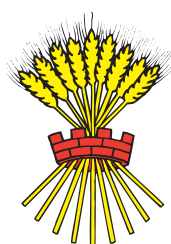


Operating your premises safely



A guide for retail businesses opening after COVID closure

RYEDALE
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Introduction

During June and July, the Government will allow types of retail businesses to re-open, following a period of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before you re-open it is very important that you take all necessary steps to keep your employees, and members of the public, as safe as possible.

This document has been issued by Ryedale District Council's environmental health team to help retail business owners to understand their responsibilities, and plan for safe re-opening and operation at this very difficult time.

The advice we give here is based upon the guidance and good practice in place at the time of publication. However you are strongly advised to pay close attention to the government website (www.gov.uk) as circumstances are subject to change, and government requirements and recommendations may be altered and updated at short notice.

First steps

Before opening to the public you must make yourself familiar with the government's guidance on working safely during COVID-19 in shops and branches. This provides a practical framework of things you need to think about, and what you need to do to continue or restart your retail operation.

You will find the guidance here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

What the law says/risk assessment

COVID 19 is a risk to health that must be managed by the employer, in order to comply with the law.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 applies to all workplaces. It requires employers to take reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of employees whilst at work and also others who may be affected by what they do, this includes members of the public and visitors.

Before reopening you should ensure the safety of your premises by:

1. Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment and sharing the results with the people who work at your premises. You can find out more about this, and access a template on the Health and Safety Executive website here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>
2. Developing cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures for staff and customers, in line with guidance
3. Taking all reasonable steps to help your employees to work from home where possible
4. Taking all reasonable steps to maintain a 2m distance between people in your premises – both staff and employees
5. Where people cannot be 2m apart, doing everything practice to manage transmission risk.

When you have satisfied these requirements you should display a notice visibly in your shop window or outside your store to show employees, customers and other visitors that you have followed the guidance. You can download the notice here:

<https://bit.ly/COVID19Sign>

Guiding you through

In the remainder of this document you will find Ryedale District Council's list of practical points to consider about operating your premises safely.

Whilst no list can be exhaustive, it will give you a strong starting point, which you can use as a "checklist". It is important to remember that health and safety is something that you should review continuously, making necessary changes along the way in line with the latest guidance and any changes in circumstances.

Outside your business premises

- Have clear signage to explain to customers what your social distancing measures are, and reminding them not to enter if they have symptoms of Coronavirus
- Encourage customers to shop alone if possible
- Remind customers who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines
- Have one entry and one exit point, which are separate if possible
- Keep entrance and exit doors open, if possible
- Consider use of additional staff or security personnel if needed to assist managing the queue
- Close off or remove any of your outside seating areas to discourage people from congregating outside your premises
- Consider alternatives to people visiting your shop, for example by operating as 'click and collect' service or offering appointments
- Assess the size any external area, available along the frontage of your premises, and calculate the maximum number of customers who can safely queue with a distance of 2 metres between
- Speak to neighbouring premises, if they also have outside queuing, to ensure that your queuing proposals are not affected by neighbouring businesses and keep customers safe
- Provide pavement markings outside your store to assist with distancing. Ryedale District Council may be able to assist with pavement markings upon request.
- Consider provision of barriers or rope for queue waiting areas to ensure that people stay within the defined queue area
- When you have done all you can to meet government safety requirements, remember to display the notice saying that you have done so. The notice is available here: <https://bit.ly/CV19Sign>

Inside business premises

Hygiene and cleaning

- Assess the size of the premises and its layout, so that you can calculate the maximum number of customers in the shop and the different areas within it, at one time. Consider where you need to position staff to help control numbers.
- Provide cleaning stations at front of store which should include hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes and spray and tissue for trolley/basket handles.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection. Attention should be given to shared equipment and hand contact surfaces including work surfaces, tables, chairs, switches, door handles, lift buttons, keypads, stair/escalator hand rails, push plates on doors, toilets, hand towel dispensers, taps etc.
- Check that you are using sanitisers that are effective against “enveloped viruses” such as Coronavirus and that staff are adhering to the correct contact time and dilution rates. Those that comply with “BSEN 14476” are considered effective and this number should be stated on the label or you should check with your cleaning product supplier.

For further information about cleaning and disposing of cleaning materials please see www.gov.uk Covid-19 Cleaning in non- healthcare settings

- If your premises have been closed for a period, or less occupied, water may have stagnated in water systems, which can increase the risk of legionella bacteria. Flushing the system can reduce this risk. For information on the control of legionella in water systems visit: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>

In-store cafes and toilets

- Consider whether it is safe to keep customer toilets open or if these should be available on request. If open, regular cleaning should include manual multi-person touch points such as door handles, flushes, taps etc.
- Baby changing facilities should be available but consider frequency of cleaning
- Cafes and restaurants are closed until further notice and should be securely closed off to ensure customers do not use them for seating.

