Roadmap to reopening and operating safely

Prepared on behalf of the sector by the Meetings Industry Association

Version 5

mia
meetings industry association

Introduction

As we proceed into Step 3 of the Government Roadmap from Monday 17 May, it remains essential that venues can provide the necessary safety reassurance to encourage customers to sign on the dotted line and book future business meetings and events.

With this in mind, as the leading association for business meetings and events in the UK as well as the owners and keepers of AIM Secure – the industry's only accreditation scheme – the mia continues to carry out extensive national and international research to develop a series of recommendations for the sector.

It is advised that these guidelines, which are being incorporated into the AIM Secure accreditation criteria, should be read in conjunction with your own brand standards, and adopted alongside both the latest UK government advice and any specific regional or local restrictions.

Please be aware that as the situation continues to evolve and the UK government – driven by the latest science and medical advice – continues to offer direct guidance, this is designed to be a working document and is subject to change.

Best regards,

Jane Longhurst
Chief Executive mia

To access the latest supporting information, please visit:
https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources

Disclaimer: The adoption and implementation of the guidance referenced within this document is the responsibility of the recipient. The Meetings Industry Association is not responsible for your use of the information contained or linked within this document.

Business planning

All operators should now, as a priority, develop a COVID-19 risk assessment in line with HSE guidance, including all the steps required to ensure your venue is considered COVID-Secure. This will include consulting with your workers or trade unions and sharing the results with your workforce and on your website.

Your plan needs to outline all the immediate changes you need to make to your business now, in order to reopen and stay safely open. It should be agile and responsive to any changes that may come as a directive from the UK Government and National Institute for Health Protection.

The plan will steer the business through planned and unplanned changes, enable fast implementation and be used to inform customers and staff of the actions your business is taking to ensure the safety of all.

As part of the process, you should review your existing risk assessments, policies, procedures, emergency plans and those of your suppliers.

As part of the process all AIM Secure venues should upload their COVID-19 risk assessment on the miaTouchstone platform and set regular review dates. You should also take the opportunity to review your existing risk assessments across your business.

Minimum recommendations

COVID-19 response plan (risk assessment)

Your plan should detail:

- All changes to services and procedures, throughout the customer and staff journey, which will be implemented upon reopening to meet Government guidelines on:
  - ‣ Distancing
  - ‣ Cleaning and personal hygiene (to break the chain of infection)
  - ‣ Ventilation
  - ‣ Tracing
  - ‣ Communication to customers and staff
- Contingency plans in the event of an infection outbreak in your region, including how your business will manage a more localised outbreak, including in your venue.
- How you will use the UK infection level rating to help you to define changes that will be made as risk decreases or increases.
- How you will communicate your plan to customers and staff.
- Your plan must be completed or signed off by Owners/Managing Directors of the venue.

As part of their usual visit, the EHO may include your response plan as part of their audit process. Your local inspector can also support you in the development of the plan.

Business planning *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Department risk assessments	▪ Review and update existing risk assessments with information from the COVID-19 response plan. ▪ Train staff on the updated procedures.
'Safe' certification	▪ Apply for accreditation with a UK recognised scheme such as AIM Secure which is venue specific. Also apply for the Visit Britain consumer-facing scheme 'We're Good to Go' which is also available immediately and is free of charge. ▪ Additionally, you could consider applying for certificates of cleanliness and safety to verify your processes. If you are following correct guidance and have completed the COVID-Secure elements of AIM Secure accreditation, these aren't strictly necessary, however, they will add customer confidence if used in your marketing collateral. ▪ Groups will have their own brand certification and/or will be AIM Secure accredited.
Cybersecurity	Businesses are at increased risk of cybercrime during this time. ▪ Check and secure systems and train staff, where required.
Policies	Develop or update policies for: ▪ Cleaning and disinfection protocols ▪ Staffing and welfare ▪ Distancing and capacity ▪ Contact tracing ▪ PPE ▪ Health/temperature checking of customers and staff
Insurances	Check and update insurance policies. ▪ Loss of business through future cancellations or infection outbreaks.

Business planning *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Emergency planning	▪ Review fire and major emergency evacuation procedures regarding distancing at evacuation points.
Signage	Part of the communication process with COVID-19 controls is to visually remind and inform customers and staff of the procedures you have identified for their safety, and to break the chain of infection. ▪ Consider reminders at key points e.g. arrival, reception, meeting rooms. ▪ Use reminders for hand washing/using sanitiser, wearing masks (in public areas), distancing and, in addition for staff, the wearing of PPE when carrying out procedures and cleaning. ▪ Signage or reminders may be in the form of posters, information cards, copies of policies given to delegates and organisers.

Review suppliers	As part of your due diligence, review supplier procedures and policies for:
	
	▪ Disinfection, distancing and hygiene.
	▪ Ensure your suppliers know they must:
	  ▸ Communicate with you if staff become ill that have been on your premises
	  ▸ Adhere to your requirements on distancing etc.
	  ▸ Always sign in and out to support your policies on tracking
	NB: Always check references of new suppliers, especially deep cleaning companies.

Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts

You will need to ensure you have guidelines in place for your sales teams.

For some time sales will be built on confidence. As your frontline, your sales team will need to be totally conversant with your plans for a COVID-Secure environment. So, arm them with clear information on your policies and procedures for sanitising, PPE and your venue's requirement for risk assessments and advance delegate lists. All of this will help to instil confidence and, making sure organisers get this information very early in the sales process, will ensure you are being totally transparent in your dealings with them.

Whilst it is not an element included in Government guidance, you may find that investment in technology such as thermal imaging and the ability to facilitate hybrid events and streaming, could enhance your sales opportunities. Meanwhile, clear visuals demonstrating room layouts will help organisers to understand the options while social distancing is in place.

