

Following the NSW Government's announcement of further easing of COVID-19 restrictions from Friday 15 May 2020, Council has compiled some of the most commonly asked questions to assist businesses re-opening.

Q: How many patrons can I seat in my restaurant/café?

From Friday 15 May 2020 under new Government rules NSW cafes and restaurant can seat up to 10 patrons at any one time. In the event that a business wishes to open their doors to allow seated patrons, physical distancing rules apply and operators must ensure that at tables/seating are adequately spaced (1.5 meters) apart. If your venue cannot accommodate appropriate physical distancing due to small patronage area, then you should consider take-away only options, or further limit the number of seated patrons so that physical distancing requirements can be adhered to.

Q: Do the new rules also apply to pubs/clubs?

Pubs and registered clubs with restaurants or cafes may open under the new 10 patron only rule from Friday 15 May 2020 for the purpose of selling food only. Alcohol service can resume only for customers eating at the venue. Bar and gaming facilities will not be open at these venues.

Q: I have indoor and outdoor seating, how many patrons can I have?

The easing of restrictions from Friday 15 May 2020, allowing cafes and restaurants to seat up to 10 patrons at any one time is regardless of whether this is indoors or outdoors. A maximum of ten (10) patrons only is allowed across the venue.

Q. Can I still serve take-away food even if I am able to open for 10 patrons?

Yes. You can continue to serve take-away food as well as be open for 10 seated patrons. It is the business owner's decision to choose whether to open and serve takeaway, or to continue to just serve takeaway.

Q: Is there a new requirement to serve food with disposable (single use) cutlery and crockery?

Council strongly recommends any food business who does not have a commercial dishwashing machine that can sanitise cutlery and crockery to a minimum temperature of 80 degrees Celsius (irrespective of whether they have food grade sanitiser), to provide food with disposable (single use) cutlery and crockery.

All food businesses have been made aware through routine food premises inspections of their obligation to clean and sanitise food contact surfaces.

For more advice visit <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/Pages/COVID-19---Advice-for-food-businesses-on-general-health-and-hygiene.aspx>.

Q: What can I do to provide a COVID-19 safe environment for my seated patrons?

- Provide physical distancing of 1.5 meters between tables.
- Provide a supply of hand sanitiser at customer entrances and encourage patrons to make use of it.
- Wear gloves during table cleaning and wash-up process.
- Prioritise table, chair and menu cleaning and sanitising immediately after patrons vacate/use.
- Limit customer self-serve to cutlery, crockery, complimentary water glasses, straws etc.
- Provide menus that are able to be easily and effectively cleaned and sanitised.
- Provide menus and booking information online, to minimise queuing and time spent in a venue.

To download a handy check-list visit:

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/Documents/Recommencing%20operations%20checklist%202020.pdf>

Q: What can I do to provide a COVID-19 safe environment for my staff, customers and my community?

COVID-19 is not a foodborne disease. All food businesses must continue to comply with existing requirements under the Food Standards Code. Businesses with good preparations and procedures in place can minimise the impact of an employee diagnosed with COVID-19

- Review the health status of staff
 - It is essential that all staff understand the importance and regulations about not working while sick.
 - Staff checks should be done on a daily basis to review the health status of workers. e.g. do staff report feeling unwell with any flu like symptoms (sore throat, fever, cough)?
 - If yes, workers should be excluded from the workplace immediately and asked to self-isolate for 14 days.
 -
- Reinforce good hand hygiene
 - Proper hand washing is one of the most effective tools in preventing the spread of novel coronavirus.
 - Handwashing should be increased under the current circumstances (after going to the bathroom, touching your face, after handling raw food) and should be done effectively according to guidance from the Department of Health. NOTE: Glove wearing is not an exception to washing of hands.
 - Hand sanitiser should not be used as a substitute for washing hands with soap for food handlers.
 - Additional hand sanitising points should be set up throughout the business.
- Ensure that all food contact surfaces are regularly cleaned and sanitised.
- Check that your commercial dishwasher can sanitise cutlery and crockery to a minimum of 80 degrees Celsius.
- Do not accept 'keep-cups' at this stage



- Encourage a contact-less payment system such as tap-and-go card payments or direct bank transfer
- Provide menus online (via Facebook or website) so that patrons can view menu items before arriving and spend less time deciding

For more information and advice visit <https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/help/covid-19-advice-for-businesses>.

Q: Is Council continuing routine food premises inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Council is committed to minimising the risk of COVID-19 to its community and staff members. As such, Council has made a decision to temporarily suspend the food premises inspection program until further notice. However, complaints relating to alleged food-borne illness or poor food handling standards will be investigated.

For more information please contact Council's Environmental Health & Building Surveyor

Sharon Coulston

Phone: 02 6036 0100 or 1300 653 538

Email: mail@greaterhume.nsw.gov.au