

Are you a food business offering takeaways?

With the present high infection rate of Covid-19 and the risk to the operation of the NHS Hospitals it is more important at this time than ever that Covid-19 Security is maintained. Please be mindful of the three Covid-secure rules: hands are frequently washed/sanitised, face coverings are worn where required and that social distancing is maintained.



Should any staff show symptoms of a Covid-19 infection they must self-isolate immediately. Symptoms include a new continuous cough, severe headache, loss of sense of smell or taste and a temperature. They should also arrange for a Covid-19 test **using this link and follow guidance from Public Health England at:** <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>
Presently pubs, restaurants, cafés and take away businesses may only supply food for consumption off the premises (take away/click and collect/delivery).

After 11pm you should only accept orders via a website, telephone, text or post for delivery or collection where the customer remains in the vehicle while the food order is passed over. Pre-ordered food may be collected but the customer may not enter the premises. This is a requirement of the existing Coronavirus Restriction Regulations. Failure to comply may result in the closure of the business and render the owner liable to prosecution. Those businesses licenced for the sale of alcohol also risk a review of their licence with subsequent repercussions.

The Sussex Police and Rother Environmental Health Officers will both be making visits and checks during the day and in the evening to ensure compliance with these requirements

You are reminded that even with vaccinations being rolled out which will take a number of months to complete, it is still vital that we continue adhering to the three basic rules mentioned above of Hands, Face, Space. Until a large percentage of the population are vaccinated the virus will continue to spread unless businesses and the public continue to operate in a strictly Covid-secure manner. Now is not the time to become slack in the adherence to the rules.

For more detailed information on the GOV.UK website see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-food-businesses/guidance-for-food-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

What are the Hands, Face, Space rules for food businesses?

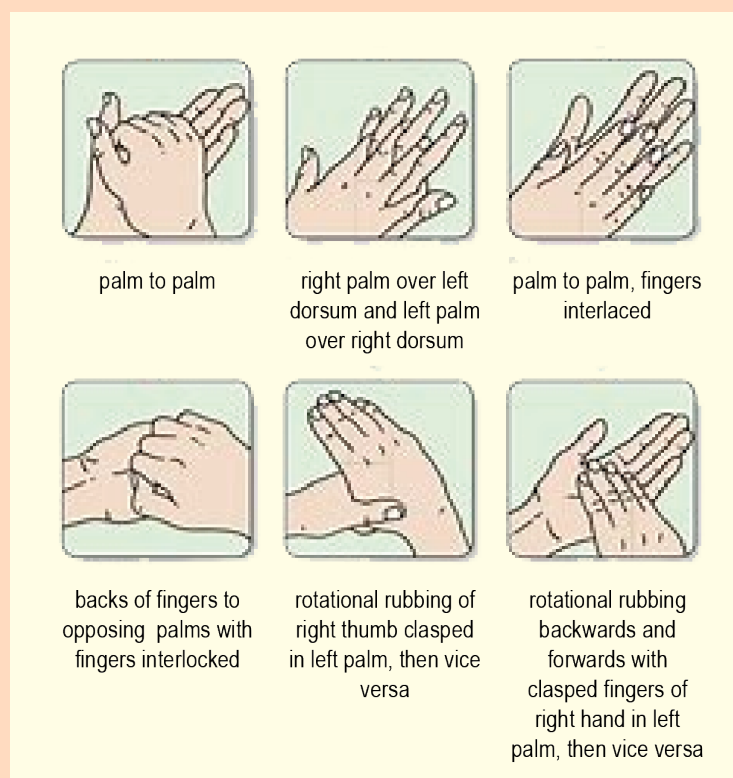
Hands

Although it is very unlikely that COVID-19 is transmitted through food or food packaging, as a matter of good hygiene practice your staff should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

This should be done routinely:-

- before and after handling food
- before handling clean cutlery, dishes, glasses, or other items to be used by the customer
- after handling dirty or used items, such as collecting used dishes from customer tables
- after handling money
- after touching high-contact surfaces, such as door handles
- when moving between different areas of the workplace
- after being in a public place
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Coughs and sneezes should be caught in a tissue or the crook of your elbow.

See the GOV.UK website for specific information on handwashing and cleaning at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery#takeaways-5-4>



Face

Face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing and hand-washing but should be used in conjunction with them. A face covering is something which safely covers the nose and mouth. You can buy reusable or single-use face coverings. You may also use a scarf, bandana, religious garment or hand-made cloth covering but these must securely fit round the side of the face. This new definition from the government excludes visors.

Face coverings are compulsory across England when:

- Travelling on public transport;
- In shops, supermarkets and shopping centres;
- In hospitality venues when not seated at a table to eat or drink (when open according to the tier system and outside of lockdown)
- Banks, building societies and post offices;
- Places of worship;
- Museums, galleries and entertainment venues;
- Libraries and public reading rooms.

