

Supporting local businesses to comply with COVID-19 restrictions

INFORMATION FOR COUNCIL OFFICERS – JULY 2020

This presentation is based on information prepared by the NSW Food Authority.



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Overview of this presentation

- Introduction
- What are the current restrictions?
- What are the requirements for businesses?
- How can councils assist?
- Where to find further information.



Introduction



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What are councils being asked to do?

- Councils play a critical role in protecting the community from the transmission of COVID-19 through ongoing engagement and education of the community.
- ***The NSW Government is requesting that councils build on this by engaging with businesses that need assistance in complying with COVID-19 Public Health Orders.***



COVID Safe Check App

- The NSW Government has developed the COVID Safe Check app, which provides a way for customers to give feedback in real time to businesses and to regulators for action.
- Office of Local Government (OLG) will:
 - refer feedback to the appropriate council based on the location of the business.
 - establish a point of contact in each council to ensure consistency in the referral process.





How will it work?

- Councils are asked to:
 - review the feedback and respond within available resourcing.
 - where possible to take proactive action by providing information to local businesses even if a complaint has not been received.
- Site visits to businesses are likely to be the most effective approach.
- **All enforcement action will remain a matter for the NSW Police Force.**



Alignment with other council enforcement functions

- COVID Safe site visits should be undertaken separate to other enforcement inspections wherever possible (eg: food inspections for the purposes of the Food Act 2003).
- If not feasible, fully complete one function and then clearly articulate to the owner/operator the new function will begin (or words to the effect).



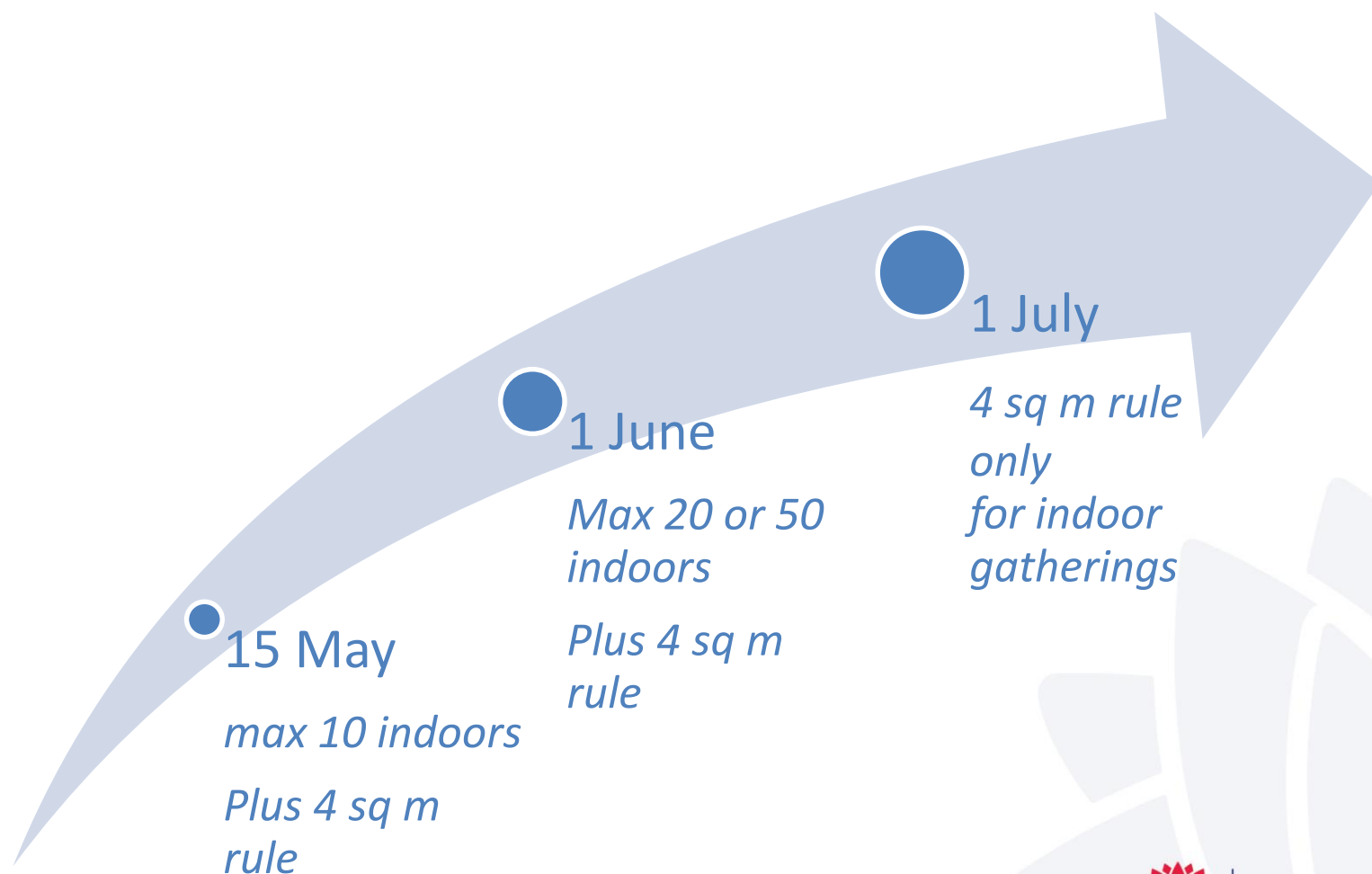
What are the current restrictions?