Social distancing

- Increase the ventilation within the premises by opening doors and windows if possible and safe to do so
- Use floor markings inside to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas
- Place clear signage throughout the store reminding customers of the social distancing measures and asking them to follow these rules
- Review the layout of the store to ensure aisles/walkways are as clear as possible to accommodate 2m social distancing, including the removal of promotional fixtures if necessary
- Create a 'one way' system, by closing off aisles and using signage to direct customers to move in the same continuous direction
- Make regular announcements if possible, to remind staff and customers to follow social distancing advice
- Erect physical barriers at till points using flexi-plastic to provide a barrier for those working on the tills. Alternatively, create an exclusion zone around the till area with a customer notice 'Please stand behind the line while being served'.
- Use staff to manage the flow of customers to checkouts.
- Where till points are close together, consider closing every other till point. Assess whether this is also necessary for self-scan tills.
- Leave non-essential doors open to minimise the number of people who touch them. This does not apply to fire doors.
- Customer order collection points should be set up to ensure the 2m separation either by floor markings or by limiting the number of customers that can wait at a time
- Consider limiting the number of customers in enclosed spaces such as lifts
- Remove promotions and features where customers are likely to congregate, such as product demonstrations.
- To limit congestion, consider restocking/replenishing only outside of store opening hours. If replenishment must be done in opening hours, assess how this can be done without compromising employee or customer safety, e.g. using barriers to close the aisle and have staff available to obtain a product for customers and only have as many staff in this area that can maintain 2m distance.
- Encourage contactless purchases

- Self-checkout touch screens/keypads. If these remain in operation a member of staff must be available to regularly wipe these areas. Ideally between each use.
- Close the premises if it becomes too busy
- Consider what steps will be taken by managers and staff where customers are not following social distancing measures

If you provide in store products for customers to trial prior to purchase, eg TVs, headphones, computers these must be set up to enable social distancing rules to be followed:

- Consider whether it is better for staff to demonstrate instead of customers touching the item or provide hand sanitiser in these areas
- Stop services which require direct interaction with customers such as providing make up advice, nail bars or personal shopping
- If stores choose not to assist customers with large purchases to their car, it is advisable to highlight this prior to purchase. If stores are providing this service they should provide suitable protection and advice for this to be conducted safely.

Delivery areas

When taking in deliveries ensure that all social distancing guidelines are followed:

- Maintain a two metre distance at all times where possible. Markings on the floor may help staff and delivery drivers to do this.
- Ensure that the delivery driver has been briefed on your social distancing measures in place by a member of staff
- All delivery drivers should wash their hands after entering the building
- All existing health and safety procedures should remain in place and carried out at all times when unloading
- Ensure that all staff are able to wash hands regularly

Meetings, staff/rest rooms and staff canteens

- Meetings should be kept to an absolute minimum carried out in a safe manner following social distancing guidelines. Desks should be cleaned down after the meeting finishes.
- Small rooms that do not allow 2m distancing should be limited to one person with notices displayed on the door and desks cleaned down after each use
- Smoking areas employees must be advised to remain 2m apart with notices displayed in this area
- Staff should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after eating
- Notices promoting hand hygiene and social distancing should be placed visibly in these areas
- Provision of hand sanitiser at entry/exit points
- Introduce a staggered or extended break rota to avoid crowding
- Space out chairs and tables by marking as “do not use”
- Remove sofas from break areas
- Frequently clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched regularly

Further information and guidance

For further information and guidance on how to ensure your business premises is prepared you may want to consult the following:

www.gov.uk

Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (Covid -19)

www.brc.org.uk

Website for the British Retail Consortium. Contains coronavirus section.

www.usdaw.org.uk

Website of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers. Contains COVID advice

www.hse.gov.uk

Coronavirus (COVID-19): latest information and advice. Social distancing, keeping businesses open and in-work activities during the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.food.gov.uk>

Coronavirus advice for food businesses; Advice for consumers; Bulk freezing of ambient and chilled foods; Food safety for food delivery; Food safety for community cooking and food banks.

Ryedale District Council support

We update our website regularly on the support available for businesses during the COVID pandemic, and to provide the latest advice and guidance.

Visit Ryedale District Council's Covid pages here:

<https://www.ryedale.gov.uk/covid-19-2020.html>

The Council has created a Back to Business pack for small retail businesses, containing social distancing posters and floor stickers. You can order a FREE pack (subject to availability) here:

<https://www.ryedale.gov.uk/covid-19-2020/order-business-pack.html>

If queuing on the pavement outside your premises is an issue, we may be able to help with pavement stencils to encourage customers to maintain social distancing. Contact as below.

For environmental health and safety advice, or for any queries relating to this document please contact:

Environmental Health Team Email: environment@ryedale.gov.uk Tel: 01653 600 666
Or write to: Ryedale District Council, Ryedale House, Malton, YO17 7HH



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