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These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide responses to a range of local government enquires as councils progressively ease COVID-19 restrictions in line with public health orders and is for guidance only. Decisions on whether to open a facility or service remains a matter for individual councils.

Even if a service or facility is able to remain open, councils should work as far as possible to maintain [social distancing](#) requirements and good [hygiene](#) practices consistent with NSW Government advice.

For more information please visit the [NSW Government](#) and [NSW Health](#) websites.

Councils should also consider the use of signage exhibiting ‘risk warnings’ under the *Civil Liability Act 2002*.

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Council administration buildings, depots and offices	
Can council staff return to work in administration buildings and offices?	<p>The Public Health Order of 14 May 2020 directs employers to allow an employee to work at the person's place of residence where it is reasonably practicable to do so. It is a matter for individual councils to determine how to comply with this direction, based on the relevant circumstances. The Public Health Order changes certain restrictions on people in office buildings. Specifically, the limit on 100 people in an indoor space and the requirement that a premises provides sufficient space to allow for 4 square metres of space per person ("the 4 square metre rule") no longer apply in office buildings. However, where staff do return to the office to work, it is recommended that councils ensure that adequate physical distancing continues to be maintained. Staff must continue to stay home if they are sick.</p> <p>SafeWork provides advice on h</p>
Do the exclusions of the Public Health Order apply to indoor spaces at council works depots?	<p>Yes. The Public Health Order exclusion in terms of eased restrictions for certain gatherings applies to all "office buildings". It is a matter for individual councils to determine which of their buildings fall into this category.</p>
Council meetings and public forums	
Can council meetings, committee meetings now be held?	<p>It is now permissible for councillors and council staff to leave their homes for the purposes of attending council and committee meetings and to attend meetings in person.</p> <p>Councils should continue to allow councillors and staff to attend and participate in council and committee meetings by audio visual links where it is reasonably practicable to do so.</p> <p>Members of the public are not permitted to attend meetings (other than for the purposes of work) if this means that the total number of people attending meetings (including councillors and staff) exceed 10.</p>

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	<p>Where councils exclude members of the public from meetings, they must livestream their meetings using audio-visual links to satisfy the requirement under section 10 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> for members of the public to be permitted to “attend” meetings.</p> <p>Councils must not allow persons to attend meetings if the size of the meeting venue is insufficient to ensure there is 4 square metres of space for each person attending the meeting.</p> <p>Where councillors and staff do participate in face to face meetings, councils must ensure that adequate physical distancing continues to be maintained. Staff and councillors must continue to stay home if they are sick.</p> <p>Further information about compliance with social distancing requirements at council and committee meetings can be found in Council Circular 20-17 and Council Circular 20-09.</p> <p>Separate advice is provided in relation to planning panels below.</p>
<p>Can councils undertake face to face public consultation (including at public forums)?</p>	<p>Public forums should only be held in a manner that is consistent with the Public Health Order. Where this is not possible, public forums should not be held, or alternative arrangements should be made for the making of public submissions to councillors. For example, submissions could be made to councillors via an audio-visual link or in writing instead of in person. Further information about the ability of councils to hold public forums during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in Council Circular 20-09.</p>
<p>Do the newly eased restrictions apply to planning panels?</p>	<p>Advice from DPIE on holding planning panels has not changed. Restrictions on meetings during COVID-19 are changing rapidly. They are now being eased in stages across government. Councils should continue to check the DPIE Planning Panel website for the latest information on meeting requirements for Local Planning Panels.</p>
<p>What provisions exist to allow council staff to travel more than one per vehicle? As public spaces</p>	<p>SafeWork NSW advises that if more than one person is required in a vehicle, occupants must ensure people are seated in the most distant seats, have the air circulating with outside air and open windows when possible. Further information about safe work practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a number of case studies can be found on the SafeWork NSW website.</p>

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open up more staff will be required to monitor and clean equipment. Can more than one person travel in a council vehicle if one is on the back seat?	
What is council's role in enforcing and/or educating business and wider community in relation to restrictions – and under what instrument? For example, religious groups and businesses conducting funerals and weddings – is this the role of local government to enforce the number of persons attending?	Councils play an important role in disseminating information to businesses and the community, through local networks. For the most up to date information, councils should visit OLG's COVID-19 webpage .
Can there be a form of reconciliation back to the Commonwealth Roadmap given the high publicity and visibility of this within the community and councils.	<p>Every state has its own circumstances and must be able to move at its own pace. NSW will consider other changes when it is safe to do so, based on the data and best available health advice. This advice will be based on testing, tracing and tracking cases and using technology such as the COVIDSafe app.</p> <p>For the most up to date information on the status of restrictions in NSW visit the NSW Government's COVID-19 webpage.</p>

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Food Business Regulation

Can food businesses be open from 1 June 2020? What are the restrictions on customer numbers?

On 29 May a new *Public Health (COVID-19) Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020* was made, which comes into effect on Monday, 1 June 2020. This Order sets out limitations and directions for use of premises, including which premises may be open and when a COVID-19 Safety Plan is required.

The template to create a COVID-19 Safety Plan is available on the NSW Health website:
<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines>

The Order allows *food and drink premises* to be open so long as certain conditions and restrictions are met.

Food and drink premises mean premises that are used for the preparation and retail sale of food or drink (or both) for immediate consumption on or off the premises, and includes a restaurant or cafe, take away food and drink premises, a pub or a small bar. In part, this includes premises within other premises except:

- casinos
- micro-breweries, small distilleries holding a drink on-premises authorisation under the *Liquor Act 2007* or cellar door premise, and
- pubs and registered clubs (including a racing club within the meaning of the *Liquor Act 2007*).

