

EXHIBITOR GUIDANCE BASED ON GOVERNMENT COVID-19 RETAIL MEASURES

INTRODUCTION

In essence, the challenge faced by all industries as a result of COVID-19 is purely one of Health and Safety. What you are trying to avoid is the spread of the disease and you need to attempt to aid in that by decreasing the risks of transmission from one person to another. The main transmission route is airborne, and this gives us our challenge from the resulting social distancing requirements. Other routes are through surface contact and person-to-person contact – both can be mitigated quite successfully through hand washing and other simple hygiene measures and protocols. It makes sense, therefore, to approach your plans and measures from a Risk Assessment basis - as you would do for all other Health & Safety risks.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- Measures and reactions to immediate, life threatening, emergencies (such as Fire or Security Emergencies) take precedence over any COVID-19 controls such as social distancing measures and one-way systems. Such measures are not applicable during an emergency situation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- You will need to carry out a Risk Assessment, as usual, which will now also need to consider transmission of COVID-19 as a new risk and the control measures you will be implementing to minimise this risk. This could be a separate document or be included within your Risk Assessment covering the Build-up, Open Period and Breakdown periods of the event. Space Only exhibitors should also ensure that this risk is considered within the Risk Assessments completed by their stand contractors.

WELFARE

- Welfare facilities will be provided within the venue as usual, with any relevant new procedures in place and communicated to all parties to ensure all risks to health are minimised. Please ensure that your staff are familiar with the details.

GENERAL VENUE AND EVENT MEASURES

ACCESS

- Event arrival, access and registration procedures for exhibitors, contractors and visitors are being considered and planned by the event organisers and venue. As much as is possible, this process will be contactless and where staff are in frequent close contact with large numbers of people they will be positioned behind screens or issued with the necessary PPE.
- The event organisers will maximise the number of access points to the event where practical, considering required entry processes.
- The event organisers and venues are working closely together to introduce systems for security checks which work as closely as possible within current guidance. In some instances, guards may operate from within fixed protected positions and, where not, will be supplied with the necessary PPE.
- Requirements for event access passes will be communicated to you prior to the event. Please ensure that your teams and contractors abide by these systems at all times and have the required accreditation displayed whenever they are within the event space.

AIR QUALITY

- The event organisers will liaise with venues to ensure the best possible hall ventilation services.

HYGIENE

- Hand washing and hand sanitiser facilities together with general hygiene routines signage will be provided by the venue and event organisers within the public areas and high traffic areas (such as toilets, catering areas, show features etc).
- You may wish to add general hygiene routines information to your stand signage.

INTERACTION POINTS

- On-site service desk systems, registration help points, information points and other facilities are being reviewed and will be protected by screens/barriers where possible. Physical distancing protocols will also apply. Circumstances are under constant review and any other necessary precautions/systems will be communicated to you prior to the event.
- Consider protocols for any showguide/magazines/show bag giveaways.

ONE-WAY SYSTEMS

- Venues are currently working on systems for safely moving around their facilities. Guidance will be provided in these areas.
- Dependent on crowd density expectations and gangway widths, one-way systems may be introduced in certain gangways or across the event. Where these are in place, the system will be clearly indicated. Please ensure your teams abide by these requirements.

QUEUING

- Any areas where queuing is required around the venue will be managed with signage, floor markings and rope and post/tensator barriers where applicable.

STAND DESIGN

It is important to consider the layout and design of your stand to ensure that you can both undertake the construction of your stand (for space only exhibitors, and for the set-up tasks undertaken by shell scheme exhibitors) and interact with visitors in a safe and controlled manner. For example; assess the complexity of your build or stand merchandising to reduce onsite workers/deliveries and reduce the range of products on display to maximise floorspace.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure any changes to your stand layout take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including people with disabilities.

CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider ways to reduce the complexity of your Build-up and Breakdown activities in order to minimise the number of people required and the amount of time spent building and dismantling the stand.
- Site rules for the event space as a whole will be communicated by the event organisers in advance and displayed at all entry points. You will need to communicate these site rules to all your staff, contractors and suppliers in line with CDM regulations.

CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS AND PRODUCT DISPLAY POINTS

- Consider the use of screens/barriers for any staff who come into most frequent contact with customers where they can be based and protected e.g. Reception, Info Points or Meeting spaces. This will be dependent on stand size and complexity of your stand design requirement.

- If possible, consider ways of displaying your product in such a way that they do not need to be handled.
- If it is vital that customers handle your products, consider supplying hand sanitiser and/or disposable gloves when the visitor enters your stand. Also consider your cleaning routines for all surfaces and products, as gloves do not mitigate the risk of cross contamination.
- Users wearing gloves should be mindful that they should still avoid touching their face.
- Consider if you need to bring your whole range and whether or not you can show some of your products digitally or virtually.
- Try not to have display cases/rails etc open/accessible to both sides.
- Consider the type of furniture you have on your stand – hard surface chairs which can be cleaned between use would be preferable to those that are material based.
- Consider placing protective coverings on large items that may require customer testing or use, for example, furniture, beds or seats. Ensuring frequent cleaning of these coverings between uses, using usual cleaning products.
- For items such as working machinery, ensure safe working and physical distance from the operator and the machinery itself.

HOSPITALITY/GENERAL SEATING AREAS

- Consider reducing or removing general seating areas on your stand where people would be likely to congregate. Surfaces and furniture within any such areas should be cleaned regularly.
- Where necessary ensure adequate space between seats. Consider screens/barriers on tables to mitigate seating arrangements below social distancing guidelines.

MEETING SPACES

- Any meeting areas on your stand will need to be assessed and appropriate distancing measures implemented; consider the use of screens, physical dividers and/or booths in situations where you intend to sit and talk with customers and colleagues, face to face. This may be a useful strategy to allow more meetings to happen in smaller areas.
- Remember that, as per e-Guide regulations, screens made of Perspex are not allowed so please ensure you use an approved alternative such as Plexiglass. Early sourcing is advisable as demand is likely to be high.
- Make sure you have a pre-agreed system in place in order to manage your meeting spaces.
- If you have one-to-one meeting spaces, the spaces themselves may have to be cleaned after each meeting.

SIGNAGE

- Consider what signage you may need to remind staff and customers on your stand to follow social distancing guidelines and other hygiene measures e.g. floor stickers, tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a relevant distance, signage to identify what cleaning measures you are taking in order that they feel comfortable coming onto your stand. General codes of conduct will be communicated to all personnel pre-event and on arrival at the event via signage.
- You may also wish to communicate the measures you are taking within the invitations you send out to your customers prior to the event as well. Be open to answering questions about this as people are likely to have different concerns from your own.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Before finalising your design define the maximum number of people (staff and customers) that you can safely have on your stand at any one time while maintaining prevailing social distancing guidelines. It is recommended to monitor guidelines as the event approaches as these may be subject to change.

- Consider the design and layout of your stand to allow staff to work further apart from each other wherever possible
- The event organisers have ensured that all stands going forward will be a minimum of 2m deep in an effort to accommodate social distancing and avoid gangway pinch points.

