

# COMMUNITY FRIDGE NETWORK

## REOPENING YOUR COMMUNITY FRIDGE?

GUIDANCE ON REOPENING AS LOCKDOWN EASES

### ABOUT

This guidance is for community fridges (CFs) looking to re-open. This will also be beneficial for those who are currently open but want to ensure they are operating as safely as possible.

We hope this provides you with a practical framework to identify what you need to do to continue, adapt, or restart operations as lockdown restrictions ease. It draws from, and signposts, key guidance from the Food Standards Agency. This includes the hygiene processes and requirements you must follow to safely operate your CF in line with government instruction to food businesses.

We have drawn most heavily from the guidance aimed at restaurants and takeaways, as we believe that this guidance is well aligned with the way in which most fridges operate. More importantly it has a keen focus on food safety. If you feel that your fridge is more aligned with a store due the fact that visitors pass quickly through the fridge space, then we would urge you to read this guidance against the Government's [recommendations for retailers](#). Ultimately you will need to prepare a HACCP and risk assessment which feels right for your situation.

**Please note that regardless of which recommendations you follow, you will need to notify your local authority of your intention to restart operations.**

If you have any questions about this guidance or the [Community Fridge Network](#), please contact [communityfridge@hubbub.org.uk](mailto:communityfridge@hubbub.org.uk).

## LET'S START!

Reopening the CF during a period of COVID-19 risk requires extreme vigilance from the CF and host sites' teams, volunteers and local governing bodies. Once you have worked through the below and adjusted your procedures, we would recommend sharing them with the stakeholders above for input before making them available to CF visitors in print and digital form. We have made general signage available to download in this [Dropbox folder](#), where you will also find a copy of this guidance. You can also use websites like [Canva](#) or [PosterMyWall](#) to create simple signage for free. There are also lots of COVID-19 ready-to-use posters in [Canva](#) and [PosterMyWall](#).

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. Considerations for your site .....</b>	<b>4</b>
PPE and face coverings.....	4
Social distancing considerations for staff and visitor safety.....	4
Guest book .....	6
Food procurement.....	6
<b>2. Risk management procedures to open safely.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Update your food safety management system for any new procedures .....	8
Prepare your site .....	9
Equipment checks .....	10
Ingredient and product checks.....	10
Communicating change.....	11
<b>3. Further reading .....</b>	<b>13</b>



# 1. CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR SITE

## PPE AND FACE COVERINGS

For non-health and social care settings, where staff are not in prolonged contact with visitors, government guidance recommends against using personal protective equipment (PPE).

For CFs, we would suggest that staff wear face coverings and encourage all visitors to also wear face coverings (you may wish to keep some spare for visitors who come ill equipped). The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

Beyond this, practising good hand hygiene and social distancing is key to minimising the risk of infection. We would also recommend a redesign of customer flows to minimise contact opportunities. You may also wish to erect physical 'splash barriers' between staff and visitors if space permits, you have the resources, and this can be done in a sensitive way.

If you do decide that PPE is needed, then we would like to direct your attention to the following government guidance and request that you ensure that you have adequate supplies that you are able to freely provide to staff to staff and volunteers.

The link to the government guidance above states that:

'Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it.'

## SOCIAL DISTANCING CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND VISITOR SAFETY

Please review the below alongside government advice on social distancing in the workplace in working safely during coronavirus. Please also see social distancing at work and food preparation.

Provide 2 metres\* social distancing where possible. This will likely mean limiting the number of visitors in your space at one time. See steps below for further guidance.

- Define the number of customers that can reasonably follow the 2 metres\* social distancing within your CF. Take into account total floorspace as well as likely pinch points and busy areas.
- Limit the number of visitors overall and in any particular congestion areas, for example doorways between outside and inside spaces.