Separate parts of the Order apply to the three types of premises set out above.

The Order now allows, in relation to *food and drink premises* for the number of customers that may consume food or drink on the premises to be the lesser of:

- 50 customers per existing separate seated food or drink area, or
- the total number of customers calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each customer (excluding staff members) on the premises.

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	<p>Existing separate seated food or drink area means a separate seated area for the consumption of food or drink that existed immediately before the making of this Order. For example, if food and drink premises includes 2 restaurants, each restaurant may sell food or drinks at any time to no more than 50 customers to consume on the premises, subject to having at least 4 square metres of space for each person (other than staff) in the restaurant.</p> <p>If the food or drink premises includes more than one restaurant or cafe, the limitation on the number of customers to whom food and drink may be sold for consumption on the premises is per restaurant or cafe on the premises.</p>
<p>Are there any new obligations on food and drink premises under the Public Health Order?</p>	<p>For <i>food and drink premises</i> that are open, each person entering the premises must provide the person’s name and contact details, including a telephone number or email address, to the occupier or operator of the premises, who must then record these details for all persons entering the premises. These records must be kept for at least four weeks and, if requested, provided to the Chief Health Officer.</p> <p>The operator of all <i>food and drink premises</i> that are open must have a COVID-19 safety plan. This means that the occupier or operator of the premises must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and comply with a safety plan for the premises that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 safety checklist approved by the Chief Health Officer in relation to the type of premises and published on an appropriate Government website (a copy is available here), and • keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested.
<p>Can pubs and registered clubs be open from 1 June 2020? What are the</p>	<p>On 29 May a new Public Health (COVID-19) Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020 was made, which comes into effect on Monday, 1 June 2020. This Order sets out limitations and directions for use of premises, including which premises may be open and when a COVID-19 Safety Plan is required.</p>

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<p>restrictions on customer numbers?</p>	<p>The Order allows <i>pubs and registered clubs</i> to be open so long as certain conditions and restrictions are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Pub</i> means licensed premises under the <i>Liquor Act 2007</i> the principal purpose of which is the retail sale of liquor for consumption on the premises, whether or not the premises include hotel or motel accommodation and whether or not food is sold or entertainment is provided on the premises.• <i>Registered club</i> means a club that holds a club licence under the <i>Liquor Act 2007</i>. This includes a racing club within the meaning of the <i>Liquor Act</i>. <p>Separate parts of the Order apply to micro-breweries, small distilleries holding a drink on-premises authorisation under the <i>Liquor Act</i> or cellar door premises.</p> <p>For the purposes of accessing good or services, other than accommodation, the lesser of the following number of customers is allowed — (a) 50 customers per existing separate seated food or drink area, (b) the total number of persons calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each customer (excluding staff members) on the premises.</p> <p>The Order now allows, in relation to <i>pubs and registered clubs</i> for the number of customers that may consume food or drink on the premises to be the lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50 customers per existing separate seated food or drink area, or• the total number of customers calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each customer (excluding staff members) on the premises. <p>Any persons on a bowling green on the premises are not to be counted in the total number of persons on the premises, provided no more than 10 persons are on the green at any one time</p> <p>Existing separate seated food or drink area means a separate seated area for the consumption of food or drink that existed immediately before the making of this Order. For example, if food and drink premises includes 2 restaurants, each restaurant may sell food or drinks at any time to no more than 50 customers to consume on</p>
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	<p>the premises, subject to having at least 4 square metres of space for each person (other than staff) in the restaurant.</p> <p>If the food or drink premises includes more than one restaurant or cafe, the limitation on the number of customers to whom food and drink may be sold for consumption on the premises is per restaurant or cafe on the premises.</p>
<p>Are there any new obligations on pubs and registered clubs under the Public Health Order?</p>	<p>For <i>pubs and registered clubs</i> that are open, each person entering the premises must provide the person's name and contact details, including a telephone number or email address, to the occupier or operator of the premises, who must then record these details for all persons entering the premises. These records must be kept for at least four weeks and, if requested, provided to the Chief Health Officer.</p> <p>The operator of all food and drink premises that are open must have a COVID-19 safety plan. This means that the occupier or operator of the premises must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and comply with a safety plan for the premises that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 safety checklist approved by the Chief Health Officer in relation to the type of premises and published on an appropriate Government website (a copy is available here), and • keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested.
<p>What is council's role in enforcing the PHO for cafes and restaurants, given that council officers play an overlapping food safety inspection role?</p>	<p>Councils have not been asked to enforce the Public Health Order, which is a role for NSW Police. It is anticipated, however, that authorised officers of councils could identify public health and hygiene issues when undertaking food safety inspections that may indicate a food business is in breach of the Public Health Order.</p>

