreshment Areas

It is important to maintain good hygiene practices at refreshments areas. Both delegates and employees should strictly observe good personal hygiene practices at all times around these areas. Attention must be paid to hand and respiratory hygiene.

Service of refreshment must be managed by employees. There must be no self-service stations.

Employees should take orders in a time efficient manner and at a suitable distance to minimise time spent in close contact with delegates. Close contact can mean spending more than 15 minutes in face-to-face contact within 2 metres\* of an infected person. For more information see [HERE](#).

Individual bottled water should be provided rather than water carafes on meeting tables and at water stations.

Remove as much loose furniture (e.g. sofas, etc.) where possible from the room to ensure maximum space for physical distancing.

\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.

## 14. Kitchen / Food Service Area

### Cleaning & Disinfection Protocol

At the end of each shift, clean and disinfect each area systematically with effective detergents and disinfectants. All cleaning must be recorded by a suitably trained person.

### Physical Distancing Protocol

As far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres\* and a minimum of 1 metre\* should be maintained between employees. Where 2 metres\* is not possible all other measures to protect employees should be in place.

Where the food service environment makes it difficult to physically distance, employers need to consider what measures to put in place to protect employees.

Examples of practical measures to adhere to physical distancing guidance in the food services environment are to:

- Divide the kitchen into zones with an employee allocated to each zone. Control and minimise movement between zones
- Stagger workstations on either side of service area so that food workers are not facing one another
- Provide PPE if required, such as face coverings / masks, disposable gloves and clean aprons/uniforms. The use of PPE would be routine in high-risk areas of food premises that produce ready-to eat and cooked foods. When employees are dressed in PPE it is possible to reduce distance between workers
- Limit the number of employees in a food preparation area at any one time and record the times that employees are on duty
- Organise employees into working groups or teams to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

Physical barriers such as sneeze guards / plexiglass and partitions can be useful, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain apart, for example in kitchens and at cash registers, host stands or food pickup areas. These physical barriers need to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Display signs that promote physical distancing and review all handwashing / good hygiene practice signs. Replace them if they are damaged or outdated.

### Kitchen & Food Handling Personnel

The same food law requirements apply now as did before COVID-19. Any changes to the nature and extent of the business must be reflected in the food safety management system / HACCP documentation.

Ensure that all employees are trained in any new COVID-19 standard operating procedures adopted by the business. Keep a record that this training has taken place.

Ensure that the HACCP system is updated. All new protocols need to be reflected in records, food flow diagrams, cleaning schedules, zoning, allergen updates on menus, etc. HACCP is in the context of food safety and re-opening only and not for COVID-19 prevention.

### Wash-up

Prior to re-opening, ensure all mechanical dishwashers operate at optimum levels and reach the correct temperature. Ensure all heads of spray taps are cleaned and disinfected. Use adequate and safe chemicals. If equipment is being hand washed, use the correct double sink method with a drain area and wash at the correct temperature and using the correct chemicals.



\*Current physical distancing guidance is in line with Public Health advice. This document will evolve to reflect new Public Health advice and changes to protocols as and when they emerge.



## 15. Suppliers of Goods & Services

**The Conference / Event Organisers and venue management team must contact all suppliers to ensure that they have put all necessary protocols in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

**Note:** Fresh food deliveries must be treated separately to other deliveries. HACCP only refers to food deliveries.

### Deliveries

An employee must meet each supplier who is delivering to the venue.

All delivery personnel must follow the Government's Public Health advice on physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to delegates:

- Wear suitable, clean and protective clothing where necessary.
- Maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness.
- Wash hands before and after each delivery transaction. The use of gloves is not recommended as this can give a false sense of security. Instead, hand washing is best practice.

If possible, delivery drivers should not be allowed to enter the site (with the exception of food deliveries which adhere to HACCP delivery protocols). Employees should not come in close contact with drivers. HACCP is in the context of food safety and re-opening only and not for COVID-19 prevention.

All food items (where food service is on site) must be checked in by employees with crates and boxes remaining outside the door.

### Dealing with Drivers

Provide hand sanitisers (alcohol or non-alcohol based) in the delivery area. Drivers must clean their hands before passing delivery documents or goods to employees. They must also be aware of the potential risks involved in contact transmission of COVID-19.

Once they leave their vehicle, it is of paramount importance that drivers use sanitiser in conjunction with physical distancing.

Businesses must ensure that food suppliers and their drivers comply with HACCP procedures.

All suppliers of all products must ensure that all transport containers are kept clean and frequently disinfected.

Disposable containers and packaging should be used to avoid the need to clean any returns. In the case of reusable

containers, appropriate hygiene and disinfection protocols must be followed by employees.

