As we continue to effectively slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Victorian Government is working with businesses to support the gradual re-opening of cafes, restaurants and other venues. This factsheet provides guidance and advice on how to set-up your venue to maintain the safety of staff and customers.

**Key points**

From 11.59 pm on 31 May, restaurants, cafes and other hospitality businesses can resume dine-in service with the following restrictions:

- Up to 20 seated patrons per enclosed space.
- All venues must abide by physical distancing requirements. Limits will be placed on entry to comply with the density requirements allowed within a single space – one customer per four square metres.
- Tables should be spaced at least 1.5m apart.
- A maximum of 6 people will be able to sit at a table to eat a meal together.
- Venues are required to request contact details, first name and phone number, of every dine-in customer to assist in rapid contact tracing. Other safety precautions will also be required, including extra cleaning. Staff should not work when unwell.

From 11.59 pm on 21 June this is planned to increase to 50 patrons per enclosed space. A further increase of up to 100 patrons per enclosed space is planned for the second half of July.

**What are some of the things I can do right now to improve safety at my venue?**

Organisations and employers who are responsible for a workplace should take actions now to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus. The actions you should take are:

- Ensure you have adequate hygiene and sanitation supplies such as bleach, alcohol sanitisers and hand soap.
- Provide and encouraging the use of hand sanitisers for use on entering and exiting buildings.
- Ensure high standards of routine environmental cleaning.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly, including counters, tables, doors, handles, keyboards, taps, chairs, tables, handrails, tills, phones, vending machines, terminals, shared pens and iPads/screens.
- Open windows, enhance airflow including adjusting air conditioning.
- Avoid large indoor meetings and lunchrooms and use outdoor venues.
- Plan for increased levels of staff absences.
- Plan for what to do if staff arrive sick at work.
- Promote preventive actions amongst your staff - lead by example.
What is the ‘four square metre’ rule?

Physical distancing is an important component to creating a safe environment for employees and customers. The current directions require capacity limits of 20 patrons per single enclosed space, subject to meeting the density quotient of one patron per four square metres of patron-accessible area.

This ‘four square metre’ rule is called the ‘density quotient’.

It is calculated by dividing the total accessible area measured in square metres (not including any space that is not accessible to patrons, such as kitchens, behind bars, or storage areas) by 4.

For example, if an indoor space is 8 metres long and 2 metres wide, its total area is 16 square metres. Its density quotient is 4, so no more than 4 patrons would be permitted to be in the indoor space at the same time.

The density quotient should be rounded down, for example a density quotient of 9.68 becomes 9 patrons because you can’t have .68 of a person.

The spaces specifically available for staff only (e.g. kitchens, behind bars or counters, or storage areas) are not included when calculating the density quotient for customers.

Closed areas within venues (e.g. gaming areas) cannot be calculated as part of the four square metre rule.
Does the four square metre rule apply to everyone in the space i.e. staff and customers?

The four square metre rule applies to limit the number of customers/patrons in a space, but not to limit the number of workers. Venues and facilities can have the number of staff reasonably required to operate, in addition to the limit in place for customers/patrons.

Workers are excluded from the calculation because employers have a duty to provide a safe workplace and control the health risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).

Do we still need to do physical distancing, as well as the ‘four square metre’ rule?

It is very important that people continue to adhere to physical distancing measures as this is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that you should keep 1.5 metres between you and other people not from your household. This includes between patrons or customers, for example when waiting in a queue.

Do I have to have a separate entrance and exit to my business for customers to use?

Separate entry/exit points are not required but should be used if available. Businesses should take steps to minimise opportunities for people to mix, including while waiting to pay or to use a bathroom. This could include paying beforehand electronically or staggered arrivals for bookings.

If a group of friends go out for dinner do they have to sit 1.5 metres apart?

A maximum of 6 people will be able to sit at a table to eat a meal together. Larger groups will need to sit at separate tables, with the tables spaced more than 1.5 metres apart.

Victorians are being asked to use common sense when it comes to dining out with friends or family who are not part of their household, especially those who are more vulnerable. Spacing of 1.5 metres between groups is required.

What do you mean by separate spaces for the gathering limit?

A separate space means an undivided space, for example a dining room of a restaurant or cafe premises. Walls separating areas should either reach from floor to ceiling or be at least 2.1 metres high for the space to be considered sufficiently separate. It is not intended for temporary structures to be installed to create separate areas.

Can outdoor areas be used as a dining space?

An outdoor smoking area, or drinking area where smoking is allowed, can become an outdoor dining area. However, a smoking area that has become a dining area means smoking is no longer allowed in that space.

The conversion of an outdoor smoking area, or drinking area where smoking is allowed, into an outdoor dining area must also take into account the requirements of the Tobacco Act, which stipulates that an outdoor drinking area where smoking is allowed cannot be within four metres of an outdoor dining area.

More information on outdoor dining and smoke-free area requirements is available at the DHHS website.

What if I have a venue that has an upstairs and a downstairs? Or two rooms that open onto each other?

For single businesses on a large premises that may have, for example, multiple separate rooms (e.g. upstairs and downstairs, or separate rooms on one level, or an indoor and separate outdoor area), each separate area must not have a density of patrons greater than 1 per four square metres, and any more than 20 patrons at any one time.
Each area must be separated by permanent structures or be a discrete area of the premises that is sufficiently separated from any other area of the premises. Walls separating areas should either reach from floor to ceiling or be at least 2.1 metres high for the space to be considered sufficiently separate. It is not intended for temporary structures to be installed to create separate areas.

If two connecting rooms can be closed off from each other, then you can have up to 20 patrons in each, whilst adhering to the four square metre rule for each room. If connecting rooms cannot be closed off from each other, this is considered to be one space for the purposes of calculating the four square metre rule.

Operators will need to apply measures to limit close contact for customers in shared spaces such as foyers and bathrooms, and consider how they will stagger the entry and exit of patrons from each separate indoor space so that physical distancing between patrons can be achieved.

**For more information**


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