STAND ACCESS AND VISITOR FLOW

- If you have concerns about visitor density on your stand you will need to consider regulating access and visitor movement - for example: restricting access to open sides using ropes and posts, creating staff only areas on larger stands to separate your team from visitors, or having a restricted area for meetings away from crowds. You may be able to regulate visitors to smaller stands in person rather than utilising physical barriers.
- Regulating access will allow you to manage visitor density and behaviour on your stand but ensure you consider the potential for congestion at access points and take reasonable steps to prevent overcrowding.
- Ensure that you have a system for dealing with visitors wishing to visit your stand when your dwell areas are fully occupied; this could include a queue area (within your stand area, not within a gangway), appointment/call back system or contactless detail capture.
- Please do not allow queues to build up on the gangways outside your stand.
- On larger stands, where access is less restricted, think about designing your stand to incorporate a one-way flow with separate entry and exit points if practical. Where this is not possible, consider alternative mitigation measures such as floor markings and screening options.
- Carefully examine your available floorspace and plan your physical displays accordingly; visitors will need to feel comfortable coming onto your stand and you may need to limit the number of product displays or consider alternate display methods to achieve this.
- Please remember that your stand design should allow for you to comfortably hold conversations and meetings with your customers, within your space, without the need for them to dwell in the gangways and create pinch points.

STAND ACTIVITY

This section covers all of the tasks you will be undertaking during a build-up and breakdown – whether it be a space only stand build, or the merchandising of a smaller shell scheme stand.

BUILD-UP AND BREAKDOWN

- When planning your Build-up and Breakdown construction activities consider back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) wherever possible. Where staff are required to work in close proximity, examine options such as temporary or mobile screening
- Consider activities that take place away from your stand itself. Advise your staff to follow any requirements publicised onsite when off your stand area (eg social distancing requirements around toilets, catering facilities, loading areas, gangways etc).
- Throughout the Build-up and Breakdown periods, congestion is best mitigated by scheduling the tasks to be completed in such a way that the minimum number of people are required at any one time.
- Wherever possible, use the same pairs of people for moving loads where more than one is needed.
- Try to avoid passing goods, products, tools or materials from hand to hand.
- Consider how your goods are to be transported and then how they are going to be moved when onsite. Where possible, ship in such a way that people can move the items whilst working within social distancing guidelines. Where this is not possible, consider use of PPE and any other relevant mitigation measures that may be required.

- Surface transmission risks can be mitigated relatively easily by adopting good and regular hand cleansing routines.
- Social distancing cannot always be achieved (e.g. where footing a ladder is required) so other mitigation measures should be considered in these circumstances, such as the amount of time the activity can continue for, or the wearing of suitable PPE.

CHILDREN

- Remind customers who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.

COLLECTING ITEMS

- You should consider not supplying any sort of 'giveaways' including samples or promotional gifts at this stage unless, of course, you have considered the hygiene around this process.
- Consider supplying information digitally or virtually to your visitors instead of hard copy brochures and catalogues.
- Where you do need additional supplies on your stand throughout the event, consider having all requirements delivered to your stand and stored within your stand, or with the official event freight contractors, during build-up.

HOSPITALITY

- Staff and visitors should not share equipment and crockery etc. without thorough cleaning.
- Please do not offer shared bowls of snacks/treats even when individually wrapped.
- Avoid drinks receptions on your stand space.

INTERACTION WITH CUSTOMERS

- Consider how you will interact with your customers. Is it vital that you talk to every member of their team? Do you need to accompany them on a tour of your products? If so, consider measures that may mitigate any risks e.g. adequate space or any PPE options.
- Wherever practical, ensure that staff interactions with visitors are contactless.
- Can you provide information to your customers digitally either in advance, whilst they attend your stand, or as a visit follow up in order to reduce the activity time?
- Where screens are not practical, you may need to consider other risk mitigation measures, such as reducing time spent with an individual, face visors (though no PPE should be shared between people without being thoroughly cleaned), masks etc

MEETINGS

- It is recommended that exhibitors arrange as many meetings in advance of the event as possible, and spread these times throughout the course of the event/day.
- Encourage your visitors to attend meetings on the traditionally less busy days for your stand.
- Consider whether meetings could be held elsewhere e.g. in an outside space
- Limit the length of meetings to 15 minutes or less wherever possible.

PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS

- Product demonstrations can attract crowds and it is recommended that such activities are strictly limited to essential demonstrations only. If a demonstration of your product is vital you must ensure that staff are briefed as to how to manage crowds to maintain social distance, aisles are kept clear and interactions are minimised.
- For any demonstrations planned, you will need to provide the organiser with evidence of how you intend to manage crowds to maintain social distancing guidelines. This will usually be required in advance of the event and with an accompanying Risk Assessment.

- Can you provide information to your customers digitally either in advance, whilst they attend your stand, or as a visit follow up in order to minimise direct contact and maintain social distancing?
- Consider increasing the number of demonstrations throughout the day, with a controlled and reduced viewing capacity at any one time.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPACE ONLY STANDS

- Add all relevant instructions to the site rules that you prepare for your stand construction phase.
- Consider the size/location of any break areas or staff rooms within your stand space where relevant and ensure that your staff are aware of the rules and procedures that apply in these areas.
- When implementing restricted access to your stand, consider the visual appeal and customer experience, for example, building in a product display or branding opportunity rather than a functional but blank wall.
- Within the construction phase you may or may not require a one-way system on your stand - this will depend on your stand size and complexity of build, consult your stand builder and have a plan in place to ensure your staff can interact safely with the build team.
- Do not arrange for all of your construction materials, stock and supplies to be delivered at the same time, unless this can be stored throughout build within the confines of your stand. Similarly, please confine all tasks within the stand construction phase to within your stand boundaries once your floor/floor covering has been laid. It will be more important than ever to keep the gangways clear of goods and construction work to allow social distancing measures to be observed.
- If you do need to deliver everything/anything prior to being able to accept it all on to your stand area, please contact the official event freight supplier to discuss opportunities for storage within an onsite staging area.
- Consider the time that you need to arrive. Only the largest stands, with the most work to complete, need to be waiting to come into the halls when the doors open at 8am on the first day of the build-up. Breakdown speeds are likely to be slower due to these new concerns. Do you really need to be the first stand out of the hall, or could you delay your breakdown activities for an hour or two?
- If possible, allow your stand contractors enough time to complete their build before your teams arrive onsite.
- Stand construction progress updates/production meetings could be held digitally in certain circumstances as an alternative to physically monitoring progress on the stand.

STAND HYGIENE & CLEANING

You will be responsible for the hygiene measures required on your stand. Hand washing facilities will be available at the venue, and hand sanitiser facilities will be provided by the venue and event organisers within the public areas and high traffic areas (such as toilets, catering areas, show features etc). You may wish to complement this more locally by providing hand sanitisers on your stand or any other measures you feel appropriate once you have conducted your risk assessment.

CLEANING REGIME

- Good housekeeping is already an essential consideration. Consider a deeper clean of all spaces at the end of each day.
- Your stand floor will be vacuumed each evening as usual, but you should consider how you will keep the surfaces on your stand and any physical product displays clean. Please remember you are responsible for this and it is not provided by the organiser. If you require additional cleaning services, please contact the venue cleaning team in advance.

- In the event of a known or suspected case of COVID-19 on your stand, support will be provided by the event organiser who will guide you through the necessary steps you will need to take, including cleaning assistance from the venue cleaning team. Further details of this will be available closer to the event.
- Consider the locations more likely to be touched (e.g. door handles) and ensure a regular cleaning regime
- Consider cleaning touchpoints, such as rental equipment, interior and exterior touchpoints, after each customer use or handover.
- If you decide to provide disposable gloves when customers enter your stand, ensure that they are mindful that they should still avoid touching their face and ensure you have an adequate disposal system.
- A cleaning log positioned in a prominent location on your stand may be a useful way to capture and demonstrate the cleaning regime you have put in place.

EQUIPMENT

- Consider the equipment your teams will need on-site and avoid the need for sharing where possible. Where not, consider your cleaning routines around this. Please remember any PPE you are supplying should not be shared between individuals without thorough cleaning.
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly is likely to be required. Consider what materials you may need to provide to do this and your systems for ensuring this is done. This could include products, display surfaces, data capture devices and other stand resources, as well as tools and trolleys during the construction phases. Make sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products.