### Entering the Conference and Event Venue

Delivery personnel must use hand sanitiser if required to exit their vehicle and enter the venue.

- 1) Signage must make drivers aware of physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to employees
- 2) the need to maintain a high degree of personal hygiene and
- 3) the need to wear clean protective clothing.

A system for recording visits to the venue by employees / others should be put in place as required (contact log). Ref. Section D9 of [Work Safely Protocol](#). The same system should be implemented for suppliers who are required to enter the venue.

### Accepting Deliveries

A goods reception area must be set up that is large enough to ensure physical distancing for both driver and venue employees. HACCP procedures must be strictly implemented and observed there at all times.

All excess packaging must be removed by the driver. All outer packing must be removed (if possible) and placed in a suitable disposal unit.

When signing for deliveries, employees should only use their own pens. In the case of electronic devices, both device and pen must be cleaned and disinfected prior to signing.

The delivery area must be cleaned and disinfected regularly.



### Third Party Conference Suppliers

All third-party suppliers for a conference and event venue, such as sound or lighting engineers, photographers, videographers, etc must adhere to the Government's Public Health advice including physical distancing and hand hygiene measures. The venue must monitor and manage physical distancing at all times.

The suppliers must also adhere to the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

Businesses must ensure that third party food suppliers and their drivers comply with HACCP procedures, and that all food / drink service personnel adhere to respiratory and hand hygiene as well as physical distancing measures.

### Conference and Event Entertainment

Under the Government's current public health restrictions, live music or live performances are not permitted in tourism and hospitality businesses. Each level of the updated [COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) contains a 'basket' of measures which are intended, collectively, to contribute to lowering the risk of transmission in line with risk levels at a particular time. The 'basket' of measures is informed by public health understanding of the disease therefore some activities are prioritised over others.

All third party suppliers including entertainers and music groups must adhere to the Government's Public Health advice including physical distancing and hand hygiene measures.

### Additional Information

**G3 Partners AIPC, ICCA and UFI:** Good Practice Guide: Addressing COVID-19 Requirements for Re-Opening Business Events

<https://www.iccaworld.org/npps/story.cfm?nppage=2987619>

**United Nations ESCAP:** Revised Layouts of Meeting Rooms during the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.unescap.org/uncc/room-layouts>

**HPSC:** Guidance Document on Infection Prevention and Control Practices in Relation to Delivering Face to Face Education during the Global COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employersemployeesguidance/IPC%20Guidance%20for%20delivering%20face%20to%20face%20education.pdf>

# Appendix 1

Source: COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses, v.1.2 19.10.2020 (HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

## Controlled and Uncontrolled Environments 1

### CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS

Public and private venues or workplaces are considered 'controlled' environments. Examples are workplaces, schools, museums, swimming pools, galleries, cinemas, stadiums, conference facilities and casinos. Food businesses are considered 'controlled' environments, which includes restaurants and cafes.

#### Requirements (for food businesses) in controlled environments

- Use additional signage to ask customers not to enter if they have symptoms.
- Regulate entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded. Encourage prebooking as much as possible. A text may be sent to remind the guest to stay away if unwell.
- Use floor markings inside the premises to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as serving counters and tills.
- Use vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement within the premises while maintaining 2 metre distance.
- Make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly.
- Place plexiglass barriers at tills and counters if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers and customers.
- Adequate hand hygiene and toilet facilities. Provide additional pop-up hand hygiene stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser.
- Establish and supervise a schedule of frequent cleaning of bathrooms and frequently touched surfaces
- Customers should be seated at a table except when using the toilet, paying, and departing.
- Clear signage should indicate the location of and route to the bathrooms
- Limit the number of servers per group of guests to the smallest number that is practical.
- There is a limit of on the number of people gathering in a venue at one time – in line with NPHET guidance on indoor gatherings. Multiple gatherings are allowed in venue facilities provided they are in separate 'defined spaces' and there are systems to prevent intermingling in common spaces (e.g., entrances, exits and toilet facilities).
- Keep contact details for the person making the booking. Explain that the reason for keeping these records is to provide them to Public Health for contact tracing in the event that someone becomes ill with COVID-19 These records should be kept for 28 days and must be compliant with GDPR.
- Physical distancing of 2-metres should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre in controlled environments if all of the other risk mitigations requirements outlined have been met AND pre-booked time-limited slots are in place, which are a maximum of 1 hour 45 minutes duration. There should be a minimum of 15 minutes between bookings in order to allow for adequate cleaning and to allow customers to leave and enter, without mixing.
- Physical distancing of at least 1 metre should be maintained between people seated at tables.
- Encourage the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers.
- Use disposable menus or laminated menus that can be adequately cleaned after each use.