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	<p>In the first instance, authorised officers should seek to notify the business that action may be required and to work with them to rectify issues by offering support and assistance where possible. The following template COVID Safe Plans provided as industry guidance may assist in this regard for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pubs, clubs, bars and breweries, and • restaurants and cafes. <p>The NSW Food Authority is also providing advice and support to councils, including through its Food Regulation Partnership portal for authorised officers. Ultimately, if a business poses a continuing risk and compliance and enforcement action may be required, councils should refer these matters to NSW Police.</p>
<p>With the restricted reopening of cafes and restaurants, are routine food safety inspections expected?</p>	<p>The NSW Food Authority maintains a Food businesses and COVID-19 webpage which includes the latest advice surrounding the virus. Councils are advised to keep up to date with the latest developments on COVID-19 and food safety. The Food Authority's Local Government Unit is also regularly engaging with local councils.</p> <p>Please refer to the Food Regulation Partnership Portal for further specific advice surrounding food surveillance activities, or alternatively contact the NSW Food Authority for further information. The Food Standards Australia/New Zealand website also contains useful information.</p>
<p>Does the new COVID Safe Plan template replace the voluntary checklist for food businesses?</p>	<p>To assist in the reopening of many retail food businesses, food regulators previously developed a voluntary checklist for food businesses which was made available on the Food Regulation Partnership Portal.</p> <p>On 29 May 2020 new COVID Safe Plans templates were released for pubs, clubs, bars and breweries, and restaurants and cafes. These templates provide industry guidance to support businesses seeking to operate under the Public Health Order that applies from 1 June 2020. Councils and the food businesses they regulate should refer first to the Public Health Order and then to the relevant COVID Safe Plan for each industry.</p>

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	Each COVID-Safe Plan template sets out the matters in the COVID-19 safety checklist that must be addressed by each business owner in that industry.
Libraries	
<p>When can libraries reopen?</p> <p>How many people can be in the library at once?</p>	<p>On 29 May a new Public Health (COVID-19) Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020 was made, which comes into effect on Monday, 1 June 2020. This Order sets out limitations and directions for use of premises, including which premises may be open and when a COVID-19 Safety Plan is required.</p> <p>The template to create a COVID-19 Safety Plan is available on the NSW Health website: https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines</p> <p>This Order allows premises that are an <i>information or education facility</i> to be open so long as certain conditions and restrictions are met. Information and education facility mean a building or place used for providing information or education to visitors, and the exhibition or display of items, and includes an art gallery, museum, library, visitor information centre and the like.</p> <p>The Order states that no more than the total number of persons calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each person (including staff members) is permitted on the premises.</p> <p>The State Library of NSW is working with all NSW public libraries and providing assistance on reopening plans. Please see the State Library's Public Library Services website for details and contacts.</p>
<p>What are the new requirements libraries are required to follow?</p>	For libraries that are open any indoor cinemas, theatres or theatrettes must be closed and the library must have a COVID-19 safety plan. This means that the occupier or operator of the premises must:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and comply with a safety plan for the premises that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 safety checklist approved by the Chief Health Officer in relation to the type of premises and published on an appropriate Government website (a copy is available here), and • keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested. <p>On 29 May 2020 new COVID Safe Plans templates were released for specific industries to provide guidance to support facilities seeking to operate under the Public Health Order that applies from 1 June 2020. Councils and the managers of their libraries should refer first to the Public Health Order and then to the COVID Safe Plan template for libraries.</p> <p>The COVID-Safe Plan template sets out the matters in the COVID-19 safety checklist that must be addressed by each library. This covers the following subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wellbeing of staff and visitors • physical distancing • hygiene and cleaning, and • record keeping.
<p>Can visitor information centres be open? Do any conditions apply?</p>	<p>Yes, from Monday 1 June 2020 all information and education facilities may open so long as certain conditions and restrictions are met, including visitor information centres.</p> <p>The Order states that no more than the total number of persons calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each person (including staff members) is permitted on the premises.</p> <p>For visitor information centres that are open any indoor cinemas, theatres or theatrettes must be closed and the facility must have a COVID-19 safety plan. This means that the occupier or operator of the premises must:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and comply with a safety plan for the premises that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 safety checklist approved by the Chief Health Officer in relation to the type of premises and published on an appropriate Government website, and • keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested.
<p>Do libraries have to keep records of all people entering the library?</p>	<p>Yes. The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that each library’s Plan, which must be complied with under the Public Health Order, must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep a record of name and a mobile number or email address for all staff, volunteers and visitors for a period of at least 28 days, and • ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely. <p>You must also make your staff aware of the COVIDSafe app and its benefits to support contact tracing if required.</p>
<p>What cleaning and sanitation and hygiene measures should be taken at libraries?</p>	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that the following steps must be taken in relation to hygiene and cleaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarantine returned items for 24 hours and wipe down plastic cases or coverings before returning these to shelves • remove any toys and virtual reality headsets from public access • adopt good hand hygiene practices • encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after touching books, DVDs, computers or any other materials • ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels • clean frequently used areas at least daily with detergent or disinfectant • clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disinfectant solutions need to be maintained at an appropriate strength and used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, and• staff are to wear gloves when cleaning and wash hands thoroughly before and after with soap and water.
What steps are required to implement physical distancing?	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that the following steps must be taken in relation to physical distancing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• capacity must not exceed one person per 4 square metres• use signage at entrances to communicate the maximum safe capacity• move or remove seating and tables as required to comply with physical distancing• ensure no more than 10 visitors are at any storytime, workshop or other group activity at any one time• reduce crowding wherever possible and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor• where reasonably practical, ensure staff maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing at all times (including at meal breaks)• use telephone or video for essential meetings where practical• where reasonably practical, stagger start times and breaks for staff members to minimise the risk of close contact• consider physical barriers such as plexiglass around counters with high volume interactions with customers• review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical. Have strategies in place to manage gatherings that may occur immediately outside the premises, and• coordinate with public transport, where reasonably practical, around strategies to minimise COVID-19 risks associated with transportation to and from the venue.