Please also review your booking contracts, they should always include a pandemic clause. Careful consideration will need to be given to your cancellation policy in the event of any future national or regional lockdown. The mia has issued guidelines, which include a clause prepared by legal experts Mishcon de Reya, around this. If you prefer to use your own cancellation policy and pandemic clause, then the mia strongly recommends taking legal advice on this.

Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Terms and conditions	Review current terms and conditions and, to safeguard your business, ensure they reflect the current situation and potential future pandemics. ▪ Use mia recommended terms and conditions. ▪ Have pandemic clauses. ▪ Check cancellation policies reflect emergency situations. ▪ Clients should also sign an agreement to venue policies on health and welfare of delegates e.g.: temperature checking and health statements on arrival. ▪ To enable infection tracing, clients must agree to send delegate lists containing names and addresses of each person. They should confirm where delegates are arriving from if not home prior to arrival, including any details on quarantine time, if applicable. Details will be kept for 21 days. ICO guidance indicates it is lawful to collect this information on the basis of public interest. More details can be found here: https://ico.org.uk/global/data-protection-and-coronavirus-information-hub/ ▪ Consider using the miaTrustedtrace tool, which will collect delegate information and store it securely for you
Venue flexibility	While delegate numbers are restricted by Government guidelines to 50% capacity to a maximum of 1,000 delegates, socially distanced and with mitigation in place, it doesn't need to restrict your creativity. Consider: ▪ Outdoor events which enable greater numbers ▪ Hybrid events ▪ Socially distanced food offers for instance picnic and bento boxes
Event risk assessments	▪ To offer enhanced safety for delegates, a specific risk assessment should be carried out for each event. ▪ Liaising closely and regularly with the organiser will help build confidence in your ability to respond to the fast-changing environment. ▪ Communicate identified risks to organisers and together decide on actions to reduce the risk.

Sales, showrounds, booking and contracts *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Showrounds	Showrounds are permissible, however many clients may not want to travel if it is unnecessary or if their start point, for international bookings, prevent this. In these circumstances consider offering a virtual tour. For showrounds taking place follow strict Covid protocols: - Staff and client should wear masks unless exempt - Conduct with due regard to social distancing - Staff should wear gloves to open doors. - Sanitiser points should be used regularly during the tour - If hospitality is offered follow the controls you have created around catering (see F&B section)
Syndicate meeting and conference rooms	Syndicate, meeting and conference areas should be allocated with care to ensure distancing can be maintained. - Syndicate rooms should be as close as possible to the main room. - Apply social distancing rules to syndicate rooms for numbers of people and layouts. - If possible, keep small group work within the main room and consider allocating a larger space to facilitate this. - Discourage use of lounge areas.
Sales staff	Follow workplace guidance to ensure the safety of all staff at all times. - Where staff are traveling for business purposes they should travel in vehicles alone. - PPE and sanitisers should be provided to staff traveling.

Disinfection and cleaning planning

For a COVID-Secure environment, your cleaning procedures need to be considered for both reopening and business continuation. The steps we recommend are outlined below.

Walk through your business as a customer to consider all of the high-touch and high-traffic areas, and develop your procedures to ensure these are given priority. Your cleaning procedures will by necessity become hourly, at minimum, in some high-traffic and high-touch areas.

Don't forget to publish and share your procedures; visible procedures and cleaning activity will continue to give confidence to your customers.

Minimum recommendations

Reopening

- If you choose to fogg or electro-statically decontaminate, and this is not compulsary, it is recommended that you use an external contractor service. *(Check company references as in business planning.)*
- Contractors should issue a certificate of cleaning. *(This can be used to support marketing material and as evidence of COVID-19 due diligence.)*
- Ensure equipment with water connections is thoroughly flushed through to remove the risk of Legionnaires. Carry out all of your usual Legionnaires checks after flushing.
- Ventilation systems should be checked and serviced before reopening. (It is recommended that ventilation and air conditioning systems that normally run on recirculation mode, are now set to run on outside air where possible.)

Disinfection and cleaning planning *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Cleaning standards	Normal cleaning procedures should be reviewed and updated. ▪ Refer to National Institute for Health Protection advice on the type and dilution of products. ▪ Include electrostatic disinfectant sprays in your procedures. ▪ Document for each new product; the contact time, how the product should be used by staff and identify what PPE should be worn. ▪ Identify disinfection procedures based on the 6-stage disinfection procedure used in food safety. ▪ Use disposable cloths, paper towel roll and mop heads. ▪ Avoid splashing onto surrounding surface areas or items. ▪ Revise existing cleaning schedules in all departments to include the new standards and procedures and train staff. ▪ Record training given.
High-touch points	High-touch points are those points in a room/area or items that are touched the most frequently. ▪ Regular disinfecting of these points and items is crucial to breaking infection chains through contact. ▪ Carry out an analysis of high-touch points in every room and area. ▪ Identify the most effective products eg: sprays or wipes to manage the high touch points. ▪ Consider how often touch points should be disinfected. The frequency of cleaning should be determined by the number of people inhabiting the space, the number of people passing through the space and their access to sanitisation and cleaning facilities. ▪ Some items, such as phones and keyboards which may be shared, should be disinfected between each use. ▪ Guests will be very aware of these cleaning processes taking place and this will build confidence. ▪ Use a signed schedule in areas as a visual to guests. ▪ Managers should check schedules regularly to ensure that the disinfection of high touch points is carried out correctly.

Disinfection and cleaning planning *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Sanitiser points at key guest and staff areas

Although frequent hand washing is the most effective at killing coronavirus, it is not always possible to get to a hand wash facility.

- Sanitiser points and signage should be provided throughout the venue, back and front-of-house eg: venue entrance, reception or welcome desks, entrances to restaurants, refreshment points, external seating areas, canteen entrances, staff entrances, locker rooms, at lift entrances, stairwells etc.

