

COVID-19: Guidance for Food Businesses

With the number of COVID-19 cases increasing in the ACT, food businesses need to be aware, plan and implement, to protect their business and the ACT community.

Please see below some additional measures to assist in the control of the COVID-19

- To help slow the spread of COVID-19 in the ACT, the ACT Chief Health Officer has issued a number of Public Health Emergency Directions prohibiting certain indoor and outdoor mass gatherings. As of 19 March 2020, all non-essential indoor gatherings of greater than 100 people (including staff) and all outdoor gatherings of greater than 500 people (including staff) are prohibited. These directions may impact your food business and any planned functions or activities. Indoor functions of less than 100 people and outdoor functions of less than 500 people may proceed, but with social distancing and other hygiene measures. Failure to comply with these directions may result in significant penalties. The Public Health Emergency Directions can be found through the following link:
<https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/WhatsNew/Index>
- Be alert and not alarmed – stay up to date and informed through the ACT Health website and social media channels.
- Help prevent the spread of germs by paying attention to good hand and respiratory hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow, dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards.
- Ensure your hand washing facilities are not obstructed and have sufficient paper towel and soap; these facilities should only be used for hand washing. Ensure gloves are changed regularly and wash hands between glove changes.
- If you or your staff are unwell, tell them to stay at home and avoid social activities or mass gatherings and events. Ask them to be aware of the criteria for getting tested for COVID-19, available on the ACT Health website.
- Brief your staff on the additional processes and procedures, especially hand washing techniques each shift.
- More frequent sanitising of all benches and surfaces, (benches, handles, fridge and cool room handles etc), dining areas and condiments such as sauce bottles, salt and pepper shakers, preferably after each dining service. Clean EFT machines regularly. One staff member should be dedicated to handle all transactions.
- Self-service food stations, buffets and self-service utensil and plate arrangements should be operated by staff only.
- ACT Health recommends Food Businesses take a precautionary approach and consider carefully whether to use customer supplied reusable containers to minimise the potential risk to your staff.



- Arrange dining areas to enhance social distancing, seat dining groups apart and limit dining periods to less than four hours for each booking.
- Place additional signage in key areas, including above the hand wash facility with correct procedures.
- Provide hand sanitiser, clearly labelled for public use only at points of entry.
- If an employee or patron has serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call triple zero (000).
- Please maintain a bookings register and process for signing in staff at the start and end of shifts.
- Please ensure that you have planned for the following:
 - If a significant number of staff are off sick;
 - Hygiene maintenance in your staff and public facing areas;
 - Cleaning escalation in staff and public areas;
 - High use stock maintenance; and
 - Management of staff presenting with illness in the workforce and public areas.

You can keep up to date on the situation in the ACT through the ACT Health website
<https://health.act.gov.au/public-health-alert/updated-information-about-covid-19#ifyouthink>

There is further food safety information available in the following link below:
<http://health.act.gov.au/public-information/businesses/food-safety-regulation>

If you have any questions, please contact ACT Health.

Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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