People can be refused travel or a £200 fine issued by the police if they don't follow the face covering rules. Repeat offenders face larger fines.

See the Gov.UK advice on face coverings including where they should be worn at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Space

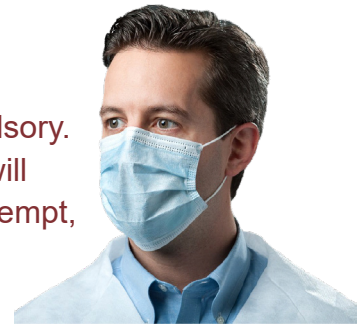
You must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity can be redesigned to maintain a 2m distance or 1m with risk mitigations.

Mitigating actions include:-

- further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
- using screens or barriers to separate workers from each other and workers from customers at points of service
- using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others)

Main supermarket chains make face masks compulsory

Several supermarkets across the UK are making face coverings compulsory. Tesco, Asda and Waitrose, Morrisons are the latest chains to say they will deny entry to shoppers who do not wear face masks unless they are exempt, whilst Sainsbury's says it will also challenge those who flout the rules.



Is your business COVID-secure?

Eight steps to protect yourself, your staff and your customers during coronavirus.

- Complete a COVID-19 risk assessment. Share it with all your staff. Find out how to do a risk assessment at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>
- Clean more often. Increase how often you clean surfaces, especially those that are being touched a lot. Ask your staff and your customers to use hand sanitiser and wash their hands frequently.
- Remind your customers to wear face coverings in any indoor space or where required to do so by law, for instance using signage. However, you are not responsible for enforcing customer face covering law. This is an important reminder to help mitigate transmission. It is especially important if your customers are likely to be around people they do not normally meet. Some exemptions apply. Check when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own.
- Make sure everyone is social distancing. Make it easy for everyone to do so by putting up signs or introducing a one way system that your customers can follow. Enable people in the same party who do not live together to remain a safe distance apart.
- Consider ventilation. Read advice on air conditioning and ventilation from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at www.hse.gov.uk.
- You must take part in NHS Test and Trace by keeping a record of all your customers, visitors and staff for 21 days. **This is a legal requirement.** Some exemptions apply. Check 'Maintaining records of staff, customers and visitors to support NHS Test and Trace' for details.
- Turn people with coronavirus symptoms away. If a staff member (or someone in their household) or a customer has a persistent cough, a high temperature or has lost their sense of taste or smell, they should be isolating. Employers must not require someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work. Any employer asking an employee to break self-isolation to work is committing an offence.
- Consider the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19 for yourself and others. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Check if your business is eligible for a coronavirus grant due to national restrictions

For information on the arrangements see the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-your-business-is-eligible-for-a-coronavirus-grant-due-to-national-restrictions-for-closed-businesses>



For local information see Rother District Council's website at:

<https://www.rother.gov.uk/business/information-for-businesses/>

Exporting and Export Health Certificates



The Food and Safety Team of Rother and Wealden Environmental Health have started issuing Export Health Certificates (EHC's) for a fish exporter in Rye sending products to France and Belgium since the new EU requirements came into force on 1st January 2021.

In conjunction with this fishing vessels are also required to be inspected. To enable trade in fishery products with the EU to continue, the fishing vessels that catch and handle the fishery products need to be compliant with the relevant hygiene regulations.

An export health certificate (EHC) is an official document that confirms your export meets the health standards and the requirements of the destination country so animal products can be exported. These certificates are required for a range of animal products including meat; dairy; hides, skins, wool, etc; collagen, gelatine & casings; eggs; fish and fishery products

If you are considering exporting goods see the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/export-goods> for a step by step guide to the export process.

Health and Safety Matters

Tesco's prosecution

Tesco supermarket has been fined more than £500,000 at Reading Magistrates Court after a 10-year-old boy was electrocuted while getting an ice lolly from a freezer. The boy was reaching into a freezer when he was electrocuted by a wire exposed by a loose rail which caused a burn and pain in his chest and leg.

The supermarket firm pleaded guilty to two health and safety offences after the incident in 2017 at their store in Warfield, Berkshire.

The local Public Protection Partnership said procedures “were not followed properly”. Staff were told of the accident but the freezer was still being used the next day until it was eventually switched off. Store records showed the rail was known to be loose and had been patched up with glue and tape before the accident.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has produced information on maintaining electrical safety of portable and moveable equipment. To download a copy go to:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg107.htm>

Rother District Council information

For information on current Covid-19 requirements and guidance and for all food safety and health and safety matters for businesses see the Rother District Council website at:

www.rother.gov.uk and specifically: <https://www.rother.gov.uk/environmental-health/food-hygiene/safe-food-and-healthy-workplaces/coronavirus-covid-19-closure-regulations/>

If you have any queries please contact us at:

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