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<p>What should council do if notified that a person with COVID 19 visited a library when sick?</p>	<p>Council should immediately contact their local Public Health Unit for advice. Contact details are available here. Libraries are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep a record of name and a mobile number or email address for all staff, volunteers and visitors for a period of at least 28 days, and • ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely. • This information may be requested by or on behalf of the Chief Health Officer, including when a staff member or visitor may be infected with COVID-19.
<p>What steps must be taken to protect the wellbeing of staff and visitors?</p>	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that the following steps must be taken in relation to the wellbeing of staff and visitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exclude staff, volunteers and visitors who are unwell • provide staff and volunteers with information and training on COVID-19, including when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning • make staff aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self-isolate, and • display conditions of entry (website, social media, venue entry). • The template COVID Safe Plan also states, in relation to physical distancing, that libraries should: • where reasonably practical, ensure staff maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing at all times (including at meal breaks) • use telephone or video for essential meetings where practical • where reasonably practical, stagger start times and breaks for staff members to minimise the risk of close contact • consider physical barriers such as plexiglass around counters with high volume interactions with customers • review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have strategies in place to manage gatherings that may occur immediately outside the premises, and • coordinate with public transport, where reasonably practical, around strategies to minimise COVID-19 risks associated with transportation to and from the venue. <p>You must also make your staff aware of the COVIDSafe app and its benefits to support contact tracing if required.</p>
Will there be restrictions on visitor numbers each day?	The Order only states that no more than the total number of persons calculated by allowing 4 square metres of space for each person (including staff members) is permitted on the premises. No daily limit is specified.
Are customers able to browse the collections or should library staff access books for them?	The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that libraries should encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after touching books, DVDs, computers or any other materials.
What should be done about newspapers and magazines? What about toys and puzzles?	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that toys and virtual reality headsets should be removed from public access. It also states that the following steps must be taken in relation to hygiene and cleaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quarantine returned items for 24 hours and wipe down plastic cases or coverings before returning these to shelves • adopt good hand hygiene practices • encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after touching books, DVDs, computers or any other materials, and • clean frequently used areas at least daily with detergent or disinfectant.
Are all books touched by a person in the library, as	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries states that libraries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must quarantine returned items for 24 hours and wipe down plastic cases or coverings before returning these to shelves, and

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<p>well as returns, to be quarantined for 24 hours?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after touching books, DVDs, computers or any other materials.
<p>Should libraries make public computer access available or only the internet?</p>	<p>The COVID-Safe Plan template for libraries does not refer to public computer access but states that libraries should remove any toys and virtual reality headsets from public access. It also states that libraries should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage staff and visitors to wash their hands before and after touching books, DVDs, computers or any other materials • clean frequently used areas at least daily with detergent or disinfectant • clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day • move or remove seating and tables as required to comply with physical distancing, and • ensure no more than 10 visitors are at any storytime, workshop or other group activity at any one time.
<p>What happens if a library or other building permitted to be open contains a café?</p>	<p>The café may open if it is able to comply with the relevant parts of the Public Health Order. See further information above in the section about Food Regulation.</p>
<p>Can you ask minors to sign in without parental permission – if not how do you ensure that you have permission when kids often go to libraries after school etc?</p>	<p>Visitors are not required to sign their name but are required to state their name and either a mobile number or email address.</p> <p>If a minor attends with a parent or guardian, the parent/guardian details will suffice. If attending the library unaccompanied, the minor must provide contact details in order to be admitted. Libraries have policies for use by minors based on Guidelines issued by the Library Council of NSW - https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/childrens_policy_guidelines_0.pdf</p>

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<p>What if libraries are used for delivery of other services?</p>	<p>The Public Health Order states that from 1 June 2020 premises may be used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to provide a service to assist vulnerable members of the public, including, for example, a food bank or a service providing for the needs of homeless persons, or • for counselling and support group services, or • as an early education and care facility.
<p>Galleries, museums, information centres and other cultural venues</p>	
<p>Can galleries and museums now reopen?</p> <p>What are the rules for managing wellbeing of people on site, social distancing, hygiene and record keeping in these facilities?</p>	<p>Yes. The Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020 NSW enables galleries, museums, information centres and the like to be open to visitors.</p> <p>Schedule 1 of the Order (No. 13. 'Information and education facilities') outlines the following limitations, restrictions and conditions that apply to these premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitation - there must be no more than the total number of people allowing 4m² for each person in the facility at any one time, including staff members • Conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) indoor cinemas, theatres or theatrettes must be closed (b) facilities must have a COVID-19 safety plan. <p>The COVID-19 Safety Plan for Museums and Galleries is available on the NSW Government COVID-19 website to help councils and other operators of museums and galleries to create and maintain a safe environment for staff and visitors.</p> <p>The 3-page Safety Plan is designed to be simple and quick to fill out online, and to easily share for consultation input and approval.</p> <p>Key issues councils are asked to consider include:</p>

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- **Wellbeing of staff and visitors** – eg. excluding those who are unwell, staff training, conditions of entry
- **Physical distancing** – eg. ways to facilitate the 4m² rule – consider time-based bookings, space eating in the facility out to ensure the 1.5m social distancing rule is met, no more than 10 visitors per tour group, markers on floors, managing entry and exit etc
- **Hygiene and cleaning** – promote good hand hygiene, enhance cleaning in bathrooms and frequently used areas, encourage contactless payment, consider replacing printed guides with downloadable ones,
- **Record keeping** – keep a record of name and mobile number or email address of every person (staff, volunteers, clients and visitors). For at least 28 days. This may be required by NSW Health if a COVID-19 outbreak is linked to your facility.

