



# Food Matters

## Food Safety Newsletter



Moorabool Shire Council's Environmental Health Unit is committed to providing a high level of food safety educational service to the community and businesses in the interest of protecting and promoting public health and wellbeing.

### Welcome to the first edition of Food Matters for 2020

It has been a challenging year so far. Even though we don't have any concrete end date in site, there are a number of positive signs especially with a reduction in the new daily cases of COVID-19 cases. We recognize the pressure that this has placed you all under, our thoughts are with you and your families and we will continue to do our very best to assist you wherever possible.

It has been fantastic to see so many businesses able to take up the challenge and change their standard operations so they can continue to provide services and takeaway food for the community. A number of you have taken it upon yourselves to contact us for further information on what you can and cannot do. This demonstrates the excellent working relationship many of you have with the Environmental Health team which is integral to best possible outcomes for us all.

Council's Health Services are here to help as much as possible during this time and if there is anything that we can assist you with please don't hesitate to get in touch and let us know.

### 2020 RENEWALS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank businesses on their efforts this year to ensure renewal payments were received on time. We had an enormous response and only a few did not meet the required deadline. Of course, due to current circumstances, we are now looking at ways to assist you if you have been affected by COVID -19. Please contact the Health Department and let us know how this pandemic has affected your business so we can be sure to contact you once a decision has been made regarding any registration payments for this year or next.

### FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Moorabool Shire Council are still undertaking inspections at this time (while practising social distancing) and some of you may have already received your inspection for 2020. The decision to commence inspecting earlier in the year is so we can avoid interruption during the Christmas period. Thank you all for your patience with receiving an additional inspection within a short time frame. What it has shown us is that the majority of businesses are now ensuring hand wash basins are functional and temperatures are all in check. The importance of having a functioning hand wash basin could not have come at a better time so well done to everyone.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WITH COVID-19



### **How is COVID-19 spread**

Coronaviruses are spread from someone who is infected to other close contacts through droplets spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects.

### **How long does COVID-19 last on surfaces?**

According to the World Health Organisation, there is currently no certainty regarding how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may differ under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

If you think a surface may be contaminated, clean it with a common household disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others.

### **Can it be spread by foodborne transmission?**

There is no evidence that food is a likely source or route of transmission of the virus.

### **Do food and drink businesses have to close?**

Any business providing only sit-down meals and drinks must close. You may remain open if your business operates as takeaway or delivery only, or if you change over from table service to takeaway and delivery only.

This restriction is to reduce the opportunity for large numbers of people to spend time in an enclosed space while eating their meal. Restaurants, cafes, cafeterias and fast-



food stores also have many surfaces, tabletops, door handles and other fixtures that are touched or handled by many customers. Reducing the amount of time people spend in a food service business can minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus

### **If my business is allowed to stay open, are there any special conditions I should know?**

Yes, there are two special requirements for every retail business that has customer premises:

1. You must measure your available floorspace and identify the maximum number of customers allowed on your premises at one time. For example, if your shop is 8 metres wide by 20 metres deep, its floorspace would allow

no more than 40 customers and staff inside at one time ( $8 \times 20 = 160\text{m}^2$ , divided by  $4 \text{ m}^2$  per person = 40 people).

2. You must place a sign at the entrance to your premises indicating the maximum capacity of your shop and ensure that no more than this number are in your premises at any one time.

### **If I change my business to takeaway and delivery only are there extra legislative requirements?**

If your Class 2 food business is currently registered, there is no further registration or administrative requirements needed for you to provide takeaway or home delivery services from your business.

You will, however, need to ensure that you have added appropriate content to your food safety program and continue to comply with all the requirements of the Australia New Zealand Food Safety Code sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, including requirements such as packaging used for takeaway, temperature control during delivery etc.

Whilst there is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via food, there is no immunity in the general human population and the disease is highly infectious. You must adopt practical measures to reduce the risk of spread between staff and to the general public. Restaurants and cafes providing home delivery or take away must continue to:

- Maintain correct personal hygiene while packing the food and ensuring the food containers are stored in a safe and clean manner
- Food also needs to be packed, stored and delivered to the customer under temperature control and in a timely manner.
- Physical distancing must be maintained when handing over deliveries.
- Encourage use of pay pass to limit cash handling.

### **Cleaning**

You must initiate a cleaning regime that ensures frequently touched surfaces are cleaned at least twice a day.

Frequently touched surfaces may include:

- Door handles e.g. fridges, freezers, display cases
- Service counters/check-out areas
- Hand rails
- EFTPOS keypads

Surfaces must be cleaned when visibly soiled; and immediately after a spill on the surface. The cleaning regime

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WITH COVID-19 cont.

must include use of a disinfectant with anti-viral properties that complies with the published requirements of the Department of Health and Human Services.

### Cleaning Products

Use a disinfectant which the manufacturer states includes antiviral activity (meaning it can kill viruses). Chlorine-based (bleach) disinfectants are one product that is commonly used. Other options include common household disinfectants or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol (for example, methylated spirits).

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for appropriate dilution and use a chlorine dilutions calculator

Household bleach comes in a variety of strengths. The concentration of active ingredients —hypochlorous acid, can be found on the product label. Contact time is usually 10–30 seconds but check the manufacturer's instructions.

Throw diluted bleach away after 24 hours.

Below is a table with dilutions using household bleach.

### If suppliers have run out of alcohol swabs, what can be used instead?

Boiling water can be used to sanitise equipment, including probe thermometers.