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EASING RESTRICTIONS





Current restrictions

From 1 July 2020

The number of people allowed inside indoor venues that can open will be determined by the one person per 4 square metre rule, with no upper limit.



What are the requirements for businesses?

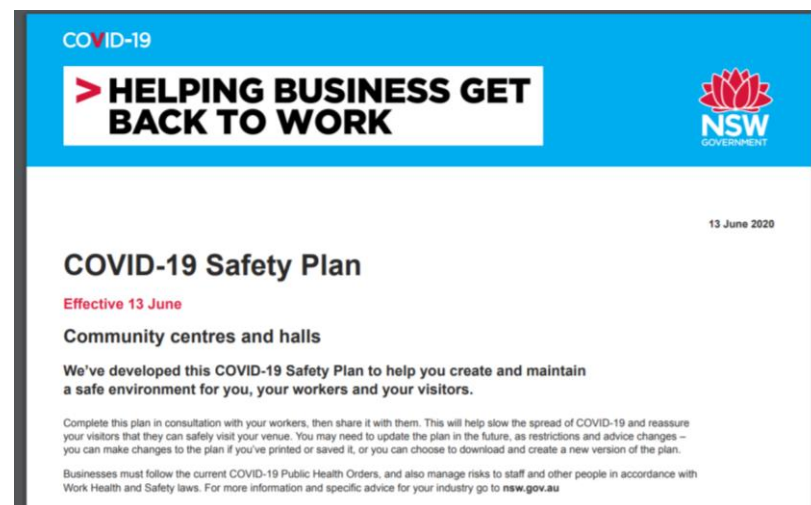




COVID-19 Safety Plans

Businesses must have their own COVID-19 safety plans

- Most business types are required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan under the Public Health Orders
- COVID-19 Safety Plans help to protect staff, customers and visitors.
- Safety Plan templates and checklists for a number of industries can be found [here](#)
- Restaurants and cafes (ie. food and drink premises) – councils should refer to the checklist developed by the NSW Food Authority which is available on the [Food Regulation Partnership Portal](#).



Covid-19 safety plan



1. Wellbeing

- Staff
- Customers



2. Physical distancing



3. Hygiene and cleaning



4. Record keeping



1. Wellbeing of staff and patrons

COVID plan to incorporate the following:

- exclusion of staff and customers who are unwell
- clearly display the conditions of entry on the website, social media platforms and at the venue entrance

Conditions of entry

- *Your temperature will be checked on arrival*
- *You will be asked a series of questions related to your current wellbeing*
- *Social distancing signs are in place and must be adhered to*

Wellbeing of staff and patrons

- Plan should also include:
 - Staff to be made aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self isolate and
 - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/safe-workplaces/hospitality>



Provide staff with information and training on COVID-19 incl:

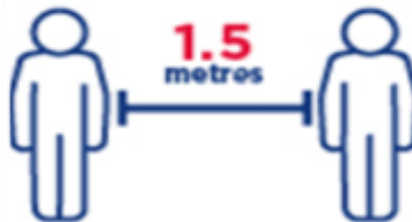
- when to get tested
- physical distancing and
- cleaning requirements



2. Physical Distancing

Ensure staff and patrons keep their distance

- Remember – requirements change from 1 July (4 sq metre rule applies for all industries)
- Move or remove tables and seating
- To comply with the 1.5m physical distancing rules for patrons
- No more than 10 customers per table
- Exceptions – weddings and funerals events
- Reduce contact between customer groups
- Reduce crowding and promote physical distancing with floor markers for queues



Physical distancing

- Consider physical barriers
 - eg plexiglass around counters with high volume interactions with customers
- Where possible
 - ensure staff maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing and assign workers to specific workstations
 - Stagger start times and breaks for staff members





Physical Distancing

- Deliveries
 - Review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing
- Outside gatherings
 - Have strategies in place to manage gatherings that may occur
- Avoid group singing and wind instruments (such as flute)
 - Solo singers should maintain at least 3 metres physical distance from other people

3. Hygiene and Cleaning

Cleaning goes beyond the normal Food Standards Code requirements

- Businesses to ensure more stringent hygiene and cleaning practices
- Adopt good hand hygiene practices
- Reduce the number of surfaces touched by customers
- Bathrooms
 - well stocked with hand soap and paper towels
 - handwashing resources are available [here](#).