Councils must keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer, if and as requested.

Create NSW continues to work with all partner galleries and museums to provide assistance on reopening and operational plans during this period. Please see the Create NSW [website](#) for details and contacts.

Create NSW conducted a webinar on Friday 29 May, details of which will be available on their website shortly.

Meanwhile, as galleries and museums are preparing to open again, Create NSW is undertaking a survey of organisations to better understand how the sector is responding. The survey will allow Create NSW to gauge how many venues have reopened, or chosen to remain closed. The survey should only take around two minutes and will provide valuable information for Create NSW in supporting organisations as they reopen. The survey will be open until 11.59pm 7 June 2020. Your support in completing the survey is appreciated.

Please [click here](#) to complete the survey.

Councils should continue to update their COVID-19 Plans, as required. Further information will also continue be provided to councils as it becomes available.

Community centres and halls

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<p>Can my council open our community centre or hall?</p> <p>What limitations and restrictions apply to opening our community centre or hall?</p>	<p>Yes. The Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020 NSW enables community centres to be open, but only for the 3 purposes listed under ‘Restrictions’ below.</p> <p>Councils should determine whether or not premises are a ‘community centre’. However, feedback from councils suggests that this may be any building in which members of the community meet for social or other purposes whether or not it is called a ‘community centre’. Common examples include town and community halls and neighbourhood centres.</p> <p>Schedule 1 of the Order (No. 7 - ‘Community centres’) outlines the following limitations and restrictions that apply to these premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitation - there must be no more than the total number of people allowing 4m² for each person in the facility at any one time, including staff members • Restrictions – (as per clause 6 of the Order) community halls may only be open for 3 purposes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to provide a service to assist vulnerable members of the public, for example, a food bank or a service providing for the needs of homeless persons, or (b) for counselling and support group services, or (c) as an early education and care facility.
<p>Can religious services, weddings, funerals and wakes be held in community centres?</p>	<p>No. While the Public Health Order permits religious services, weddings and funerals to be held (with limited participants) they may not be held in community centres and other buildings that are required to be closed.</p>
<p>Organised sporting activities and recreation facilities</p>	
<p>Can recreational facilities now be re-opened?</p>	<p>The Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 3) 2020 provides that major recreation facilities, such as parks, sports stadiums and showgrounds used for recreational activities may be open for the public to use regularly or periodically.</p>

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	<p>However, indoor recreation facilities must continue to remain shut to members of the public.</p> <p>Councils should determine whether or not a premises is a ‘recreational facility’ (indoors or major) using the definitions in clause 3 of the Order.</p>
<p>What does the latest Public Health Order mean for the conduct of sporting activities?</p>	<p>Sporting activities can continue in accordance with the Public Health Orders.</p> <p>The latest Public Health Order does not prevent any sporting organisation from resuming training.</p> <p>NSW State Sporting Organisations can train as long as they comply with the current Public Health Orders, including training in maximum groups of 10 people and following the recommended physical distancing measures of 1.5 metres.</p> <p>It is up to the sporting organisation to adapt or modify their sport, to be in line with the Public Health Orders.</p>
<p>What information should councils consider when deciding whether to open an outdoor recreational facility, or allow organised sport to take place on land under their care and control?</p>	<p>When making decisions about the running of sporting activities on land and in recreational facilities under their care or control, councils must consider the requirements in the Public Health Orders.</p> <p>Council should base their decisions in relation to the conduct of sporting activities on land and in recreational facilities under their care and control on their own policies and procedures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Councils may wish to consider guidance and materials such as Sport Australia’s <i>Return to Sport Toolkit</i> https://www.sportaus.gov.au/return-to-sport or guidelines issued by bodies such as Sport NSW (https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/sportnsw/files/he9qx0pgsenbfkks.pdf) to assist in their discussions with community sport. It should be noted that these frameworks need to be considered within the context of local conditions, the requirements of the NSW Public Health Order and any sport specific guidelines and guidance.</p>
<p>Can more than one group of 10 people gather at a recreational facility?</p>	<p>Many outdoor sporting grounds and facilities include multiple separate areas and facilities which can be used by different groups at the same time, such as soccer pitches, tennis courts or bowling greens within a complex.</p>

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	<p>In each case, council and the relevant sporting groups should consider whether up to 10 people using each area at the same time can be managed in light of the distance between these areas and whether participants will be sharing use of common facilities.</p>
<p>Do councils have to reopen any sporting grounds and facilities that are currently closed?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any sporting facilities for which they are responsible based on information available to them.</p> <p>When making this decision, councils may wish to consider whether it is possible to meet social distancing and public hygiene requirements (eg. whether there will be 4m² of space per person), guidance from the NSW Office of Sport and the relevant sporting code, as well as their own policies and procedures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the NSW Government urges all councils to keep public facilities open and operational, where possible.</p>
<p>Can councils reopen grounds or a facility but restrict use to fewer than 10 people?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any sporting grounds and facilities for which they are responsible and any conditions that apply to their use.</p> <p>Councils are responsible for complying with the Public Health Orders when managing these. This means councils must enforce any closure orders or conditions placed on the use of public facilities to protect public health. They should work with their Police Local Area Command in implementation of any restrictions.</p>
<p>Do councils have to keep facilities at sporting grounds open where they are the only public toilets?</p>	<p>No. However, councils should carefully consider whether it is in the public interest to keep these facilities open where they are the only public toilets available to residents.</p>

