



COVID Safety Guidelines – Further information for Local Government

Introduction

The Western Australian Government has implemented a staged lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and developed guidelines to assist businesses and community activities to reopen or recommence.

Safety requirements and accompanying guidance to reopen or recommence are contained in the [COVID Safety Guidelines](#).

A Local Government that operates premises and / or delivers activities that were required to close under Directions made under the *Emergency Management Act* must complete a [COVID Safety Plan](#) and display a COVID Safety Certificate before reopening.

Premises that were not required to close (but may have chosen to) under directions made under the Emergency Management Act are encouraged to voluntarily complete a COVID Safety Plan, and display a COVID Safety Plan Certificate

Local governments should use the specifically published guidelines (Food Business; Sport and Recreation) if their premises and / or activities are covered by those, or alternatively the generic [COVID Safety Guidelines](#).

Where activities and facilities are covered by multiple guidelines, the relevant COVID-19 Safety Guidelines should be read conjunctively.

The purpose of this document is to outline further considerations specifically for the reopening of community, cultural and arts activities and should be read in conjunction with the above COVID Safety Guidelines and COVID Safety Plan.

This information will be updated as the restrictions are lifted, and to clarify business, governance and community considerations.

Role of Local Government

Local Government has a key role in the delivery and facilitation of sport, recreation and cultural activities in the community.

This role includes the operation of facilities, the direct delivery of services, the provision of venues to organisations through a variety of arrangements (lease, hire etc), oversight of venue operations (not run by local government) and the provision of information and support to the broader community.

In accordance with the easing of restrictions, Local Governments should consider the following in the commencement of sport, recreation, cultural and community activities.

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Local Government Business

- Facilities / services - owned and operated by the local government.

Local Governments should ensure that their own facilities, services and activities are compliant with existing legislative and regulatory requirements.

- Local Governments should also comply with all specific requirements relating to COVID-19 and follow relevant COVID Safety Guidelines and Plans. These requirements, guidelines and plans are aimed at maintaining the health of patrons and the broader community

Local Government Governance

- Facilities/services – leased, contracted or hired by Local Government.

Local Governments should ensure that operators, lessees and hirers of their facilities and deliverers of services and activities comply with existing legislative and regulatory requirements.

Local Governments should also carefully consider whether any additional requirements should be placed on lessees, contractors or hirers to address COVID risks and maintain the health of patrons and the broader community.

Community Support and Advice

- General advice - Local Government provides general advice and support that enables community groups and individuals to be resilience and have the capacity to be engaged.

Food Businesses

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines and Safety Plan: Food Businesses](#) outlines the requirements and guidelines for the re-opening of Food businesses, or where Food businesses are expanding beyond takeaway only. These conditions apply to Food businesses including: Cafes, Restaurants, Pubs, Clubs, Hotels, Roadhouses, Taverns and the Casino.

All businesses are required to mitigate the risks of COVID-19. It will be important for the safe operation of premises to:

- maintain a strict limit of a minimum of four square metres (4sqm) per person
- ensure a maximum of 20 dine-in patrons per venue (excluding staff)
- maintain hygiene and frequent cleaning
- self-complete a COVID Safety Plan prior to re-opening (or expanding beyond 'takeaway only'), and display a COVID Safety Plan Certificate
- ensure staff have completed the AHA Hospitality & Tourism COVID-19 Hygiene Course before returning to work
- maintain attendance records of patrons for the purposes of contact tracing (not including takeaway services)
- carefully manage waiting areas to ensure social distancing
- only serve alcohol ancillary to a meal
- ensure alcohol is only consumed at a table (not counter service, or bar service).

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For non-venue related venue related food services (breakfast clubs, meals on wheels etc, please follow the [link](#).

Additional Information and Practices

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines and Safety Plan: Food Businesses](#) contains additional information in relation to managing patrons, managing venues, hygiene training, staff training, food handling, takeaway services, deliveries, cleaning and sanitation, rubbish disposal, cutlery, payments, PPE, notification of change (of food business activities) and licensed premises.

Licensed premises

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines and Safety Plan: Food Businesses](#) contains detailed information regarding the conditions for the recommencement of licensed premises.

Further information is also available in [Director's Guidelines – Licensed Premises](#).

Role of Local Government Environmental Health Officers

It is recognised that Local Government Environmental Health Officers deliver a broad range of compliance, enforcement and educational activities to ensure public health is maintained at a local government level, and are authorised under the *Food Act 2008*, *Public Health Act 2016* and subsidiary public health legislation.

The support and public health expertise of Environmental Health Officers is critical in supporting the WA Police Commissioner to increase compliance with COVID-19 guidelines and requirements.

The Police Commissioner as the State Emergency Controller has formally requested that whenever local government authorised officers are exercising compliance and enforcement powers in the course of normal duties, that authorised officers:

- Support businesses and venues to understand the requirements for maintaining the relevant safety measures namely:
 - Restaurants, cafes, pubs, bars and clubs are subject to a maximum of 20 patrons at any time, excluding staff
 - There must be at least 4 square metres of space per patron in the dining or activity areas, which means some premises will not be large enough to accommodate 20 patrons
 - Maintain records of patrons for the purpose on contact tracing (excluding takeaway food customers)
 - Each venue must display a Safety Plan Certificate in a prominent place visible to members of the public
 - Licensees can only sell or supply liquor ancillary to a meal

Local Government Environmental Health Officers are to ensure that they do not represent to the Food Business that they authorised to provide expert advice regarding to compliance with COVID-19 requirements and that their support and assistance is of a general nature only.

