

CHECKLIST FOR RE-OPENING A FOOD BUSINESS AFTER A COVID-19 SHUT DOWN

This guidance is relevant to all food and beverage businesses. Before completing the Checklist, we recommend you read [COVID-19 and food safety](#) for details of the most important food safety things to consider.

1. Check your business can re-open

Check the [COVID-19 website](#) before you re-open your business for any trading restrictions in place for your type of food businesses opening after a COVID-19 response shut down. What does the upcoming Level look like for your food businesses (i.e. online sales and delivery only or seated dining)? Your business may not be able to open fully until restrictions completely eased. For latest advice: for food and beverage businesses visit MPI's [Primary sector businesses, services, and support services](#) and MBIE's [Workplace operations at COVID-19 alert levels](#).

2. Check conditions at your business

Was your business closed at any time during the COVID-19 response?

If yes, make sure that nothing has happened during the closure (such as building maintenance, pipe leak, a pest infestation) preventing you from hygienically preparing and handling any open (unwrapped) food.

3. Check the condition of the services and equipment

Make sure that services, facilities and equipment are fully functioning. Have power and water supplies to the building been damaged or turned off during the COVID-19 response, and have they been restored? If any services cannot be used, have you made adequate provision for:

electricity

gas

drinking water supply (see also 9 below)

disposing of waste water

toilets

hand-washing with clean water, soap, towels

disposing of rubbish

cooking, refrigerating and freezing food.

4. Is refrigerated food OK? If in doubt, throw it out!

Have fridges been damaged or been without power? Have contents been contaminated?

Check how long fridges were without power.

If power was off for less than 24 hours and fridges were not opened during the power cut, contents must be checked but should be ok. If fridges were opened during the power cut (other than to add ice to help keep contents cool) potentially hazardous food should be thrown away.

If power was off for more than 24 hours potentially hazardous food should be thrown away.

DO NOT USE ANY FOOD beyond its Use-By date. Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or use as pig food.

All opened ready-to-eat food such as processed meats, should be discarded, even if it is within the Use-By date. Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or use as pig food.

5. Is frozen food OK? If in doubt, throw it out!

Have freezers been damaged or without power? Have contents been contaminated?

Check how long freezers were without power.

If a freezer was full, power was off for less than 4 days and the freezer was not opened during the power cut and there is no evidence of thawing, contents should be ok to use.

If power was off for more than 4 days, or the freezer was not full, or there is any evidence that contents have thawed, or thawed and refrozen, then DO NOT USE THE FOOD. Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or send for pig food.

6. Check all other food

Check for any signs of pest infestation. Carry out pest control before opening.

Throw out food damaged by pests. Throw out food in damaged packaging that exposes food.

Clean premises before opening.

7. Cleaning and sanitising

Clean food packaging, if required, before opening it.

Check all stocks of food packaging materials are clean (e.g. takeaway containers).

Clean all food areas and clean and sanitise food surfaces, utensils and equipment.

Clean customer areas and clean and sanitise crockery and cutlery etc.

8. Before re-opening

Check with your suppliers – can they provide the food/brands you usually use? If not, check substituted food/brands enable you to make safe and suitable food. Do you need to change the ways you process and handle food? Do substituted foods contain unexpected ingredients allergens?

Make sure staff know what to do and understand how your business will operate under any COVID-19 restrictions that apply.

9. Water

If you know of a water supply issue near your business confirm with your supplier it is OK to use the water. Follow [Ministry of Health](#) (MoH) guidelines for flushing the system through.

Don't forget to flush plumbed-in equipment (e.g. ice machines, coffee machines, slush-ice makers, post mix guns, self-service soft drink machines and some water coolers).

Keep hand washing facilities stocked with soap and a supply of clean towels so people can practice good hand hygiene.

10. Are your staff available and do your staff know what to do?

Make sure you have adequate, appropriately trained staff available.

Make sure everyone knows what they must do to produce safe and suitable food after lockdown. Train any new or replacement staff before they start work. Remind everyone of sickness policies, and the importance of keeping hands, food preparation surfaces, and food equipment clean, even more so at this time. If in any doubt about what you should do, contact your food safety verifier.

11. Registration & Verification

Check that your plan or programme to trade in food is still correctly registered. If in doubt, contact your Registration Authority (MPI or your local council).

Check when your next verification is due. Please note that depending on the COVID-19 level, your verification may need to be completed using technology, like Skype. Any questions, please contact your verifier for advice.

For more COVID-19 food safety information and updates, visit: [COVID-19 and food safety](#)

Where businesses want to take extra measures to protect their staff and customers, they should do so in line with MoH advice on social distancing and limiting the spread of the virus – contact the Healthline team on 0800 358 5453, visit www.health.govt.nz, or the all of Government COVID-19 website www.covid19.govt.nz.