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What should councils do where they have waived fees or made similar subsidies on the assumption that sporting activities cannot proceed?	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether to review the term of any subsidies or waivers previously granted and may wish to take into account whether activities have recommenced and the extent to which fields and related facilities are open and in use.</p> <p>With the ongoing uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, councils are being asked to waive fees, and charges for those facing hardship, balanced against compliance with legislative requirements, including local sporting clubs and organisations.</p> <p>To provide flexibility in waiving fees and charges, the Government announced measures that allow councils to waive or reduce fees under a new COVID-19 category. This means that councils can immediately apply a fee waiver or reduction for this purpose, without following the usual requirements to establish a category, while also bypassing the need to provide 28 days' public notice.</p> <p>These measures are discretionary on a council-by-council basis and should take into consideration both the financial circumstances of the local community and the flow-on impacts on council revenue and the wider community.</p>
What should councils do if the grounds or facilities needed for sport are not currently ready for use?	<p>Each council has separate arrangements in place for the use of sporting fields and facilities as well as the cleaning and maintenance of grounds and on-site facilities. Where these grounds or facilities are currently closed and council is considering opening them, they may wish to consider whether they remain appropriate for use. It is suggested that councils discuss these issues with local organisations that commonly use the grounds or facility to identify how best to manage these issues and when it may reopen.</p>
What has changed in terms of professional sporting activities?	<p>Professional sports organisations are workplaces and therefore are permitted to continue their operations at this time in NSW.</p> <p>Professional sports training and competition can proceed without spectators or other public attendance provided they meet their occupational health and safety obligations and comply with relevant Ministerial directions and other legal requirements.</p>

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<p>How should changing facilities and toilets at sporting grounds and facilities be managed?</p>	<p>Where possible, councils should consider options to limit the use of communal spaces such as change rooms to assist with the implementation of social distancing consistent with the advice of the Australian Institute of Sport https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#ais_framework_for_rebooting_sport.</p> <p>Councils should carefully consider whether it is in the public interest to keep these facilities open where they are the only public toilets available to residents.</p>
<p>Beaches, parks and other outdoor spaces</p>	
<p>What has changed for beaches, parks and other outdoor spaces in the new Public Health Order? When do those changes start?</p>	<p>From 14 May 2020 the Public Health Order provides that, in general, people may participate in gatherings outdoors of not more than 10 people in public places. They also provide that outdoor public swimming pools, outdoor play equipment in public places, outdoor gymnasium equipment in public places and skateparks need no longer be closed.</p>
<p>Does the total number of people include children?</p>	<p>Yes. Both children and adults must be counted in considering whether a gathering is of more than 10 people in a public place.</p>
<p>Have there been any changes to permitted uses of outdoor areas?</p>	<p>From 14 May 2020 the Public Health Order provides that, in general, people may participate in gatherings outdoors of not more than 10 people in public places. The orders do not specify the purposes for which people may gather. In addition, the Public Health Order no longer states that people can only leave their homes for certain specific purposes, such as to undertake exercise. Taken together, this means that people can gather in outdoor spaces for social purposes, such as to have a picnic or BBQ.</p>
<p>Do each group of people in an outdoor public area need to remain a certain distance apart?</p>	<p>The Public Health Order requires no more than 10 people to gather in public spaces. This means that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no more than 10 people in a group can occupy a space together so that individual people are closer than 1.5 metres apart within that group,

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than one group of 10 people can use a public outdoor area at the same time if <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the overall limit of 500 people in an outdoor area is not exceeded ○ where there is more than one group of people in a space, the people in that group should be at least 1.5 metres from the people in any other group, and ○ there is sufficient space in that outdoor area for each person to have 4m² each. <p>Each adult and child within an outdoor area should be counted towards the total of 10 people.</p>
<p>Are councils required to reopen beaches, parks and other outdoor spaces?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any outdoor spaces for which they are responsible and any conditions that apply to their use. Where a council determines it is necessary to close a space or to restrict its use, clear public signage should be placed at key access points.</p>
<p>Can BBQ areas and picnic shelters be reopened? If so, what conditions must or should apply?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any outdoor spaces for which they are responsible and any conditions that apply to their use. Where a council decides to open BBQ areas and picnic shelters it should consider additional measures to keep facilities clean for the purposes of public hygiene, so far as possible.</p> <p>Ultimately, however, it is a matter for the public to use these facilities at their own risk in terms of their cleanliness.</p>
<p>Can beaches be opened?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any outdoor spaces for which they are responsible and any conditions that apply to their use.</p> <p>As the Public Health Order does not specify the purposes for which people can gather outdoors or why they may leave their homes, use of any beaches that are open is not conditional unless a specific condition is applied by a council.</p> <p>Where a council determines it is necessary to close a space or to restrict its use, clear public signage should be placed at key access points.</p>