HAND SANITISER

- Consider providing hand sanitiser on your stand and encourage use by everybody.
- Ensure that your staff are aware of the stand policy and can communicate it effectively to your visitors.

PPE

- Consider the use of PPE across all phases of the event as part of your risk assessment and provide it as necessary within your stand space. Remember that individual pieces of PPE should not be used by multiple people without adequate cleaning in between.
- PPE is considered as the lowest level of mitigation measures which should only be considered if the risk cannot be managed through preventative measures such as social distancing and hygiene regimes etc.
- If your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to anyone who requires it within your stand boundaries, including visitors if applicable. Any PPE provided must fit properly.
- Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

WASTE DISPOSAL

- Contact the venue cleaning team if you require additional waste disposal services. Details of regular services will be provided closer to the event.

STAFF WELFARE

Staff welfare is a key consideration during these times, and it is important that your staff be aware of the measures you are taking and the required procedures to enable them to work safely and confidently on your stand.

ACCOMMODATION

- Ensure that you are aware of any measures your proposed accommodation/hotel recommends and pass this information onto your team.

BRIEFINGS

- Brief your team about the control measures you, as well as the venue and the event organisers, are implementing in advance of them coming on-site in order to help them feel comfortable about the ways in which the risks have been reduced.
- Arrange for on-stand briefings for your team to be held in advance of the show, digitally, or given to smaller groups in order to maintain social distancing guidelines.
- Remember to detail your control measures on any site rules you are issuing to your teams, contractors and suppliers who will be on your stand during the build-up and breakdown period. You do not need to share your risk assessment if you do not wish to do so, but you do need to tell them of any measures you are taking that impact them, or procedures they will need to adhere to.
- Consider briefing your team to deal with customers who may have special needs in a different way - for example briefing them verbally upon arrival should they have visual impairments
- Give someone within your stand team responsibility for ensuring adherence to your control measures.

BREAKS

- Do you need to consider having shifts on your stand? If so, try to keep these teams consistent throughout the event?
- Consider staggering staff break times to reduce pressure on any on-stand facility.
- Consider suggesting lunch breaks outside of peak times for venue facilities.
- Consider use of any safe outside areas for staff breaks
- For your own staff, consider ordering pre-packaged meals/snacks from the official stand catering supplier to avoid having to go to catering points within the hall.

HYGIENE

- Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
 - When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
 - Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
 - Continue to wash your hands regularly.
 - Change and wash your face covering daily.
 - If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
 - Practice social distancing wherever possible.

MOVEMENT AROUND THE VENUE/EVENT

- Try to remain within the confines of your stand space as much as possible and try to reduce the number of non-essential trips. When off your stand, to visit toilet or catering facilities, please follow guidelines displayed in those areas.

- Try to minimise using passenger lifts and use the stairs wherever possible

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

- Carefully consider the staffing requirements for each phase of the event – ensure only the minimum number of staff required are present at any one time, consider measures such as splitting into separate teams, staggered arrival times and use of technology to minimise staff requirements onsite (for example, visitor data capture solutions).

SYMPTOMS

- Ensure you and your staff are familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19 as well as the latest NHS advice on what action you should take if you develop any of these symptoms before going on-site for the event:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

- The procedures you should follow if someone on your stand develops any of these symptoms on-site will be communicated to you in advance of the event.

TRAVEL TO/FROM THE VENUE

- Transport arrangements to and from the venue should be considered by yourselves in advance of the event. Procedures for arrival at the venue will be published nearer to the event.

VULNERABILITIES

- For your visitors, it is difficult for you to affect this. However, do try to ensure you have given your own staff the opportunity to let you know if there are any individual requirements they may have, as you would normally do. Remember that not all vulnerabilities can be easily seen.
- The list of people who have been identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable and therefore at higher risk from Coronavirus can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>