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Beyond assistance and support, Local Government officers are requested where necessary, to report overt non-compliance to the WA Police Force by

- Phone: 131 444
- Email: Covid19.business.continuity@police.wa.gov.au

Should Local Governments received complaints or reports from the public regarding potential breaches, officers are encouraged to relay the supportive and educative approach to COVID-19 related compliance that authorities are taking. The public should be encouraged to report significant and overt non-compliance that might pose a health risk.

Recommendation of Sport and Recreation

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines Sport and Recreation](#) provides important guidance on the reopening of Sport and Recreation venues, and / or the recommencement of sporting activities.

All businesses are required to mitigate the risks of COVID-19. It will be important for the safe recommencement of sport and recreation to:

- maintain a strict limit of a minimum of 4 square metres (4sqm) per person
- ensure a maximum of 20 people per venue (subject to specific guidance on multipurpose venues)
- ensure equipment used for training is not shared and is cleaned between classes
- maintain hygiene and frequent cleaning
- self-complete a [COVID Safety Plan](#) prior to re-opening/recommencing activity, and display a COVID Safety Plan Certificate at relevant sporting venues
- maintain attendance records for the purposes of contact tracing
- close communal showers and change rooms (although toilets may remain open)
- ensure only non-contact training and non-contact sport (e.g. no bumping, boxing, tackling, wrestling or holding) is allowed.

Additional Information and Practices

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines Sport and Recreation](#) contains additional information in relation to maximum occupancy of indoor venues, swimming pools, multifunctional venues, outdoor venues (including multicourt and ovals), managing patrons, managing venues, washing, equipment sharing, hygiene training, staff training, food handling, cleaning and sanitation, payments and PPE.

Public Libraries

Further information in relation to the re-opening of public libraries can be found on the [Link](#).

Other Community, Cultural and Arts Activities

A Local Government that operates premises and / or delivers activities that were required to close under Directions made under the *Emergency Management Act* must complete a [COVID Safety Plan](#) and display a COVID Safety Certificate before reopening.

Premises that were not required to close (but may have chosen to) under directions made under the Emergency Management Act may choose to voluntarily complete a COVID Safety Plan, and display a COVID Safety Plan Certificate

Local governments should use the specifically published guidelines (Food Business; Sport and Recreation) if their premises and / or activities are covered by those, or alternatively the [COVID Safety Guidelines](#) can be used for:

- Community organisations involved in the direct delivery of community activity
- Community clubs and individuals involved in the direct delivery of community activity
- State government/local government/ community venues with community components
- Studios (e.g. visual art, ballet, dance)
- Spaces for hire including community centres, halls, pavilions
- Visitors, Youth and Seniors centres
- PCYC's
- Service organisation clubs (RSL, Lions, Rotary, Scouts, Guides etc)
- Men's sheds and Playgroups.

Additional Information and Practices

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines Sport and Recreation](#) contains information in relation to maximum occupancy of indoor venues, multifunctional venues, outdoor venues, managing patrons, washing, equipment sharing, managing venues, hygiene training, staff training, food handling, cleaning and sanitation, payments and PPE.

[COVID-19 Safety Guidelines Sport and Recreation](#) should be used to understand the conditions required to recommence the operation of community, cultural and arts activities (including indoor and outdoor venues).

Non-venue related food services

Non-venue related food services are to refer the conditions outlined in [COVID Safety Guidelines](#) prior to recommencement.

These guidelines apply to services such as:

- Meals on Wheels
- Breakfast Clubs

Additional Practices

There are additional practices recommended that will enhance the above compliance requirements in relation to food handling, deliveries, cleaning and rubbish disposal are contained in [COVID-19 Safety Guidelines and Safety Plan: Food Businesses](#)

Local government Act 1995 and Regulations

Amendments were made to the Local Government (Administration) Regulations to enable council meetings to be held online or via telephone during the state of emergency. Further amendments were progressed to increase the flexibility of the sector to access funding in a timelier manner and to support local government employees to access their long service leave in situation where they were stood down.

Amendments were also made to the Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations to increase the tender threshold to \$250,000 so local governments can extend their own purchasing policy and apply local content provisions more readily to goods and services acquired via written quotations. On 21 April 2020, the Local Government Amendment (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 introduced a new Part 10 into the Local Government Act to specifically deal with the pandemic. It allows local governments to suspend a local law, or parts of a local law, to temporarily remove local restrictions which may be beneficial to the district, or parts of the district, during the state of emergency.

The COVID Response Act also provided a power to enable the Minister to modify or suspend provisions of the Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations while a State of Emergency declaration is in force and where the Minister considers that such an order is necessary to deal with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first Ministerial order was gazetted on 8 May 2020 to deal with issues relating to the requirements to hold public meetings, access to information when council offices are closed and budgetary matters.

For further information please visit the Department's [website](#).

Conduct of Council Meetings

Each Local Government will need to review the Chamber or Hall in which they hold Council meetings to see if there is appropriate space to allow for the 4 square metres per person requirement. The Local Government needs to make sure firstly they can accommodate Elected Members and staff and then consider how many members of the public can attend, noting that the maximum that can be in the room is 20 (even if the room is over 80 square metres in size).

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Where a local Government has enough space for Elected Members and staff, they also need to consider access for the public and appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to ensure community participation is possible. One option is to broadcast the meeting in another room. This room must also allow for 4 square metres per person to a maximum of 20 people.

If the Chamber or Hall cannot accommodate the council members and attending staff in accordance with the 1 person per 4 square metre rule, Local Governments should continue E meetings.

For further information please visit the Department's [website](#).

For Further Information and Enquiries

For further information, please contact the Department on LGresponse@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

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