Hygiene and cleaning

Enhanced cleaning considerations:

- Clean frequently used areas at least daily with detergent or disinfectant
- Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times per day
- Maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength
 - use in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions
- Workers wear gloves when cleaning
 - wash hands thoroughly before and after with soap



4. Record Keeping

Check records are being maintained

- Keep a record of
 - name, mobile number or email address for:
 - » staff, customers, visitors and contractors
 - » for a period of at least 28 days
- Ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored confidentially and securely
- Employers should make staff aware of the COVID Safe app and its benefits to support contact tracing if required



Requirements - Recap

- 1. COVID-safety plans are in place**
2. Businesses are recording patrons and contractors contact details
3. Businesses are managing the appropriate venue/premises capacity for patrons
4. Businesses are ensuring unwell staff and patrons are excluded
5. Cleaning – disinfectant, thoroughly and regularly



How can councils assist local businesses to be COVID safe?



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A role for councils

- Site visits to businesses to provide information about restrictions and encourage compliance.
- Use the resources including the Council site visit checklist and this training presentation.
- Report back to OLG on any action taken, using the streamlined reporting tool.
- **Note:** for *restaurants and cafes* use the Food Authority checklist available on the [Food Regulation Partnership Portal](#).



Purpose of site visits

- Approach in an advisory capacity and offer guidance to assist businesses
- Work with the business to ensure they meet the 5 critical requirements
- Use the Council checklist for prompt when speaking with owner/operator.



What to do at a site visit

- Where a site visit is undertaken, council officers should:
 - a) Alert the business that the council has received information the business may not be in compliance with the Public Health Order.
 - b) Explain the importance of the Public Health Order restrictions and seek their cooperation by providing education material in the standard information pack.
 - c) Advise that further breaches from the business may be escalated to the NSW Police for enforcement.



Wellbeing of staff and patrons

Key assessment point 1

- Check they have a COVID-19 Safety Plan and they are using it
 - Plan is written and is being used
 - Training for staff is provided
 - Health checks for staff



Physical distancing

Key assessment point 2

- Ensure patron levels do not exceed the capacity limit
- From 1 July, only measuring the size of the premises as one person per 4 square metres is required
 - not simply a maximum of 50 patrons
 - Making physical distancing possible is the main theme.



Hygiene and cleaning

Key assessment point 3

- Cleaning requirements go beyond normal Food Standards Code requirements
- Use of appropriate detergent or disinfectant at the correct dilution rate.



Record keeping

Key assessment point 4

- Check records are being maintained for staff, customers, visitors and contractors and
- Are being kept for 28 days, securely.



Is further action required?

If all 5 critical requirements observed

- visit is ‘satisfactory’
- complete checklist
- provide a copy to the owner/operator

If **ANY** of the 5 critical requirements are **NOT** observed

- Visit is ‘unsatisfactory’
- provide guidance on how to comply



Minor issues

COVID-19 Safety Plan

- If any non-conformance with Safety Plan elements contained are **minor**
- Provide owner/operator with advice on how to comply

 Site visit is '**satisfactory**' so long as the **5 critical elements are met**



ESCALATION

- **Enforcement is a matter for NSW Police.**
- Councils should generally only provide advice/guidance to the business.
- However, **for food and drink premises only (enforcement by EHOs)**, if a critical non-conformance is observed:
 - Escalate using the *Warning Notice* template
 - Provide a copy to the owner/operator with clear instructions on how to comply
 - Further escalation – speak with your Manager/Supervisor



Key resources



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COUNCIL CHECKLIST

- To assist councils during any COVID-19 safety onsite visits
- Acts as a prompt and provides high level guidance on the critical requirements
- **Note:** for restaurants and cafes use the Food Authority checklist available on the [Food Regulation Partnership Portal](#).



Council checklist

Covers the 5 critical requirements:

1. A COVID-safety plan
2. Managing physical distancing/venue capacities
3. Adopting good hygiene
4. Excluding staff/patrons who are unwell/exhibiting symptoms
5. Records of customers/visitors/contractors/staff.



Reporting tool

- A streamlined reporting tool will be available on OLG website www.olg.nsw.gov.au.
- Further information will be available in the near future.



Where to find further information



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Resources

Food Authority website

- <https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/help/covid-19-advice-for-businesses>
- Includes food service [training module for EHOs](#).

NSW Health resources

- <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/resources.aspx>



Resources

Service NSW

- Information for businesses, relief and assistance packages for many industries, and information about the app complaints function
- <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

Safe Work NSW

- information about how businesses can manage the risk of COVID-19 to workers and others in the work environment.
- <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/COVID-19-Coronavirus>