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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Draft Guidance for Indoor Hospitality

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From July 26th, indoor hospitality can re-open with robust protective measures and adherence to Government regulations in relation to evidence of COVID-19 vaccination or immunity following recovery. Final regulations are expected to be signed off on July 25th. In the meantime please find below draft guidelines based on the draft regulations. Once the final regulations are signed by Government, this document will be updated.

Business owners and management who are operating indoor hospitality should adhere to their sector-specific [Operational Guidelines](#) (and any possible amendments of same) in addition to implementing the below Guidance for Indoor Hospitality. This guidance specifically supports the Government regulations and legislation - Health (Amendment) (No.2) Act 2021.

All businesses need to ensure processes are in place and staff are trained to implement the Operational Guidelines and ensure the business is operating within the approved legislation. The COVID-19 Lead Worker Representative should be consulted as these processes and staff training are developed in line with the [Work Safely Protocol](#).

The key element of this guidance is that reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that no person, other than a 'permitted person', is admitted to a relevant indoor premises. Permitted persons are those with acceptable Proof of Immunity.

Infection Prevention Control measures such as physical distancing, cleaning, face coverings, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene and staying at home if feeling unwell should continue to be adhered to.

Ventilation

Poor ventilation in crowded indoor spaces is associated with increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. Ensuring adequate and appropriate ventilation may mitigate some of this risk. There has been a significant update to Ventilation Guidance outlined in the [Work Safely Protocol](#) and this should be adhered to, specifically the appropriate measures in relation to implementation of effective ventilation. This includes guidance on increasing airflow, air extraction systems, and the use of CO2 monitors. This guidance will be incorporated into the sector-specific [Operational Guidelines](#) published by Fáilte Ireland.

Determining ventilation of enclosed workplace settings should be considered as part of the workplace risk assessment. The priority for the risk assessment is to identify areas of the workplace that are usually occupied and are poorly ventilated. To assist with the risk assessment of ventilation, see the [WSP Employer Checklist No. 8 - Ventilation](#).

It is important to remember that ventilation is part of a hierarchy of risk controls. It is not a substitute for other Infection Prevention Control measures, such as vaccination, physical distancing, cleaning, face coverings, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene and staying at home if feeling unwell.

Pre Arrival: Booking – Telephone or Online

Where pre-booking is in place clear communication from the business will be required, i.e. either those taking the call or the website must inform the customer:

1. To ensure all customers are aware that they must provide the relevant Proof on arrival that that all over 18s are fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 if they wish to dine indoors and provide photo ID.
2. That under 18s who are accompanied by a parent/guardian in an indoor setting, currently do not require Proof of Immunity.
3. That if any of their group arrive without their verification Proof of Immunity, they will be refused entry to indoor facilities.

The business must ensure the premises contains sufficient seating (which adheres to physical distancing requirements) to accommodate the number of permitted persons for the purpose of consumption of food or beverages, and at any time the number of permitted persons does not exceed the seating available on the premises.

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Arrival / Walk In

1. There must be a **defined, managed and supervised entrance point with an appropriate queue management system** within the business (at entrance to premises or as near to the entrance as possible) or at point of entry to seating areas, that is controlled by personnel who have been instructed in the process. Measures will need to be in place to ensure a person cannot access without being checked (e.g. 'please wait here' signage, table at entrance, etc). The responsible person(s) for managing entry must be known and recorded for subsequent inspection. If multiple entrances are in use, the above measures must be in place at each entrance. There should be a demarcation between entry and seating area, physical where possible.
2. Before a customer is allowed to enter the seating area the Proof of Immunity for each adult must be checked to verify eligibility for entry to the seating area. These checks include verifying Proof of Immunity, combined with photo ID to ensure person is a 'permitted person'.