- Touchless dispensers are preferred, as dispenser buttons are high-touch points and must be disinfected between each use.

- Wipes should be used for electronic items.

- To be effective against coronavirus, sanitisers should have a minimum 60% alcohol content.

- Consider providing each delegate with a small bottle of sanitiser/wipes or have a supply available on request.

- If your venue has bedrooms, place sanitiser/wipes in each room for guest use.

Safe disposal of wipes

Provide bins for safe disposal of wipes and tissues.

- Bins should be lidded and foot pedal operated, or automatic. Liners should be used for safe removal.

- Waste bins at sanitiser points to be emptied, disinfected and liners replaced frequently in line with usage.
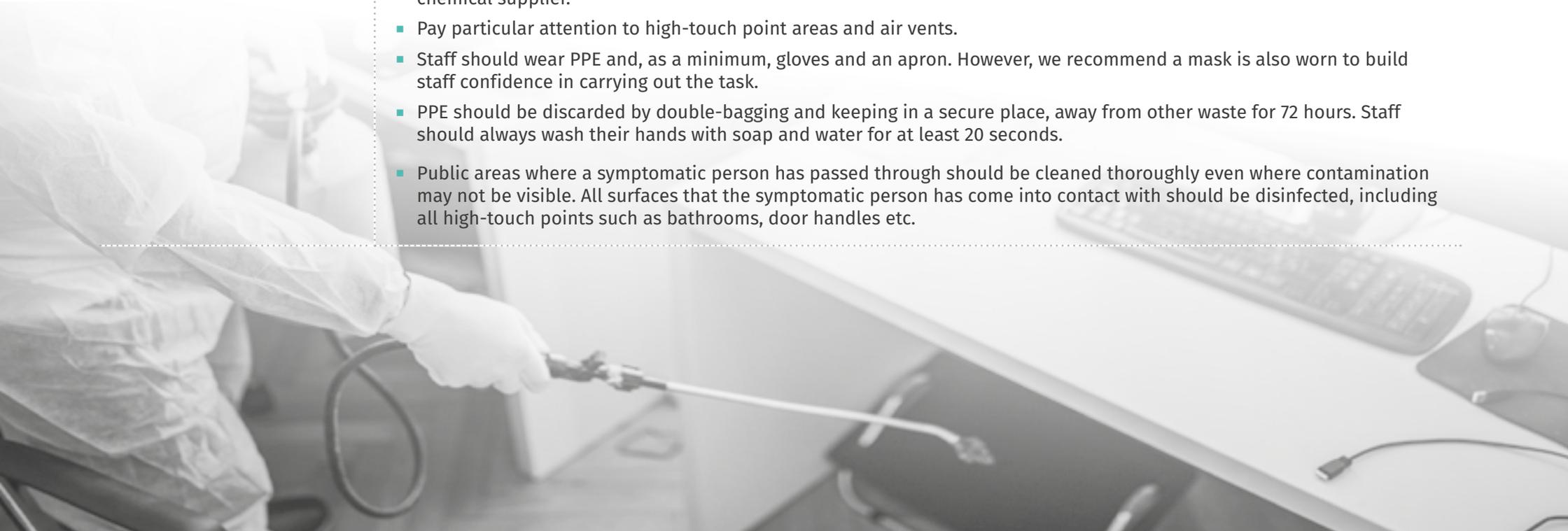
Disinfection and cleaning planning (continued)

Minimum recommendations

Cleaning a room where a guest has reported COVID-19 symptoms

Follow the recommendations of National Institute for Health Protection:

- **Secure the room for 72 hours to reduce the infection risk, especially on soft furnishings which cannot easily be cleaned.**
- Carry out your own cleaning procedure, or use external contractors to add an extra layer of safety.
- Use disposable cloths and mop heads.
- Clean with warm soapy water first, then disinfect the surfaces.
- Normal household disinfectant is recommended, however, we recommend using products supplied by your cleaning chemical supplier.
- Pay particular attention to high-touch point areas and air vents.
- Staff should wear PPE and, as a minimum, gloves and an apron. However, we recommend a mask is also worn to build staff confidence in carrying out the task.
- PPE should be discarded by double-bagging and keeping in a secure place, away from other waste for 72 hours. Staff should always wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Public areas where a symptomatic person has passed through should be cleaned thoroughly even where contamination may not be visible. All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with should be disinfected, including all high-touch points such as bathrooms, door handles etc.

Disinfection and cleaning planning *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Cleaning a room where a guest has reported COVID-19 symptoms

a) If the room cannot be left for 72 hours, internal deep cleaning procedures need to be applied.

- Staff must wear full PPE and be trained in the correct use.
- Do not shake linen as this increases the risk of dispersing through the air.
- Double bag linen and leave securely for 72 hours before washing.
- Disinfect any surfaces that may have been contaminated by the bags after taking to the secure place. Remove gloves and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Steam clean soft furnishings and mattresses. The cleaner MUST emit steam when it leaves the machine.
- Disinfect surfaces using the 6-stage disinfection procedure and disposable cloths and mop heads.
- Pay particular attention to frequently touched areas, surfaces and air vents.
- Dispose of PPE, disposable cloths and mop heads along with other waste from the room by double-bagging and storing securely for 72 hours before throwing away in the regular rubbish.
- After removing rubbish, wash hands using the effective washing guidelines.

b) If body fluids are involved, extra precautions must be taken:

- The nose and eyes must be protected with a surgical mask equivalent to those used in healthcare. Staff should be trained in how to put this style of mask on correctly. If that is not possible, the room must be left 72 hours as above.
- Items that have been heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned should be disposed of.
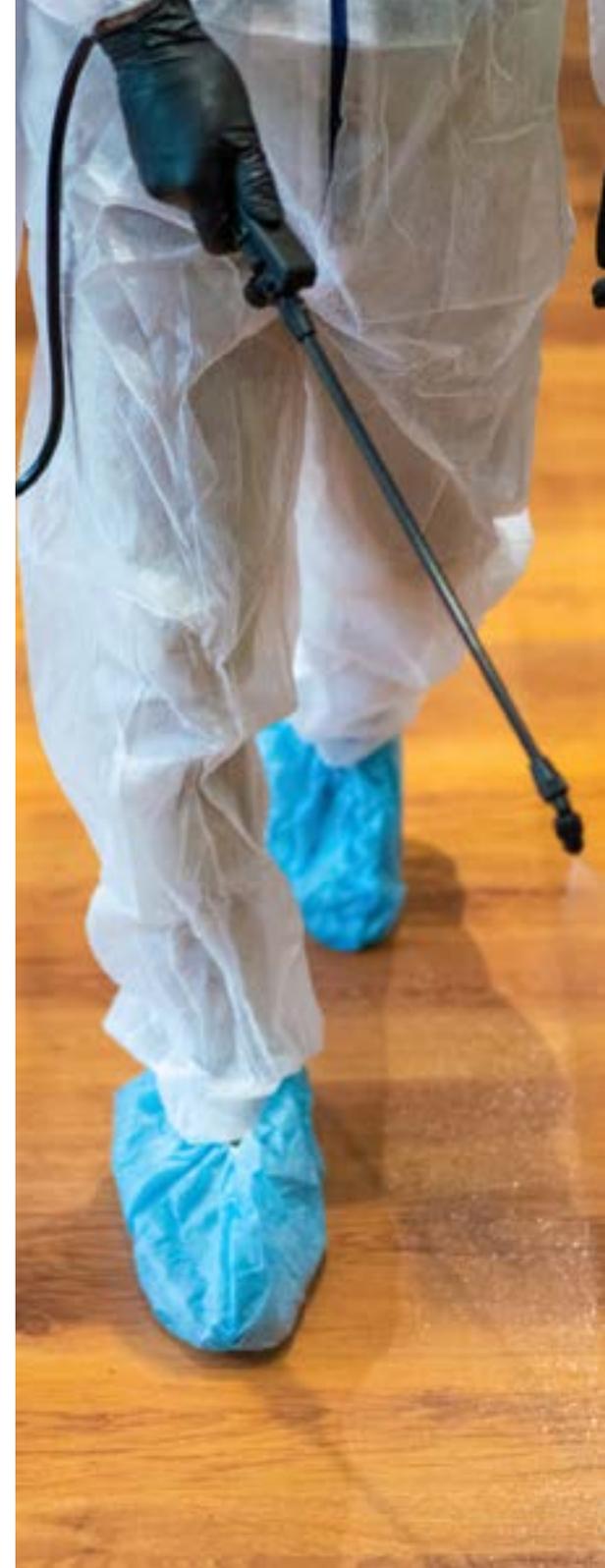
Meeting rooms

Consider how you can adapt and present your venue to facilitate the requirement for social distancing. How will this work in all settings and all rooms? Unless your venue has a number of rooms that are identical, you will need to consider this on a room-by-room basis.

Your protocols around cleaning must be exemplary, so review your processes around breaktime 'refreshes'. Also review your delegate supplies and consider replacing flipcharts with white boards that can be disinfected. If flipcharts must be used, they should be considered as belonging to the customer in their entirety at the end of the event, along with the flip chart pens and removed by the client.

Part of your consideration will need to be air flow, access routes and, if you are asked to cater within a room, how will this be managed?

Meeting rooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Room capacities

Applying distancing rules will reduce the capacity of meeting and event spaces.

- Apply the current distancing requirements and crowd density standards to each room and to each layout i.e.: theatre, boardroom, classroom.

- Layouts must allow for distancing between people of all parties, including the organiser, speakers, delegates etc.

- Lapel microphones should be supplied to speakers to eliminate the shared handling and cross contamination of microphones.

- Tables should only be facing when the current distancing regulations can be applied.

- The use of baize or other cloths is not recommended.

- If baize is used, it must be changed at the end of each day and not reused for 72 hours.

- If linen cloths are used, they must be changed at the end of each day and laundered at a minimum of 60°C.

- Update your website and marketing materials to reflect the new capacities and layouts.

- Stay flexible. As we come through the crisis, distancing regulations will change and you need to be able to review capacities and update marketing information quickly.

Meeting rooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Set-up and break-down	Distancing and personal safety rules must be applied during set-up and break-down procedures.
	■ Staff should maintain current distancing rules when setting up conference rooms.
	■ Staff should wear gloves to reduce surface contamination risk and masks, if identified in the risk assessment. (Masks should be worn at break-down point particularly where baize or linen cloths were used.)
	■ Tables and chairs, particularly arm rests, must be disinfected when in place.
	■ If a venue uses chairs with attached writing desks, these should be disinfected before use and at the end of each day.
	■ Trolleys used to move chairs, tables and other equipment, should be disinfected before and after use.
Supplier set-up	If external suppliers are used to deliver chairs or equipment, they must follow your procedures.
	■ Suppliers should not use the front entrance at the same time as delegates/guests and preferably they should deliver at back of house.
	■ Apply current distancing rules for deliveries with ground markings.
	■ Distancing between suppliers and staff must be maintained at all points from delivery point to meeting room.
	■ Suppliers should wear masks and gloves to reduce the risk of contamination.
	■ Suppliers must sign in and out, creating a record to enable tracing, if required.
	■ Suppliers must provide evidence to the venue before leaving, that the equipment provided has been disinfected.