- Ensure visitors to use hand sanitiser or handwashing facilities as they enter the premises to reduce the risk of transmission while browsing.
- Do not allow visitors to handle CF products whilst browsing. This could be mitigated by pre-packing of food until the risk decreases.
- Encourage visitors to come alone where possible.
- Remind visitors who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Look at how people move through the space and how you could adjust this to reduce congestion and contact between visitors, for example, queue management or one-way flow, where possible. Ensuring any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled visitors.
- Use outside premises for queuing where available and safe, for example some car parks. Working with your local authority or landlord to take into account the impact of your processes, including queues, on public spaces.
- Reduce volunteer numbers or delegate tasks to avoid crowding. For example, have one with the sole responsibility of hygiene, PPE and policing social distancing, and/or leave a couple to select and pack the food for the visitors.
- Anyone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or is exhibiting any symptoms should not enter the CF space.
- Ensure vehicles used to transport food are disinfected regularly.
- Managing flow of users/visitors may require you to lengthen your opening hours but this may not be possible for all fridges.
- Pause the use of user surveys/ guest books/ measurements etc, i.e. anything that involves shared use of pens.
- Consider how you will communicate with, update and where necessary train staff in new procedures. See government guidance on [communications and training](#).
- Identify staff at higher risk and consider how you can reduce their proximity to fridge visitors. See government guidance on [protecting people who are at higher risk](#).
- Increase ventilation. You should assess the possibility to do this without introducing new risks or hazards to food safety and hygiene. See government guidance [before reopening your venue](#).
- Keep interactions to a minimum when picking up food. Prioritise volunteers who have their own cars or cargo bikes (so as to avoid public transport) and are able to do pick ups alone. You can also try to keep staff working in similar sets of pairs.

## GUEST BOOK

Places like pubs, restaurants, hotels and hairdressers are being asked by the government to keep a temporary record of customers and visitors for 21 days (p11), in order to support the government's test and trace system. This requires users register at a premise and provide contact details for every member of the group in what is being called a "guest book".

We would recommend doing this at the fridge once you begin to invite visitors.

- You will need a designated volunteer to take down the details to ensure that multiple guests are not using a pen, and that the details are legible.
- Make sure to capture the date and time of each visit.
- Make sure you store this data in a way that is GDPR compliant.
- We would recommend that you also gain consent from the visitor to join your organisational mailing list (if leaving an email as opposed to the phone). The government recommends that you keep this data on record for 21 days. Ultimately, you are best placed to decide how long you store this data for and whether you request that it be used for local marketing at your site.

## FOOD PROCUREMENT

Hubbub have been in contact with some key food donors. The general consensus is that, because every store is unique, it is highly recommended that you contact all pre-COVID-19 food donors to notify them of your intention to reopen, discuss any changes in food collection rules and potentially share your precautionary measures.

- **Collections secured via Neighbourly (Waitrose, Aldi, M&S)** - If you have any concerns about stores or staff not adhering to social distancing measures during the donation process, please contact Neighbourly ([food@neighbourly.com](mailto:food@neighbourly.com)) as soon as possible with much detail as possible. They are keen to take the necessary action to ensure the collections are as safe and possible.

- **Collections from Sainsbury's (through CCWorks)** – Surplus has been a lot less over lockdown. There are no specific rules for collections, although volunteers collecting food would be expected to abide by the social distancing 2 metres rule\*. Every store is different, and we recommend contacting the store to confirm if you need to collect from different locations or any particular guidelines for that particular store.

Other things to bear in mind are that:

- Donations and surplus levels have settled back down significantly since the initial outbreak. Panic/bulk buying no longer seems to be affecting surplus levels, although they do always fluctuate.
- You will need to assess the availability of surplus food. As you will be aware a number of new food partnerships have been established during COVID to support with emergency food aid. These may have an impact on the quantity of food available in the short-med term.

Work with the donor to establish a pick-up system which fits with their current operations and both of your precautionary measures. [Government guidance on inbound goods \(Section 8\) may be useful here.](#)

## 2. RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES TO OPEN SAFELY

[Reopening your CF](#) will require extra checks alongside your 'normal' daily opening checks. You will need to maintain your basic hygiene standards and recognise the areas where greater attention will be required.