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<p>Can councils apply additional conditions that are more restrictive than the Public Health Order?</p>	<p>It is a matter for each council to determine whether or not to open any outdoor spaces for which they are responsible and any conditions that apply to their use. Councils should exercise caution in applying any additional conditions that are not strictly required to ensure that the Public Health Order is complied with. If council applies any further conditions, those conditions must be within council's powers and enforced by council's authorised compliance and enforcement officers.</p>
<p>What is councils' role in terms of managing public use of beaches and other outdoor spaces?</p>	<p>Councils are not responsible for enforcing the Public Health Order but are responsible for managing public areas and facilities for which they are responsible. This means that councils are responsible for enforcing closure orders or any conditions placed on use of a public area or facility, even if that is for the purposes of protecting public health. They should work with their Police Local Area Command in implementation of any restrictions.</p>
<p>Can councils allow outdoor markets to be held?</p>	<p>Yes, outdoor markets for fresh food only may be held.</p>
<p>Outdoor public play equipment, gym equipment and skateparks</p>	
<p>Can outdoor play equipment and outdoor gym equipment open?</p>	<p>Yes. Public outdoor play equipment, outdoor gyms and skateparks can open at the discretion of council and if compliant with the Government's outdoor spacing rules, social distancing and good public health and hygiene practices. Councils should consider how they can support good social distancing and hygiene practices by users.</p>
<p>Is council required to open its outdoor play equipment, outdoor gym equipment and skateparks?</p>	<p>No. This is matter for individual councils. However, where possible councils are encouraged to keep public facilities and equipment open.</p>

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<p>What obligation lies on the council as the facility operator? Do councils have an obligation to ensure the 500 people/4sqm distancing rules?</p>	<p>The Public Health Order requires that outdoor spaces must not comprise 500 or more persons at the same time and that the 4 square metre distancing rule must continue to be observed. The public gathering rule of no more than 10 people also still applies.</p> <p>Councils could consider erecting signage to remind users of community equipment to continue to observe the social distancing and gathering advice and to remind them of good health and hygiene practices. Users should maintain social distancing, not go out if they are sick and get tested.</p> <p>Councils are not responsible for enforcing the Public Health Order but are responsible for managing public areas and facilities for which they are responsible. This means that councils are responsible for enforcing closure orders or any conditions placed on use of a public area or facility, even if that is for the purposes of protecting public health. They should work with their Police Local Area Command in implementation of any restrictions.</p>
<p>What does <i>with caution</i> mean?</p>	<p>The Government is urging people making use of outdoor public facilities to continue to observe health and hygiene standards by washing their hands before and after using equipment and to assume the person who has used the equipment before them has the virus.</p>
<p>What is the expectation of cleaning of outdoor playground equipment - which is rarely cleaned and there would be a significant cost to put in place a cleaning regime that deals with COVID-19?</p>	<p>The NSW Government advice is that users may use outdoor exercise and playground equipment, but should do so with caution, and to wash their hands before and after they use the equipment and to assume the person who has used the equipment before them has the virus.</p> <p>NSW Health suggests, where possible, that councils consider increased maintenance of handwashing facilities or the provision of hand sanitiser near playgrounds.</p> <p>Cleaning of outdoor equipment could improve the health and hygiene of the community, however, councils are not obliged to clean public outdoor equipment.</p>

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<p>Are there time limits on the use of outdoor equipment?</p>	<p>Time limits have not been specified in the Public Health Order. Councils could consider erecting signage to remind users of community equipment to continue to observe the social distancing and gathering advice, and to remind them of good health and hygiene practices.</p> <p>Community members should observe good social etiquette when using public facilities.</p>
<p>Can councils open playgrounds? What restrictions are in place under the Public Health Order?</p>	<p>Since 14 May 2020 outdoor playgrounds and play equipment in public places may be open and may be used with caution. Where possible, councils are encouraged to open these facilities and to keep them open. Ultimately, however, this is a matter for councils to decide.</p> <p>The following key rules are currently in place under the Public Health Orders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no more than 10 people can gather together in public places • the size of the space must be sufficient to ensure there is 4m² of space for each person using the space, and • outdoor spaces must not comprise 500 or more persons at the same time. <p>Councils are not responsible for enforcing these requirements in the Public Health Order, which is a matter for NSW Police. However, as the manager of public areas that contain playgrounds, councils need to take these rules into account in deciding whether to allow open-specific facilities to be open and whether any specific conditions should apply.</p> <p>Councils should also consider how they can support good social distancing and health and hygiene practices by users, such as by installing signage and notices to communicate the rules that apply.</p> <p>Further, detailed Advice for councils about managing public playgrounds has also been issued by the Office of Local Government.</p>
<p>Does the “10 person gathering rule” apply for</p>	<p>Yes. Unless a council has chosen to apply further restrictions, the rule that requires no more than 10 people to gather in public spaces means that:</p>

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<p>the use of outdoor play equipment?</p> <p>Is the “10 person gathering rule” just for the children using the equipment, or is it inclusive of the adults supervising? What if the adults are appropriately distanced?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no more than 10 people in a group can occupy a space together so that individual people are closer than 1.5 metres apart within that group, • more than one group of 10 people can use a public outdoor area at the same time if <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the overall limit of 500 people in an outdoor area is not exceeded ○ where there is more than one group of people in a space, the people in that group should be at least 1.5 metres from the people in any other group, and ○ there is sufficient space in that outdoor area for each person to have 4m² each. <p>Each adult and child within the playground area should be counted towards the total of 10 people.</p> <p>Further, detailed Advice for councils about managing public playgrounds has also been issued by the Office of Local Government.</p>
<p>Swimming Pools</p>	
<p>Can I open my council’s outdoor public swimming pool?</p>	<p>Outdoor pools can open and operate but only if there are no more than 10 people at a time swimming in the pool.</p>
<p>Can I open my council’s indoor public swimming pools for general use?</p>	<p>No. For general use, indoor swimming pools must remain closed.</p>
<p>Can I open my council’s indoor public swimming pools for squad training? What rules for managing</p>	<p>Yes. As of 19 May 2020, indoor pools of 25 metres length or more can be open, strictly for the purposes of allowing squad training only, as long as all of the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one swimmer in the lane at any one time