Meeting rooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

AV equipment

- Staff or suppliers should wear gloves when installing AV equipment.
- Equipment must be disinfected after setting up.
- Disinfect whiteboards at each set up and at the end of each day.
- Flipcharts, if requested, should be disinfected along with pens. Both must be removed by the client at the end of the day or disposed of.
- Use your chosen communication method (card, text message etc.) to inform organisers that the equipment has been disinfected.
- Additional cables and controls that organisers request, must be disinfected before taking to the room – gloves must be worn for the installation of these.

Ventilation

- Air conditioning should be operated at full speed to ensure a supply of fresh air and filters must be changed regularly and switched to external air where possible.
- Window handles should be disinfected as a high-touch point.

Meeting rooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Delegate packs

Delegate packs of stationery and other items are high risk of contamination, so we do not recommend their use.

- Delegate packs should only be provided on request and confirmed during the booking process. These are single-use and should be taken away by the delegates, or disposed of at the end of the event.
- Packs should be disinfected before placing in the room.
- Paper should be stored securely to reduce contamination and changed at the end of each day. Pens should be disposed of at the end of the day.
- Supply disposable glasses, or if glass is supplied, these must be run through the dishwasher and then immediately hygiene wrapped by staff wearing gloves.
- Provide each delegate with their own sealed bottle of water.
- Do not supply sweets in any format, as these can be shared between delegates therefore increasing the risk.
- Consider providing a small bottle of sanitiser or pack of wipes/pair of gloves and a mask to each delegate on arrival at the welcome desk.

Refreshing rooms and cleaning

Organisers and delegates will be very aware of what cleaning you carry out. Ensure your schedules are implemented regularly.

- High-touch point cleaning (e.g.: tables, chair arm rests, door handles, light switches) should be carried out during the main lunch break by staff wearing gloves and masks and a signed schedule left for customer confidence.
- Meeting rooms should be disinfected at the end of each day for meetings longer than one day. At end of tenancy, the meeting room should be deep cleaned prior to any further use.
- Rooms should be secured after cleaning to prevent entry.
- Staff should wear masks and gloves for cleaning and disinfecting processes, as per the cleaning schedules and risk assessments.

Meeting rooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Infection outbreaks

As part of your business planning, please allocate a permanent, closed isolation area for delegates to go to if they start to feel unwell.

- Liaise with the organiser to close down the event.
- If delegates or organisers report infection symptoms after the event, use the delegate information to contact other delegates.
- Contact staff that served that meeting and they must self-isolate for 14 days.
- Secure the meeting room for 72 hours, if possible.
- Follow the cleaning procedures in the "Cleaning and Disinfection" section, in all the areas the delegate has been in e.g.: meeting rooms, corridors, public toilets, refreshment areas.

Picture provided by: Wyboston Lakes Resort

Organiser/delegate arrivals

Carefully managed entrance areas, made clear to the organiser in advance, will give confidence to all attendees and guests. The mia's minimum recommendation is that guests are asked to wear masks – compulsory throughout all public areas in your building – and use sanitiser as they enter the building. Ideally, all delegates will be temperature screened and, as previously noted, thermal screening can facilitate this but at a cost.

As a venue, you could be dealing with mass arrivals and you must plan for this eventuality. Also consider how delegates will get to their allocated meeting space. Are they expected to use a lift? In which case, you must have controls in place around this.

Use this entrance period as an opportunity to educate delegates as to what the expected behaviour is whilst in your building e.g.: social distancing, handwashing etc.

Minimum recommendations

Data Collection
- To comply with Government guidance you must collect delegate data including name, contact number, date of visit and arrival time, and request that individuals check-in by scanning the official NHS QR code poster with the NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app.
- To aid the collection of delegate data, the mia has produced miaTrustedTrace. The online tool requires all delegates to complete their own data record and then the system stores this securely for the required 21 days.
- Staff should be trained in how to ensure all delegates comply, and how to manage delegates refusing to provide the required information.

Mass arrivals
- To comply with social distancing guidance, you should plan staggered arrival times for larger meetings.
- Recommend use of QR codes to ease queuing where distancing may become problematical.
- Recommend badge-less events – using digital credentials reduces the risk created between staff and delegates.

Organiser/delegate arrivals *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Entry	▪ To reduce the risk of continuous personal contact with handles, front doors should either be left open during key arrival time or be automated. ▪ If a large number of delegates is expected at one time, rope barriers should be placed to control flow and ground signage for distancing in case of queuing. ▪ Doormen or security should be used to control numbers entering the venue lobby area at any one time to maintain distancing. ▪ Adequate signage should be displayed around entry points to encourage delegates to sanitise prior to entering the venue.
Luggage trolleys	▪ Luggage trolleys used to help organisers with equipment must be disinfected after use. ▪ Do not store luggage or equipment and do not offer cloakroom facilities. Delegates should keep their belongings and coats with them. ▪ Equipment must be taken immediately to the meeting room. ▪ Do not store equipment. ▪ Delegate luggage should be taken to bedrooms before the person goes to the room, or use knock and step back routines and leave the luggage at the door.
Valet parking	▪ Staff may be put at risk of infection if they valet park cars. Do not offer this service.
Organiser arrival	▪ Organisers may be greeted individually maintaining distancing rules. ▪ The 'on-the-day' organiser may not be your pre-event contact so do ensure they know all of your policies related to onsite precautions.

Organiser/delegate arrivals *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Delegates	▪ Give a copy of the venue policy on safety and hygiene to all delegates, which should also include a request they take responsibility to keep themselves and others safe. ▪ Request delegates stay in the meeting room during the event as much as possible.
Isolation area	▪ Provide a closed area where delegates can go if they become symptomatic. ▪ A manager should support the keeping of distancing rules and wearing a mask and gloves. ▪ Arrange with local healthcare providers for support and advice.
Manage access to meeting rooms	Manage the flow of people in meet and greet areas and corridors, to meet distancing requirements or manage the transmission risk. ▪ Use rope barriers and floor signage and, if possible, have an 'in' and 'out' flow system. ▪ Reduce and reconfigure seating areas to keep distancing rules. ▪ Leave doors open, if possible, to reduce touching but consider fire regulations.
Lifts	▪ Follow current Government advice on lifts to ensure social distancing is maintained. ▪ Consider providing wipes to disinfect controls and a bin to dispose.
External areas	▪ Use distancing signage in patio and garden seating areas. ▪ Use rope barriers to control customer flow through doors into external areas or have an 'in and out' system clearly signed.