We recommend that you review your food safety management system (incl. HACCP, risk assessment and staff and user guidance) against the information below. Identification of risks and the actions taken to mitigate them should be recorded in your [Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point \(HACCP\) plan](#).

The Food Standards Agency have compiled a thorough checklist for what you will need to do before re-opening. 99% of it is relevant for CFs and it will help you tick off the actions required by the guidance below. We highly encourage you to use it.

## UPDATE YOUR FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ANY NEW PROCEDURES

- Consider any risks to food safety introduced by changes to procedures.
- Review and document new procedures in relation to takeaway or delivery services e.g. allergen management, cook-chill-reheat, temperature control awaiting collection or during delivery.
- Manage risks of cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods.
- Ensure food packaging for takeaways and delivery is food grade, and appropriate for the purpose and food type.
- Store food packaging hygienically. Check that the hygiene and integrity of any packaging stored through a period of closure has been maintained and dispose of unsuitable packaging.
- Check staff are fit for work and wearing clean suitable clothing.
- Consider adjustments to fitness for work procedures to take account of COVID-19 symptoms. Initial telephone interviews with staff and volunteers may be beneficial in assessing fitness to work.
- Review the CF guidance alongside government advice on use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Working safely during coronavirus has further guidance for restaurants offering takeaway or delivery which may be of use to fridges offering home delivery.



- Ensure any changes to procedures are communicated to staff, volunteers and space users and training is provided where appropriate.
- Ensure that your registered waste carrier services are running and available as required, to ensure there is no build-up of waste on site.

## PREPARE YOUR SITE

- Check food preparation areas are clean and disinfected (this includes work surfaces, equipment and utensils) as well as fridge and freezer units.
- Carry-out a full site assessment to determine if you can undertake a thorough clean or if a professional deep clean is needed.
- Source suitable cleaning and disinfection consumables and check existing stocks are within their use-by date. Cleaning products made-up or diluted before any closure should be disposed of as effectiveness reduces over time. Assess if staff need re-training on dilution rates and cleaning procedures.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection, paying particular attention to shared equipment and high through-put and touch areas.
- Look for evidence of pests, and take action if necessary, before restarting your operations. Check for: signs of damage or smearing to walls and doors/gnawed or stained packaging /footprints in dust /animal droppings or urine smell/ insect bodies, larvae, cocoons and egg/pupal casings/ feathers
- Check handwashing and cleaning materials' availability (this includes soap, sanitiser and paper towels)
- Obtain enough of your regular cleaning consumables such as soap, sanitiser and paper towels. Provide suitable alternatives if your regular products are unavailable.
- Update staff training in line with government advice that staff should wash their hands more frequently than usual. This should be for 20 seconds with warm water and soap.

- Check hot and cold running water is available at all sinks and hand wash basins.
- Make sure adequate hand-washing stations are provided at all appropriate points within the food production and communal areas.
- Consider providing hand sanitiser in addition to hand-washing facilities at appropriate locations.

## EQUIPMENT CHECKS

- Check your fridges and freezers are working properly.
- Thoroughly clean equipment before restarting and restocking.
- Check required temperatures and any temperature control records, if kept during closure period.
- Review whether equipment requires maintenance after a period of inaction.
- Allow sufficient time for equipment to reach required temperature before restocking.
- Remove and refresh any ice left in machines and dispensers.
- Check any other equipment is working properly.
- Thoroughly clean all equipment before reopening.
- Inspect for maintenance requirements, verify temperatures and re-calibrate where necessary for time or temperature.
- Run dishwashers and glasswashers empty on hot cycle before use.
- Flush through taps and other equipment with water systems.
- Consider Legionella risks and take action in line with [Legionella guidance from the Health and Safety Executive](#) to reduce risks.
- Check probe thermometers are working properly, and probe wipes are available.
- Consider whether probe thermometers need to be recalibrated.