The specific details of the process will include:

- Presentation to the responsible person at the controlled entrance of each customer's Proof of Immunity (subject to the finalisation of regulations made under the Health (Amendment)(No.2) Act 2021 this will include EU Digital Covid Certificate and HSE vaccination card).
- Scanning and confirming validity of the vaccination or recovered status of each customer using the EU Digital Covid Certificate Checker or other validation of proofs of immunity that may be prescribed in regulations.
- Cross-check the name on the documentation with Photo ID*
**Acceptable forms of ID are Driving Licence, Passport or other photo ids that may be prescribed in regulations*
- Once confirmed as vaccinated or recovered, a customer is deemed eligible for entry and can move to the next check-in step of contact tracing.

The business must ensure every customer (over 18) has the relevant Proof of Immunity to prove they are fully vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 if they wish to dine indoors. If they believe a customer, who purports to be a minor, is over 18, they should ask for proof of age. Under 18s who are accompanied by a parent/guardian in an indoor setting, currently do not require Proof of Immunity.

Businesses may refuse access where people cannot offer proof of immunity or recovery or cannot demonstrate that their certificate relates to them. If businesses do not operate on this basis, they may be liable for fines or closure.

3. If any member of the group does not have their Proof of Immunity with them, indoor food and beverage services will not be permitted. However, where outdoor food and beverage services are available, customers should be encouraged to avail of this option.
4. Once Proof of Immunity checks are complete for each person being admitted, details to be recorded for all customers allowed entry: include time of arrival, party size and confirmation that all customers (over 18) have been verified to have immunity.
5. Once checks are complete and data recorded, customers can then be shown to their seats and table.
6. Separately the name and contact number of each customer (over 18) must be taken for contact tracing purposes.

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Management of Customer Flow

If a customer leaves the premises for any reason (e.g. smoking areas that require someone to re-enter the premises using the main entrance) they must inform a staff member before re-entry. The recommendation is that they will be required to notify a staff member and they will either have to be re-checked or provided with a clearly identifiable non-transferable pass which must be returned/checked on re-entry.

Contact Tracing

Businesses must keep a record of the time and date of arrival at the premises of each guest/customer and the name and telephone number of each guest/customer for COVID-19 contact tracing. Under 18s are not required to provide details for contact tracing purposes

Details must be retained for 28 days by the business and must be compliant with GDPR. This information must be recorded for both walk-ins and pre-bookings.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between tables. However, if this is not possible, this can be reduced to 1 metre in controlled environments if the risk mitigation requirements outlined in the [HPSC Guidance for Food Service Businesses](#) have been met.

Physical distancing of at least 1 metre should be maintained between people seated at tables. Physical distancing of a minimum of 1 metre is required between the outer edges of the party (back of chair to back of chair).

Pre-booked, time limited slots of 105 minutes are no longer outlined as a risk mitigation requirement.

It is important to remember that Physical Distancing is part of a hierarchy of risk controls. It is not a substitute for other Infection Prevention Control measures, such as vaccination, ventilation, cleaning, face coverings, maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene and staying at home if feeling unwell.

Key Measures for Indoor Hospitality

- Indoor Hospitality must operate in adherence to Government regulations in relation to evidence of COVID-19 vaccination or immunity following recovery.
- A **maximum of 6 persons** aged 13 or over are permitted at a table. This limit of 6 does not include accompanying children aged 12 or younger. The total combined capacity at a table cannot exceed 15 overall (max. 6 persons aged 13 and over).
- Customers can avail of **table service only** and may not approach or order from the bar or other counter.
- Face coverings must be worn by customers at all times other than when seated at their table.
- Employees wear face coverings/masks at all times.
- Music performance, dancing or other entertainment or mingling between tables is not permitted.
- Multiple tables cannot be booked indoors.
- Premises must be clear of all customers by **11.30pm**.

Sources

EU Digital COVID Certificate, Department of Health; Department of the Taoiseach.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3a698-eu-digital-covid-certificate/> (Accessed 23 July 2021)

COVID-19: Guidance for Food Service Businesses V1.5, HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/employersemployeesguidance/HPSC%20COVID-19%20guidance%20-%20food.pdf>
(Accessed 23 July 2021)

Health (Amendment)(No.2)Act 2021, Government of Ireland
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act> (Accessed 23 July 2021)