

Guidance for Market Stall Traders : Enhanced Controls to prevent the spread of Coronavirus

1.0 Introduction

This guidance sets out enhanced measures to prevent the spread of Covid 19 during the current pandemic.

This guidance applies to all market stall holders but is split into sections focusing on food and non-food stall holders, but please read all of the sections.

2.0 Food Stall Holders

All stall holders handling food should ensure the necessary personal and environmental controls are in place to prevent the transmission of virus through food, food preparation surfaces and food packaging.

There are still risks where food is not prepared/handled and whilst provision of portable hand wash basins is not a requirement it is important to adopt the hygiene measures outlined below:

2.1 Hand Hygiene

Regular hand washing is a key control to prevent the spread of Covid 19, as well as many other infections and food poisoning, and it is important that this is carried out in accordance with government guidance, including thoroughly washing with soap for at least 20 secs. Hand sanitiser gels can be used in addition to handwashing, but they only work on clean hands. They should never be a substitute for handwashing. If possible try to minimise direct hand contact with food and instead use clean tongs and utensils. Gloves can be used, however, they can become contaminated in the same way as hands so are not a suitable substitute for good personal hygiene and hand washing. If you do wish to use gloves, they should be disposed of and replaced before handling food, and after handling any money; **keeping the same pair on for different customers is NOT good food hygiene.**

2.2 Type of market food stalls

There are different hygiene controls depending on the type of market stall you operate.

2.2.1 Catering stalls

Every catering stall must have a portable hand wash basin with running water at a suitable temperature readily and exclusively available for it. The wash hand basin must be suitably located on the stall in such a way that it will not contaminate food during hand washing. A suitable supply of hand wash soap (ideally antibacterial) should be available next to the wash hand basin as well as paper towel for drying hands. A foot-operated bin should be provided for immediate disposal of used paper towel.

Staff should wash hands after handling raw food and before handling cooked food and in addition:

- After going to the toilet
- After taking a break
- After cleaning operations
- After getting rid of waste

Staff may wish to wear gloves but these need to be changed on a regular basis, as highlighted above and in any case between high risk food operations.

Where possible food preparation should not take place in the immediate vicinity of customers. If hygienic to do so an area designated further to the back of the stall may be more appropriate. The 2 meter social distancing rule can be implemented at all times.

Ideally a separate member of staff should be designated for handling money. They too should regularly wash their hands, but this is to protect against Covid, rather than for food hygiene purposes.

2.2.2. Stalls selling open food including fruit and Veg (but where no preparation is undertaken)

Every stall must have a portable hand wash basin with running water at a suitable temperature readily and exclusively available for it. The wash hand basin must be suitably located on the stall in such a way that it will not contaminate food during hand washing. A suitable supply of hand wash soap should be available next to the wash hand basin as well as paper towel for drying hands. A foot-operated bin should be provided for immediate disposal of used paper towel.

Staff should wash hands after:

- After going to the toilet
- After taking a break
- After cleaning operations
- After getting rid of waste

Staff may wish to wear gloves but these need to be changed on a regular basis, as highlighted above and in any case between high risk food operations.

Where possible any open food display should be set back away from where customers are present unless a two meter distance can be implemented. Physical screening can also be an effective control if practicable.

Ideally a separate member of staff should be designated for handling money. They too should regularly wash their hands, but this is to protect against Covid, rather than for food hygiene purposes.

2.3 Covering food

Where possible food on display should be packaged, covered or screened to prevent risk from contamination.

3.0. Non food Stalls

It is recommended that staff wear gloves (Latex or similar) which are changed at regular intervals.

4.0. Food Stalls selling packaged food only

As for non-food stalls above.

5.0 Social Distancing

Market stall holders have a responsibility to advise their customers to follow social distancing requirements. This can be by means of notices and reinforced verbally. Customers should be kept at least 2 meters (3 steps) away from market stall personnel and should be reminded to stand back

from the stall itself. A demarcation line should be considered or even physical screens if these are appropriate.

6.0 General cleaning

It is important that regular cleaning and disinfection takes place throughout the day. This should include surfaces, equipment and touch points, as well as any other parts of the stall canopy or frame which people can hold on to. This should also include equipment controls, pens, mobile phones using a disinfectant/sanitiser. Ideally sanitisers should meet BS EN 1276 or BS EN 13697 and be anti-viral in their operation (BS 14476 approved disinfectants are effective against viruses)

7.0 Positioning of stalls/mobiles/trailers

Poor positioning could compromise safety particularly if pitches are situated near to shop entrances/queuing lines or in the immediate vicinity of other stalls. Positioning in many cases will be managed by the Local Authority or the Market Superintendent, but where the trader has the choice of location it is important that social distancing is not compromised. Stalls should also be positioned away from any 'pedestrian bottlenecks' to prevent congestion. In the case of events or other public gatherings, prior planning is key to maintaining social distancing and the event manager must draw up detailed scaled plans showing the location of pitches and traffic routes. If distances cannot be maintained in a linear formation, then consider herringbone formation.

It has to be recognised and accepted, that due to the need to maintain social distancing, it is likely that fewer pitches may be permitted. Failure to adhere to these restrictions could increase the risk of spreading the virus and risk the opening of the market as a whole.

8.0 PPE

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), for the purposes of preventing the spread of Covid-19, should only be used in accordance to the Government's current guidance documentation.

Organisations should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE such as masks to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings. Face coverings may be worn but this should not replace the other control measures listed above and including social distancing. Gloves may also be worn as long as they are regularly changed and used as highlighted above.

9.0 Contactless payments

Contactless payments should be encouraged or alternatively dedicated staff should handle money. If this is not possible, extreme hygiene should be followed and used at every infection risk stage as highlighted above.

10.0 General Infection Control

1. Legally, food businesses must ensure that all food handlers are fit for work. This responsibility can extend to the operators of the market if there is no provision to ensure this is achieved, and especially where sole traders are the food handler. In addition, you have a general duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of persons in your employment, members of the public, or anyone else who may be affected, e.g. neighbouring stall holders is protected at all times.
2. Persons must be provided with clear instructions on any infection control policy in place, and any person so affected or employed in a food business and who is likely to come into contact with

food must immediately report the illness or symptoms. This can include food stall holders having due regard for the risks posed by their customers.

3. Persons should not come to work if they are suffering the typical symptoms associated with Covid 19 virus or if someone they live with has symptoms. Instead they should stay at home and self-isolate. This requirement extends also to the management of the market or Market Superintendent, or similar.

The Government has issued guidance on what to do in these cases

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

4. The Government has also issued guidance on COVID-19 for employees and businesses
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

11.0 The role of the Environmental Health team

Environmental Health has the responsibility to ensure that the above requirements are achieved and maintained before and during the operation of the market, and the stalls present or trading within it. Guidance can be sought from Environmental Health as to how best to meet these requirements, but if they are not followed and a public health risk is posed, enforcement action will be taken.