

COVID Safe Information Sheet: MANAGING DENSITY, DISTANCING AND MIXING OF PEOPLE IN YOUR PREMISES



The Public Health directions state:

- ▶ there must only be **1 person per 2 square metres**
- ▶ people must maintain **1.5 metres from others**, where practicable

This is to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading, and to protect your workers and customers.

Density

Density is the number of people allowed in your workplace. This must comply with the Public Health direction above.

Why is this important?

Having lots of people in an enclosed space has the potential to increase the risk of the COVID-19 virus spreading from one person to another.

How to work out your allowed number

You can use a floor plan as a starting point, multiplying the length of the room by the width.

But then you must calculate your useable space: that is, the space or area that's available for people to be in. For example, if you have a café or shop:

❌ things such as shelves, counters, racks or display units can't be occupied by people. Work out how much space these take up, and take them out of your calculations.

✅ things such as tables and chairs people sit at are included.

Once you've worked this out, divide this number by 2. This will give you your allowed number of people.

Then display your allowed number with signs or posters outside/on the door of each room.

Count your staff

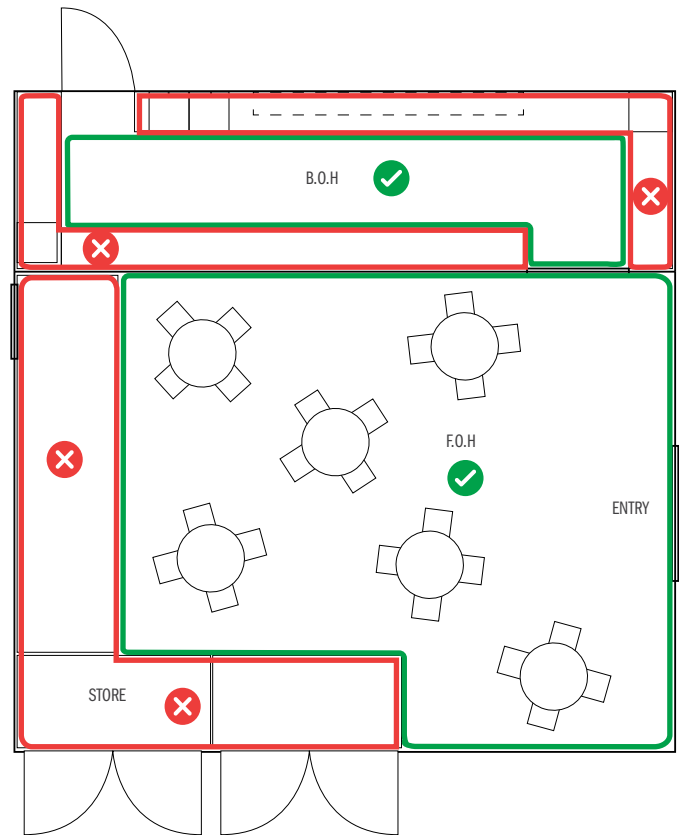
Your allowed number will include your staff. So if you've worked out you can have 10 people in your space and you need 3 staff members present, then you can have a maximum of 7 customers.

You must also count delivery people, couriers and contractors who enter or work in your space.

Manage staff-only areas

Work out your allowed number for staff areas such as tearooms, meeting rooms or stock rooms by doing the same measurements: calculate the usable space of these rooms by including tables they sit at, but excluding things such as storage shelves or fridges.

Do this for each room. And again, display your allowed number with signs or posters outside/on the door of each room.



What to include and what to exclude

- ✅ Tables and chairs that patrons will be eating or drinking at
- ✅ Chairs that clients will be sitting in to get their hair cut
- ✅ Treatment beds that clients will be lying on for beauty treatments
- ✅ Aisles customers will be walking in
- ✅ Exercise equipment clients will be using
- ❌ Storage rooms
- ❌ Shelves and shelving units
- ❌ Display units/areas
- ❌ Counters and customer service units
- ❌ Fridges/food storage units

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Distancing

Distancing is about ensuring there is 1.5 metres between people, and working out options when this cannot be achieved.

You must apply the 1.5 metre rule unless there is no other way of performing an essential task (for example, a nurse providing care to a patient).

Why is this important?

Ensuring people are separated reduces the risk of COVID-19 virus droplets being passed from one person to another.

How to maintain 1.5 metres between people

Examples include:

- ✓ space tables in eating areas so that patrons are seated at least 1.5 metres from those seated at other tables
- ✓ move bar/counter stools to ensure 1.5 metres between patrons
- ✓ use floor markings to remind people to keep their distance. This includes where people order drinks/food, make payments, queue to enter your premises, or in designated smoking areas.

There will be times/situations when it will be unavoidable to have people 1.5 metres apart. This is when you must have other control measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading. For example:

- ✓ ensure one-way flow of movement if possible
- ✓ limit the time people spend together
- ✓ change work practices
- ✓ use PPE like masks and gloves
- ✓ limit the number of people in your space and manage their movements
- ✓ avoid face to face interactions
- ✓ increase the frequency of cleaning
- ✓ use physical barriers
- ✓ consider the consequences to your workplace of a COVID outbreak occurring.
- ✗ Cleaning and hygiene measures alone are not replacement controls for physical distancing.

Mixing

Mixing is how you reduce the movement of people in your premises.

Why is this important?

People moving around increases the risk of the COVID-19 virus being passed from one person to another. The more people come into contact with others, the greater the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak.

How to manage people moving about your premises

If people move between or into different rooms in your premises, make sure this movement doesn't cause the allowed number of people for each room to be exceeded.

For example, if you are a café with a seated dining room, don't allow people placing or collecting takeaway orders to come into that room if it means you'll exceed the room's allowed number.

Have a separate area for takeaway customers and/or ask them to wait outside for their orders.

Manage your customers

It is up to you and your staff to actively enforce your COVID Safe Plan and control measures. This includes:

- ✓ counting and monitoring the number of customers in your premises
- ✓ making sure customers are following the 1.5 metre rule.

You and your staff must actively manage customers to ensure they comply. Encourage your staff to remind customers of the COVID Safe requirements.

However remember that supervision is a less effective control than the others listed above; and it should only supplement, not replace, these other control measures.

Don't cheat the control measures

You can't not implement a control measure because it is inconvenient or will cost or lose you money. For example, not putting up barriers because of the cost, or not closing off every second poker machine because it will lose you revenue are **NOT** good enough reasons for ignoring actions that can ensure these rules are followed.

Related guidance

See also:

- ▶ [COVID Safe Workplace Industry Guidelines](#)
- ▶ [COVID Safety plan templates and other guidance](#)