



## A note from the editor

Welcome to the spring 2020 edition of the MidCoast Council Food Safety Newsletter.

I appreciate that the majority of topics and conversations recently held over the last 6 months has likely evolved around the COVID-19 pandemic. Well, this newsletter is not so different and highlights the importance of having thorough processes and procedures in place and the difference good personal hygiene and sanitising practices can make to protect you, your staff and customers during these difficult times.

By now, most of you would have had your COVID-19 Safety Plan reviewed and checked by one of Council's Environmental Health Officers. This is to ensure that you are complying with your legal responsibilities and correctly following the requirements of the NSW Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order 2020 (the Order).

Please be aware that the requirements of the Order, and therefore your COVID-19 Safety Plan, can change without warning and with little or no consultation/media publicity. It is everyone's responsibility to regularly check the requirements of the Order so please contact Council for advice if you have any concerns.

**The latest up-to-date Public Health Order that affects Food and Drink businesses can be accessed via the NSW Government website: [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au)**

If you haven't already had a COVID-19 Safety Plan inspection, please arrange by one by contacting Council's Environmental Health Coordinator, Malcolm Hunter on 7955 7777. We are also on-hand to help with any questions or concerns you may have during this challenging time.

Whilst Council is not charging food inspection fees or COVID-19 Safety Plan inspection fees for the remainder of 2020, you will note attached the Annual Administration Fee for applicable retail food businesses, as per the requirements of the NSW Food Act 2003. This fee supports Council's Food Safety Program.

Kind regards,  
**Malcolm Hunter - Environmental Health Co-ordinator**



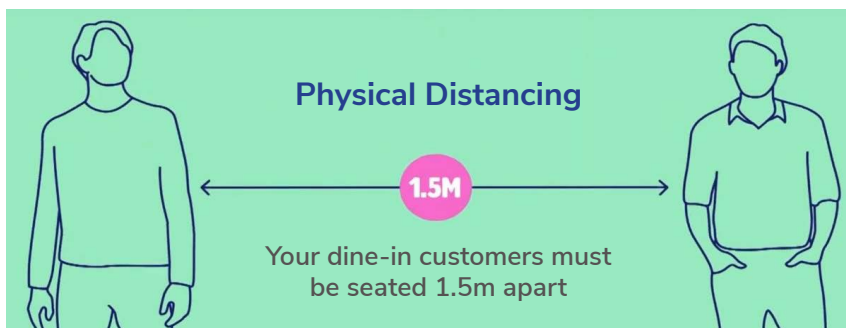
## REINFORCE GOOD HAND HYGIENE

Proper hand washing is one of the most effective tools in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Hand washing should be increased under the current circumstances (after going to the toilet, touching your face, after handling raw food) and should be done effectively.

Make sure you and your staff are familiar with the guidelines for effective hand washing, available at the Department of Health website: [www.healthdirect.gov.au/hand-washing](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/hand-washing).

Additional hand washing and sanitising points should also be set up throughout your business.



## VIDEO HELP



Helping MidCoast businesses be COVID safe

Scan the QR code and watch other local businesses undertake their COVID-19 Safety Plan (or go to [www.bit.ly/MCC-COVIDSAFE](http://www.bit.ly/MCC-COVIDSAFE))

Contact us for advice or guidance in relation to the Food Act 2003 and Food Standards Code. Phone: 7955 7777 or email [council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au)  
For more information visit [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

## CLEANING AND SANITISING

Coronaviruses, such as COVID-19, can survive on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days.

This may vary based on the temperature, humidity and type of surface.

All surfaces within food premises that come into contact with people must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent the spread of the virus.

Cleaning and sanitising is a two-step process. A surface must be thoroughly cleaned before it is sanitised:

**Step 1:** Cleaning requires the use of warm to hot water, detergent and physical action to remove food debris and dissolve grease and dirt to ensure the surfaces are clean to touch and free of visible matter and odours.

**Step 2:** Sanitising is the process of applying heat or chemicals, or a combination of both, to an already clean surface to reduce the number of bacterial and other organisms to a safe level.

During the cleaning stage, detergents ensure food particles are broken down and prevented from depositing back onto the items being washed. Effective cleaning is 90% of the overall sanitation effort as cleaning removes most of the bacterial and other organisms present. The job of the sanitiser is to kill the remaining bacteria during the sanitising stage.

Cleaning and sanitising can be done mechanically using dishwashers or manually using wash up sinks and spray bottles. Always ensure you use the correct type of sanitiser and use as outlined by the manufacturer's recommendations.

## COVID-19 SAFETY PLANS

Business operators should be aware that it is a legal requirement (under the provisions of the current NSW Public Health Order), that food and drink premises must have developed and implemented a COVID-19 Safety Plan. These Safety Plans help to protect your staff, customers and visitors as business slowly returns to normal.

There are four main key points included in the plan and you must provide detail on: **Hygiene and safety, Physical distancing, Record keeping, and Staff and customer well being.**

Council EHO's are currently assisting food and drink businesses develop and implement their COVID-19 Safety Plans. They will work with you to support your business in developing a Safety Plan to meet your obligations.

The COVID-19 Safety Plan inspections are being conducted as an educational program. However, in instances where businesses continually fail to meet the requirements and intent of the Safety Plan, Council EHO's may escalate this process, with the issuing of warning letters and/or referral of non-compliance matters to NSW Police.

COVID-19 Safety Plan templates can be downloaded from the NSW Government website - [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au)

## RECORD KEEPING

Food premises including cafes and restaurants must now keep records of the names, contact details (email or phone number) and time of attendance of dine-in customers and any contractors for a period of 28 days. These records must also be made electronic within 24 hours and supplied to authorised officers on request.

**Suggestions for record-keeping:**

- Use sign-in sheets, and scan or take a photo of the sheet at the end of the day to keep an electronic copy;
- Record details on the back of the customer's order and scan the orders at the end of the day to keep an electronic copy; or
- Use a QR code - Service NSW has now created a free QR code for businesses to use (more info: [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au))

## COVID-19 Educational Resource

The NSW Food Authority has developed a 'COVID-19 awareness for food service training' voluntary online course.

The training has been developed for anyone working in NSW food retail and food service businesses and covers key measures recommended for COVID-19 control. Key topics addressed include:

- COVID-19 Introduction and background
- Infection, signs and symptoms
- Self-protective measures
- Protective measures for premises and personal hygiene
- Cleaning and sanitising practices
- Social distancing measures
- Record keeping

The course is self-guided and takes approx. 20 minutes to complete. An acknowledgement certificate will be emailed to all participants who complete the 20-question multiple choice quiz at the end.

Food and drink businesses are encouraged to have staff complete the course to ensure that all staff have broad COVID-19 safety awareness. The course can be accessed at [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-awareness-food-service-training](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-awareness-food-service-training).



**Don't forget to always:**

- ✓ Remove condiments from tables
- ✓ Sanitise tables and chairs between customers
- ✓ Sanitise frequently touched surfaces such as door handles as regularly as possible
- ✓ Laminate menus and sanitise between customers