## INGREDIENT AND PRODUCT CHECKS

- Check raw materials and ingredients.
- Check for any damage to packaging which might affect safety of food or result in loss of allergen information.
- Check for any evidence of temperature abuse which may render the food unsafe. Refer to temperature control records where available.
- Check the use-by and best before dates on existing stock. Ensure that storage has been in-line with manufacturer's instructions. For example, check that any opened or unsealed product has been stored in line with labelled instruction such as 'Once opened consume within'.
- For foods frozen by you on closure, check that labelling and records are sufficient to allow the safe use of the food.
- Check that the length of storage is in-line with your assessment at point of freezing.
- Check that you can obtain your usual raw materials and ingredients so that your product specifications can be met.
- Ensure that any new suppliers are reputable and can meet your requirements. Safer food, better business guidance is available on the selection of suppliers and contractors.
- Check allergen information is accurate and available for all products.
- Review your allergen management system, allergen matrices and menus to account for changes of supplier and any new raw materials or products.
- Review new takeaway or delivery services to ensure risk of allergen cross-contamination is managed.
- Ensure allergen information is available to customers at time of ordering and at delivery of food.

## COMMUNICATING CHANGE

Changes to procedures will need to be communicated to staff, volunteers and visitors as well as your local Environmental Health Officer.

### Notifying your local authority

- Notify your local authority of your intention to restart operations.
- Notify your local authority of any change to the business activities you are registered for. This includes the introduction of any new delivery or takeaway service.

### Communicating with staff and volunteers to ensure that everyone understands coronavirus

### related safety procedures

- Offer clear and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
- Create training materials for staff which can be circulated prior to returning to site. Highlight new procedures for arrival at work such as the need for face coverings or hand washing on arrival.
- Print guidance and display in multiple areas where it is highly visible to staff. Also circulate digital copies.

### Communicating to the public to ensure that everyone understands coronavirus related safety procedures

- Highly visual materials for visitors will communicate what is expected of visitors at each stage of the journey to and through the fridge. We have [created some basic posters here that you can use](#). There is one for visitors at the fridge and one which can be circulated in advance. These can also be put on your social media channels. If making your own, try and use graphics and large and clear print.
- Make this available on your website and social media. You may also wish to email it to visitors where possible or circulate as a flyer.

### Example CF user journey

#### 1. Before you leave home

- Do you have symptoms, or have you felt unwell in the last 14 days? If so, please do not visit the fridge. (Are there local alternatives? Can you do doorstep delivery?)
- Please wear a clean face covering
- Please bring a bag to the fridge
- Please wash hands thoroughly
- Are you able to come alone?

#### 2. Travel

- Can you avoid public or shared transport?

### 3. Arrival

- Arrive wearing a face covering
- If queuing outside, please keep 2m apart\*, avoid physical contact with other visitors, this involves shaking hands, petting animals, holding other's belongings, hugs etc
- Once inside use the hand sanitiser available, wash hands (if available)

### 4. In the fridge space

- Keep >2 metres\* from others
- Do not handle food

### 5. Once home

- Wash your hands
- Wash face covering
- Rinse food

*\* Despite government revisions of the 2 metres rule, we would recommend that users remain 2 metres apart where possible even if wearing masks in order to err on the side of caution.*

## 3. FURTHER READING

- [Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [Guidance for people who work in or run restaurants offering takeaway or delivery services](#)
- [Guidance for people who work in or run shops, branches, stores or similar environments](#)
- [Adapting restaurants and food businesses for takeaway and food delivery during COVID-19](#)
- [Reopening checklist for food businesses during COVID-19](#)

If you have any questions about this guidance or the [Community Fridge Network](#), please contact [communityfridge@hubbub.org.uk](mailto:communityfridge@hubbub.org.uk).