



# Advice for food businesses

The majority of businesses are currently closed in line with government advice to stop the spread of coronavirus. However, if you provide food for takeaway and delivery, you may remain open. This document provides advice on how to provide your services and food products safely.

If you need more advice on food safety, email [foodsafety@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:foodsafety@westminster.gov.uk) or call us on 0207 641 1092.

## Planning control

The government has relaxed planning controls for public houses and restaurants, allowing them to provide hot food and drinks takeaway services on a temporary basis. If you decide to provide takeaway services, you must notify the local planning authority ([planningenforcementteam@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:planningenforcementteam@westminster.gov.uk)) when the new use begins and ends, as well as emailing the food safety team ([foodsafety@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:foodsafety@westminster.gov.uk))

### FOOD SAFETY

If you have changed your business to provide takeaway services, you need to include any new food safety controls you have put in place in your documented food safety management system/Safer Food Better Business pack. If you are altering your menu and adapting what you're producing, you will need to consider if any new dishes present additional hazards and ensure effective food safety controls are implemented.

All staff need to be suitably trained and instructed on the new work arrangements, especially if you take on additional staff to assist you with deliveries.





## Managing employee sickness

Any food handler who is unwell should not be at work. If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature they should be sent home and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#).

The Food Standards Agency's [fitness for work](#) guidance for staff who handle food products provides advice on managing sickness in a food business. Understanding and applying this guidance can help to prevent the transmission of coronavirus.

## Extra food hygiene measures

- Food handlers should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place, blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing. Hands should be dried with disposable paper towels.
- Frequently clean and disinfect food and hand contact surfaces, using your standard detergent and food grade disinfectant. Use disposable paper towels for these tasks.
- Whilst food packaging is not known to present a specific risk, efforts should be made to ensure it is clean and handled in line with usual food safety practices.





## Social distancing

To minimise opportunities for the virus to spread you must ensure a distance of 2 metres between individuals. This rule applies to individuals both inside the business, including food handlers, and in public areas where customers may need to queue. You need to make your own assessment how to apply this rule to your business, however this advice will be relevant to the majority of businesses:

- limit entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded
- close or remove seating inside and outside your premises
- display clear signage asking customers not to enter the shop if they have symptoms
- place plexiglass barriers at tills and counters if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers and customers
- use clear floor markings inside your premises to show customers where to stand, particularly in areas such as serving counters and tills
- encourage the use of contactless payments where possible, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers
- make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands
- provide additional handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser





## Social distancing for takeaways and restaurants offering food for collection

- **Ideally no orders should be taken in person** on the premises - this should be communicated to customers by appropriate means such as clear signage or on your website. You should therefore **only take orders online or by telephone**
- Customers could have **specified collection times** – customers should be discouraged from entering the premises until their order is ready
- Customers who arrive without having already placed an order should be encouraged to leave the premises and to place their order by telephone or online, and to return at a designated time for collection
- Customers whose orders are ready should enter **one at a time** to collect orders and make payments
- You should discourage crowding outside the premises, use queue management systems to **maintain a 2-metre separation**

## Social distancing for supermarkets

Supermarkets need to avoid crowding and create adequate spacing between individuals. Effective measures to support this will vary by store and location but could include:

- monitoring the number of customers within store and limiting access to avoid congestion
- implementing queue management systems to limit crowds gathering at entrances and at tills, and maintain the 2-metre distances
- reminding customers to buy only what they need





## Social distancing in staff canteens and rest areas

Workplace canteens may remain open where there are no practical alternatives for staff to get food, however:

- as far as reasonably possible, a distance of 2 metres should be maintained between users
- staff can continue to use rest areas if they apply the same **social distancing**
- notices promoting **hand hygiene and social distancing** should be placed visibly in these areas
- if possible, **increase the number of hand washing stations** available

## Social distancing at outdoor food markets

The main concern with outdoor food markets is to avoid crowds gathering.

Where markets are still in operation, the food market operators should consider how they can safely sell their products without encouraging crowds and ensure hygiene measures are in place. This can be done by:

- taking **orders online or by telephone** in advance and pre-packing orders to limit face-to-face time in the market
- considering **delivery services** if possible
- displaying social distancing signage at the stalls





## Food delivery – allergens

However you are selling food to consumers, it is a legal requirement to provide accurate information on the allergens present in the food.

If food is sold through distance selling (for example by an online/telephone order for takeaway/delivery, allergen information should be provided at two stages in the process:

- **before the purchase of the food** is completed – this could be in writing (for example on a website, catalogue or menu) or verbally (for example by phone)
- **when the food is delivered** – this could be in writing (for example on allergen stickers on food or an enclosed hard copy of menu)

Label all food clearly, so your customers know which dishes are suitable for those with an allergy.

Further information is available on the [Food Standards Agency](#) website.

## Food delivery – temperature control

Whether you are selling hot or cold foods, you must make sure the hot or cold chain is maintained. This is a critical point and you are advised to monitor and record delivery temperatures as part of your food safety management system. This can be a diary log or simple check sheet. Ensure that the staff involved understand the process and the required temperatures, including what to do if these temperatures are not within the required limits.

- Hot food must be hot held at 63°C or above. To ensure this will be maintained, you can use insulated bags or boxes.
- Cold food should ideally be kept at fridge temperatures below 8°C. Cool bags and boxes can be used with the addition of ice packs.
- It is advised to limit the length of delivery times, by limiting the number of 'drop offs' in one run.





## Food delivery – delivery drivers

- You need to **consider how the food will be delivered** whilst ensuring that you have adequate hygiene controls in place. For example, ensure the delivery vehicle is clean and tidy, ensure you can prevent potential cross-contamination of food (e.g. store food in sealed food-grade containers), maintain temperature control and ensure that any insulated delivery bags and boxes are adequately cleaned and disinfected.
- In order to protect your staff and customers, delivery drivers may wish to **place items on the doorstep**, knock on the door and step aside to a safe distance while the customer retrieves the delivery.
- Many businesses are no longer dealing with cash. You should **consider whether it is possible to only accept electronic payment** at the time of the order, without disadvantaging older or vulnerable customers.

For further information visit

[westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-businesses](https://westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-businesses)