### One way traffic flow

Where possible promote a one way flow throughout the store. If you have multiple entrances, dedicate one as an entrance and the other as an exit.

Consider arrow markings on the floor to indicate the direction customers should walk through each aisle and throughout the store. The purpose of this is to avoid customers having to walk around each other or towards one another.

### Social distancing markings

Wherever people queue within the premises such as entrances and at checkouts, you should provide space markings on the floor at a minimum of 1.5m apart to indicate where people are to stand. Markings need to be bright coloured or of a pattern that stands out.

Also advise customers to use the length of a trolley as a guide to always maintain 1.5m gap between other people. Signage should be used to reiterate the message and bring this requirement to the customer's attention. Picture of social distancing markings below.

### Do staff have to wear masks and/or gloves?

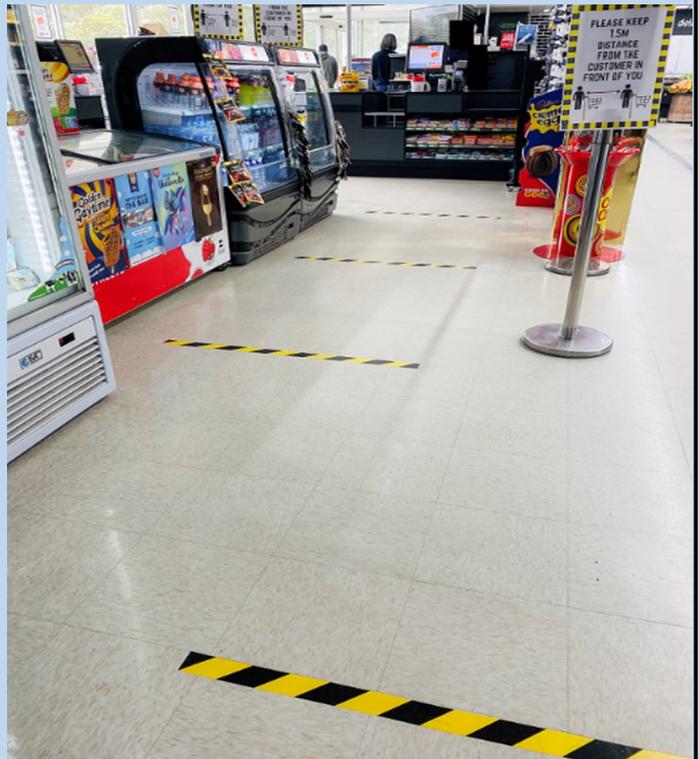
Masks – the current advice is that masks are not necessary.

For people that can practice good physical distancing and hygiene in their workplace, masks are not required.

Gloves - Gloves should only be used if they are part of the businesses normal procedures for food safety i.e. when handling ready to eat foods in the deli. Similarly to masks, the focus should instead be on good physical distancing and hygiene. Gloves can cause more of an issue as they are often not changed.

### Disposable gloves best practice

Disposable gloves may be used for one task only, to prevent the transfer of pathogenic microorganisms or other contami-



nants. For example, gloves should be changed between handling raw food and handling ready-to-eat food, or between activities such as cleaning or removing garbage and handling food.

Once a glove is removed from a hand, it cannot be reused. Hands should be thoroughly washed between glove changes to prevent transferring contamination from the used gloves to the fresh ones.

(Reference: Safe Food Australia - A guide to the Food Safety Standards)

Household bleach 4% available chlorine	Add the following amounts of bleach to the water to give the required concentration (4% available chlorine )	Add the following amounts of bleach to the water to give the required concentration (12.5% available chlorine )
Volume of water to which chlorine is added	1000ppm	1000ppm
1 litre	26.3ml	8.4ml
5 litres	125ml	42ml
10 litres	250ml	84ml

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WITH COVID-19 cont.

**No. Regularly washing your bare hands offers more protection against catching COVID-19 than wearing rubber gloves.**

**You can still pick up COVID-19 contamination on rubber gloves. If you then touch your face, the contamination goes from your glove to your face and can infect you.**

**Is wearing rubber gloves while out in public effective in preventing the new coronavirus infection?**



**#Coronavirus #COVID19**

9 March 2020

### Staff hygiene

Ensure hand washing facilities and hand sanitisers are made readily available to staff.

Educate staff to maintain good social distancing 1.5m from customers and one another.

Educate staff so that they are not touching their nose, mouth and face. If they do then they must wash hands with soap and water, and dry with paper towel.

**We are still here for you during COVID-19**

We might not be able to talk to you in person right now, but we are still working. We are here to take your calls and answer your emails.



### PLEASE REMEMBER TO:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol based hand rub.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Practice cough etiquette (keep away from other people, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissue or clothing and wash your hands).
- Don't go to work when suffering of illness

### BUSINESS SUPPORT

If you have not done so already, please sign up to the Economic Development Team e-Newsletter. The team is working hard to provide as much support and guidance as they can to local businesses. Here's a link people can use to sign up to the newsletter: <https://moorabool.me/enewsregistration>.

The Economic Development team are currently running a marketing campaign titled **Hungry? Order Local**. The campaign aims to advise the local community of food-based businesses still operating, and the services they deliver. Council encourages all Shire cafes, restaurants, caterers, and takeaway businesses to get involved if you are offering takeaway and/or delivery during this time so we can help promote the message that your business is open.

Participation is free for local hospitality businesses. To view the current list of participating businesses, visit this page: <https://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au/hungry-order-local>.

Hospitality businesses - register your interest today: <https://moorabool.me/hospitalityregistration>