Organiser/delegate arrivals *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Public toilet areas

These are areas of high risk.

- Use floor signs to remind people of safe distancing.
- Identify potential pinch points when multiple breaks might take place, and take extra measures to control flow and distancing.
- Use visible reminders to wash hands effectively.
- Check and clean public area toilets frequently.
- Staff should wear full PPE and place signs to warn customers that cleaning is taking place.
- Identify increased disinfection cleaning of toilets and other high-touch point areas.
- Carry out cleaning and disinfection of high-touch points regularly.
- Use signage to reassure customers when cleaning has taken place.
- Provide disposable towels for hand drying and pedal operated, lidded disposal bins.
- Clear disposal bins regularly and disinfect before replacing.

Reception, welcome and registration desks

Your reception is the first opportunity to showcase your venue's service levels.

Now with social distancing in place, you will need to consider how your guests can still be made to feel welcome whilst maintaining a COVID-Secure environment. Reception is also the point where you will have the greatest opportunity to educate and give confidence to your customers.

The guidelines noted on the next page, use of floor markings to control queues, PPE, contactless payments, sanitisers etc., which are the minimum you should aim for, will help to give confidence - particularly if you also publish your procedures and make them available for organisers to share with delegates in advance.

For registration desks manned by organisers, please issue protocol advice to ensure they are as strict as your own and help them to manage their queues, signage and COVID-Secure information.

Reception, welcome and registration desks *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Staff personal safety	- Use floor markings to control distancing and rope barriers to control the flow of customers. - Reception staff should not take items directly from guests, or give items directly to guests. - Use 'place and step back' routines or extended desks/tables for placement and collection of items e.g.: keys. - Provide sanitisers and appropriate waste bins for both staff and guest use. - Staff should sanitise their hands before and after dealing with guests. - Where current distancing measures are not possible and in all public areas, staff must wear masks and gloves.
Welcome/ reception procedures	**Review all procedures:** The aim of your procedures is to reduce the risk of infection to both staff and guests. - Use pre-registration wherever possible or digital check in/out. - Disinfect keys and re-useable key cards between use. - Do not accept cash. - Use contactless payment systems. - Use the card that guaranteed bookings at check out where possible, to avoid any requirement for a new card. - If a PDQ is used, use 'place and step back' routines and disinfect the PDQ before handing it to a guest. - Use email billing to reduce paper handling. - Do not offer pens to guests. - Provide information that guests require electronically.

F&B

Traditionally a period when delegates enjoy a networking experience, this is inevitably going to have to be the time when you as a venue implement the greatest controls.

Consider the size of the space in which you are providing catering. Can it facilitate the delegate numbers? Allow for the current distancing measures for queues. Ensure the area is never crowded by managing the queuing carefully, and consider your best options for food and refreshment service in line with the available space.

With all preparations, consider speed of service, minimising risk, delegate comfort and staff and delegate safety.

You may find the following food guidance useful:

- Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus **>>**
- Reopening checklist for food businesses during COVID-19 **>>**
- Keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services **>>**

Minimum recommendations

Shared break-out areas

- Allocate set spaces for each meeting and control numbers with rope barriers and floor signage.
- Identify potential pinch points and stagger break times of meetings to control numbers, flow and distancing. Discuss this with organisers at the time of booking.

F&B *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Refreshment points

Manage distancing:

- Use multiple refreshment points for larger meetings.
- Use floor signage and rope barriers at each refreshment point.
- Only serve in-room refreshments in rooms large enough to observe the current distancing measures.
- Staff service is preferred at refreshment points.
- Use 'place and step back' routines or a pick-up table.

Manage hygiene:

- Provide sanitiser wipes and bins at self-serve machines and visual reminders to prompt delegates to wipe dispense buttons after each use. Disinfect bins after use.
- Staff should wear masks and gloves to set up points and serve.
- Disinfect tables before setting up and after use.
- Cover refreshment points once they are set up.
- Use disposable cups and spoons.

Product offer:

- Limit the selection of refreshments available to reduce bottlenecks.
- Offer cold refreshments in sealed individual bottles and pre-wrap additional products eg: cakes.

F&B *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Personal safety of guests and staff

Distancing rules apply in all F&B areas including within banqueting rooms, restaurants, brasseries etc.

- Tables must be laid out in line with distancing measures and be one person per table unless they can accommodate more or plexiglass screens are used.
- Use floor guides to give guidance on distancing.
- Use rope barriers or floor guide arrows to manage customer flow.
- Aim to provide a separate entrance and exit.
- Provide table service only in bar areas.

Personal safety and hygiene rules apply in all F&B outlets.

- Provide sanitiser points at entrances and counter points for staff and guest use.
- Staff should not hand anything directly to customers or receive anything from them.
- Staff should wear gloves and masks for service and set up.
- Gloves should be changed between each customer.
- Tables and arm rests should be disinfected between use.
- Handwashing of glassware, plates and cutlery should be avoided.
- Check dishwasher temperatures are set to rinse above 70°C, preferably 80°C.