Unnecessary items should be removed from tables and single use rather than shared condiments should be provided.

#### Considerations:

Where at all practical, workers should provide services to only 1 gathering and should not move between multiple gatherings in different venue locations (e.g. two different function rooms).

Where possible, facilities such as toilets should not be used simultaneously by multiple gatherings. However, if they are cleaned in between usage, they may be used separately by different gatherings, within the same time period.

### UNCONTROLLED ENVIRONMENTS

These are settings where people have open access to the premises and generally don't know each other and are unlikely to be in close contact with each other for an extended period of time. Examples are supermarkets, retail stores, shopping malls, and takeaway-only food outlets.

#### Requirements:

- Physical distancing of 2-metres for customers (who are not close friends or family).
- As far as reasonably possible, physical distancing of 2 metres – and a minimum of 1 metre - should be maintained between workers.
- Keep contact tracing records for workers.

#### Considerations:

As much as possible use contactless payment systems to limit physical contact

## Appendix 2

Source: [HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19](#)

### Ventilation

The ventilation of enclosed places of work is a requirement under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Application) Regulations, 2007. natural (via windows and doors) and mechanical ventilation (Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition systems – HVAC) significantly improves hygiene and better air quality. The ability to adequately ventilate an indoor setting including opening windows and doors where possible is a key mitigating measure to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

General recommendations contained with *HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19 (14.10.20)* are listed below. This document provides an overview of the current literature examining the association between ventilation and COVID-19 and is aimed at commercial and public buildings.

#### Manual Requirements

##### Considerations:

- Windows and doors should be opened on a regular basis to allow for a flow of fresh air throughout the premises.

#### Mechanical Requirements

##### Considerations:

- Make sure that any mechanical ventilation systems are adequately maintained as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional maintenance cycles beyond the routine maintenance.
- Where filters are used in the central HVAC system, ensure that these are replaced regularly as per manufacturer's instructions. There is no need for additional cleaning or changing beyond routine maintenance.
- If filters are used as part of a central ventilation system, consideration should be given to installing the most efficient filter for the system (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value - MERV – 13 to 16; ISO 16890 ePM1 rating 60-90%). HEPA filtration should be considered where air is re-circulated.
- Increase the outdoor air fraction of air inside buildings as much as possible. This can be done by fully opening outside air dampers in mechanical systems or opening windows where available.
- Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces by increasing number of air exchanges per hour.
- Mechanical fans should only be used where there is a single occupant in a room. If this is not possible, then fans should be directed to exhaust directly to the exterior environment (e.g. open window), to minimise potential spread of pathogens.
- Disable demand controlled mechanical ventilation if possible. These types of HVAC systems are set to only circulate air when a certain threshold is passed, usually the amount of CO2 build-up in the room, or the ambient room temperature. If it is not possible to bypass this system, then set the threshold to the lowest possible setting (e.g. 400ppm or less of CO2) so that the system remains ventilating at a nominal speed.
- Keep ventilation running at all times (i.e. 24/7), regardless of building occupancy. When unoccupied, ventilation can be reduced to the lowest setting.
- Extend the hours of nominal HVAC operations to begin two hours before the building is occupied, and to only reduce to lowest setting 2 hours after the building has emptied. This ensures that rooms are well ventilated before occupancy each day.
- Ensure extractor fans in bathrooms are functional and running 24/7. When the building is occupied, they should operate at full capacity. As with the central HVAC, they can be set to the lowest speed 2 hours after the building is emptied and ramped up again 2 hours before occupancy if the system allows.
- Avoid directing air flow directly onto individuals or across groups of individuals, as this may facilitate transmission of pathogens between individuals.
- Avoid the use of air-recirculation systems in HVACs as much as possible. Use 100% outdoor air if supported by the HVAC system and compatible with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations. If it is not possible to disable the air recirculation system, then HEPA filtration or the highest efficiency filter possible according to the HVAC manufacturer's specifications should be considered.
- While there is evidence in experimental settings that coronaviruses like the SARS-CoV-2 virus deteriorate faster in high temperatures and humidity, the levels that need to be achieved are not attainable or acceptable in buildings. In addition, indoor humidification is not a common feature in most HVAC systems, and would incur additional maintenance and equipment costs. However, low relative humidity (<20%) is known to increase an individual's susceptibility to infection. Where such systems do exist, the advice is to maintain a relative air humidity of 20-60% if feasible.
- Create "clean" ventilation zones for staff that do not include high-risk areas (e.g. reception). This can be done by re-evaluating the positioning of the supply and exhaust air diffusers and adjusting flow rates to establish measurable pressure differentials.



Coronavirus  
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