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<p>social distancing and hygiene apply?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 10 people in the pool at any one time • The designated area for parents, family or carers can only be used if there is sufficient space to ensure there are 4 square metres of space for each person in the area. <p>This means that pool operator staff, squad swimmers, their trainers and coaches and their parents, family or carers can be within the facility as long as the above conditions are met.</p>
<p>Must I open my council's outdoor public swimming pool?</p>	<p>No. This is a matter for local councils to determine based on their own operating conditions, including seasonal considerations.</p>
<p>How many people can swim in each pool where there are multiple pools within a facility?</p>	<p>There can be up to 10 people swimming in any one outdoor pool within a facility, as long as social distancing rules can still apply.</p> <p>The 10-person limit includes any supervising adult in the pool with their child or children.</p>
<p>Does this requirement apply to artesian baths, ocean pools and baths?</p>	<p>This includes any outdoor pool classified as such by the council.</p> <p>However, in relation to ocean pools, as a rule of thumb, pools which have natural ocean flows entering the pool may be classified by the council as part of the ocean rather than a swimming pool for the purposes of the Public Health Order. This is a matter for consideration of the individual circumstances of each water body.</p>
<p>How many people can swim in each lane?</p>	<p>This is a matter for each council on how best to maintain social distancing and the 10-person per outdoor pool limit. Councils should consider the potential for lane limits as recommended by the Australian Institute of Sport https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#ais_framework_for_rebooting_sport.</p>
<p>Must we close change rooms?</p>	<p>Where possible, councils should consider options to limit the use of communal spaces such as change rooms to assist with the implementation of social distancing consistent with the advice of the Australian Institute of Sport https://ais.gov.au/health-wellbeing/covid-19#ais_framework_for_rebooting_sport.</p>

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<p>Must we keep public toilets open?</p>	<p>This is a matter for local councils to determine. However, councils should, where possible and practical, keep public facilities open.</p>
<p>What about swimming pools for which councils contract out their pool management?</p>	<p>Councils are still responsible for ensuring pools for which they contract out the management of meet the requirements of the Public Health Order.</p> <p>Councils will need to assess the viability of opening any pools under their care and control in consultation with contractors.</p>
<p>Caravan parks and camping grounds</p>	
<p>Can caravan parks and camping grounds reopen?</p>	<p>From 1 June 2020 caravan parks and camping grounds can re-open.</p> <p>The 1 June 2020 Public Health Order requires that, before reopening, all caravan parks and campgrounds have a COVID-19 Safety Plan outlining how the business will keep its customers and workers safe.</p> <p>The template to create a COVID-19 Safety Plan is available on the NSW Health website: https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines</p> <p>The Public Health Order does not set out a maximum number of people who may stay in a caravan park or campground. However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outdoor spaces must not comprise 500 or more persons at the same time • the 4 square metre distancing rule must continue to be observed, and • the public gathering rule of no more than 10 people also still applies. <p>Some specific conditions also apply to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) campgrounds, see below.</p>
<p>Are there any specific restrictions applying to</p>	<p>The general conditions of the Public Health Order apply to council-managed caravan parks and campgrounds (see above). However, councils should also consider how they can support good social distancing and health</p>

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<p>council managed caravan parks and campgrounds?</p>	<p>and hygiene practices by users of these facilities, such as by installing signage and notices to communicate the rules that apply.</p> <p>Councils are not responsible for enforcing the Public Health Order but are responsible for managing public areas and facilities for which they are responsible. This means that councils are responsible for enforcing closure orders or any conditions placed on use of a public area or facility, even if that is for the purposes of protecting public health. They should work with their Police Local Area Command in implementation of any restrictions.</p>
<p>What are the restrictions on the use of NPWS campgrounds?</p>	<p>Most NPWS campgrounds, cabins and cottages will reopen from Monday 1 June, in line with the easing of holiday travel restrictions announced by the NSW Government.</p> <p>From 1 June 2020, all NPWS campgrounds, cabins and cottages require a booking until further notice (including locations where a booking was not previously required). This does not include backcountry/wild camping, which is permitted without a formal booking, but campers must complete a trip intention form before arriving.</p> <p>Physical distancing is still required for all activities in NSW national parks. Current rules on public gatherings also continue to apply.</p> <p>Due to the recent bushfires and floods, some national parks and some NPWS sites remain closed.</p> <p>The most up to date information about NPWS campgrounds, cabins and cottages including in relation to bookings can be accessed at: https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws-covid-19 or by calling the NPWS contact centre on 1300 072 757.</p>
<p>Boating and other recreational vessels</p>	
<p>Is there an exemption to allow use of boats and other recreational vessels on waterways? What rules for managing social distancing and hygiene</p>	<p>Yes. As of 19 May 2020, operators of a recreational vessel can take a vessel out, as long as the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All people on the boat, or other recreational vessel, are members of the same household, and/or

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apply for using recreational vessels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any people on the boat or other recreational vessel who are not members of the same household shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres.
Does the exemption for recreational vessels apply to boats used for commercial purposes?	No. This exemption only relates to boats and other vessels used for a non-commercial purpose.