F&B *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Table service	▪ Pre-book tables to manage potential pinch points. ▪ Use single-use menus or display boards. ▪ Encourage delegates to pre-order or use digital formats. Service procedures should reduce risk of touching and personal contact. ▪ Use full plate service. ▪ Use cloche covers to protect food between the kitchen to the customer. ▪ Individually wrapped condiments and sauces should be offered on request and served with the plated food. ▪ Wrapped cutlery should be brought to the tables with the food. ▪ Plates of food should be placed directly on tables not handed to customers and staff should use place and step back routines.
Buffet/counter service	Currently, self-serve buffets should not be offered, instead staff should serve customers. Multiple buffet points may be required. ▪ Use floor signs to mark where customers should stand and use rope barriers to control flow. ▪ Provide sneeze guards or cover food. ▪ Staff must wear gloves and masks. ▪ Sanitiser points with disposal bins should be placed at the start of the buffet and end point for both staff and guest use. ▪ Use an end 'pick up' table for staff to place covered plates for collection by the customer. ▪ Use pre-wrapped cutlery, or disposable. ▪ Use individually wrapped condiments and sauces which should be offered and served with the plated food. ▪ Pre-plated individual desserts and fruit should be wrapped. ▪ Use individual picnic or 'bento box' style meals with disposable boxes.

F&B *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Breakfast options	▪ Consider using ambient breakfast boxes which can be delivered to delegate bedrooms if in-house or given to delegates as part of the pre-arrival refreshments. ▪ Alternatively follow Table/Buffet/Counter service recommendations on the previous page.
F&B cloakroom and toilet area	▪ Encourage 24-hour delegates to use their bedroom bathrooms as a way of reducing contact. ▪ Use rope barriers and signage to control queuing at public toilet areas. ▪ Place reminders of effective hand washing. ▪ Service toilet areas regularly. ▪ See section on Organiser/delegate arrivals – public toilets.
Room service/ in-house dining	Whilst reducing infection risks distancing rules should be applied: ▪ Staff must wear gloves and masks to deliver and pick up trays. ▪ The whole tray must be covered for delivery to rooms. ▪ Use a butler tray or light table to place items outside the guest room. ▪ Knock on the door and step back as far as possible. ▪ Guests can then take their trays themselves. ▪ Allow the guest to take the tray – do not allow service staff to carry the tray into a guest room. ▪ Ask guests to leave their completed meal tray outside the room, these should be picked up promptly. ▪ Crockery and cutlery must be disinfected through a dishwasher at 70°C or preferably above 80°C. ▪ Trays must be disinfected after use and before next use.

Venues with bedrooms

If you have bedrooms at your venue, you will need to allow for vacant periods in your revenue management. Deep cleaning/sanitisation plus a period of non-use will ensure that your rooms are infection free; currently the only alternative to this is deep cleaning after every guest.

Bedrooms are high risk areas for your staff and must be treated as such, so please do consider this as part of your risk assessment process. Follow the mia recommendations on the next page and support with clear messaging so guests understand the lengths you have gone to in order to protect them.

Venues with bedrooms *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Removing high risk	Review room cleaning standards and make adjustments to reduce contamination risk: ■ Remove additional items that may be a source of personal contamination e.g.: extra pillows, refreshment trays, mini bars, room information folders. ■ Change mattress protectors after each guest and launder at 60°C (or use a disinfectant laundry product). ■ Change duvets after each use. Either launder or place in a secure area for 72 hours before using again. ■ Stayover rooms should be cleaned when the guest is out.
Staff personal safety	Handling used linen and cleaning high touch points puts staff at risk. ■ Staff must wear the PPE identified in the risk assessments. ■ Do not shake linen when removing from beds. ■ Staff should not handle guest personal items.
Sanitiser	■ Place small bottles of sanitiser or wipes in each room.
Departure rooms	■ Rooms should be deep cleaned and disinfected on departure. ■ Use 'disinfection stickers' which are broken by the next guest on entry to show how you are safeguarding, or place a card in the rooms outlining the cleaning that has taken place. ■ Use hygiene wraps on toilets, and other items. ■ Replace shower curtains with a freshly laundered curtain. ■ Place sanitiser spray/wipes in each room and disposal bins.
Linen storage	■ Stored linen should be covered.

Staff safety and welfare

Your staff are your business, without them your venue cannot operate.

You need to build confidence in your staff and the best way to do this is through a dedicated training programme. The mia is partnering with a training supplier who can help you with this.

Consider every element of their working day with you and ensure each element is risk assessed and addressed accordingly. Make sure your staff understand all of the protocols you have in place – they communicate regularly with your guests and need to be able to answer any questions they may have.

Always ensure your staff have the right level of protection and understand the need to socially distance – even with their colleagues and in areas where this is impossible such as high activity kitchens.

Minimum recommendations

Reopening staffing

Ensure your staff are safe to return to work.

- Carry out staff health checks by phone or a return to work form.
- Assess any staff with pre-existing conditions or who are vulnerable that should not work or are living with a vulnerable person or someone with COVID-19 symptoms currently.
- Staff who are able to return to work should be supported through welfare programmes.
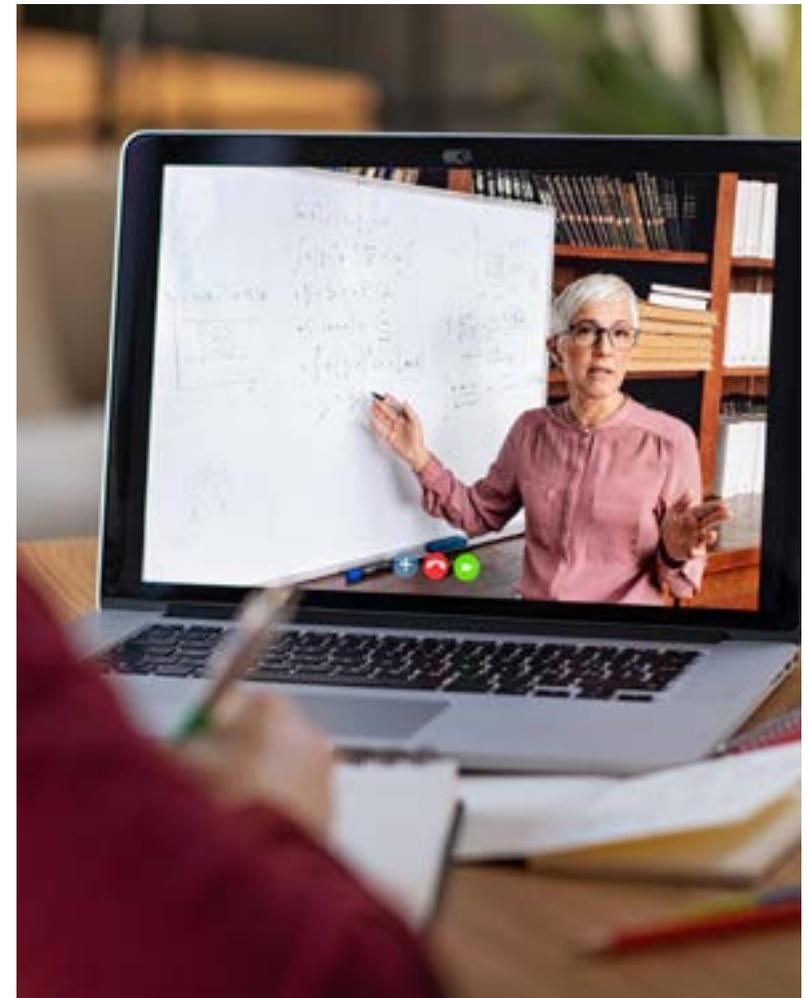
Staff safety and welfare *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Training	All staff should receive training, including: ▪ Routes of coronavirus transmission. ▪ Personal hygiene including when and how to wash hands effectively, using tissues when sneezing and coughing in the crook of elbow. ▪ Personal safety including distancing. ▪ Safe use of PPE including putting on, wearing and taking off. ▪ Key cleaning protocols. ▪ In addition, guidelines on how to respond positively to guest questions will give them confidence. ▪ Communicate the increased risks in tasks and the new procedures that are in place to keep staff safe when working. ▪ Ensure supervisors and managers understand their responsibilities to train staff in new procedures and the importance of checking standards along with their role to maintain staff wellbeing. ▪ Keep records of training.
Staff welfare	▪ Communicate procedures for reporting symptoms and the importance of self-isolating and not coming into work. ▪ Offer an EAP, or equivalent, that staff can use if they have concerns of how their health is impacting their ability to work. ▪ If staff are self-isolating maintain regular contact with them.
Staff personal safety	▪ Promote regular hand washing especially when arriving to work and place sanitiser points in key areas: staff entrance, staff canteen and locker rooms, office areas. ▪ Managers should check staff are wearing correct PPE for tasks, as identified on the risk assessment. ▪ Uniform should not be worn into work. Instead they should be laundered on-site to ensure correct temperatures of 60°C are used. ▪ Staff should not use guest lifts. ▪ Staff should not receive items directly by hand from guests or colleagues. ▪ Ensure back of house ventilation systems work effectively.

Staff safety and welfare *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Staff breaks	▪ Canteen areas should be reconfigured to apply the current distancing measures.
	▪ Canteen areas/locker rooms should be disinfected at the end of each day, and high touch point cleaning carried out throughout the day.
	▪ Managers should stagger break times to reduce crowding and queuing.
	▪ Reconsider food options with boxed meals and bottled drinks.
	▪ Sanitisers should be placed at hot drink machines with bin disposal.
	▪ Check staff carry out distancing rules at smoking areas.
Staff working in offices	▪ Reconfigure desks to apply current distancing measures and 1 person at a desk.
	▪ Where possible desks and computers should not be shared.
	▪ If this is not possible, items must be disinfected between use e.g.: chair arm rests, phones, keyboards, pc mouse.
	▪ Supply sanitisers/wipes for office and reception areas.

Staff safety and welfare *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Staff working in high density areas /back-of-house	High density work areas such as kitchens puts staff at increased risk of infection, so do everything practical to manage the transmission risk:

- Assess the workflow of kitchens and make adjustments where possible e.g.: back-to-back or side-by-side working.
- Avoid sharing workstations.
- Identify other high density areas and make adjustments to minimise risk such as: using screens to separate people, keeping activity times as short as possible.
- Consider the use of fixed teams or partnering.
- Devise menus that reduce the crossover of preparation techniques.
- Restricting entry to areas e.g.: dry stores, cellars to 1 person at a time.
- Staff should wear PPE at all times.
- Use rope barriers to manage separation and implement a one-way system where possible.
- Identify high peak times and stagger breaks and shift start times.
- Restrict the number of staff using corridors and locker rooms at the same time.
- Use distance signage at staff entrances.

Staff safety and welfare *(continued)*

Minimum recommendations

Staff starting symptoms at work	■ Provide a closed isolation area. ■ Inform staff to contact their manager (wearing PPE) who will give support. ■ Areas where the member of staff has been working must be disinfected immediately or secured for 72 hours, if possible. ■ If the member of staff has immediate difficulty in breathing, then call for an ambulance immediately. ■ Ensure the member of staff can get home safely. ■ Staff must self-isolate for at least 7 days and be clear of symptoms before returning to work. ■ Maintain regular welfare contact with staff. ■ Develop partnerships with local community care providers.
Staff in contact with symptoms at home	■ Stress the importance of reporting an infection at home. ■ Staff must self-isolate for 14 days and be clear of any symptoms after this time before returning to work.
Staff training	■ Consider cross-training staff to create flexibility and to increase available staffing if staff are ill.

To access the latest supporting information, please visit:
https://www.mia-uk.org/Safety-Resources

mia

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