



COVID-19 Guidance

eGUIDE

Appendix - July 2020

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What is this guide?

This dynamic guidance has been produced to expand upon the All Secure Standards document that has been published within the Visitor Economy Tourism Guidance and is specifically for events taking place in exhibition and conference centres.

The guidance is aimed to assist venues, organisers and contractors to plan and prepare for events in the near future in response to COVID-19 and should be read in conjunction with the All Secure Standard document via www.aev.org.uk/covid-19.

Application

For the purposes of this document the word 'event' will generally apply to any event held in a venue. It must be noted that in multipurpose venues where exhibitions, conferences and other like events can be run alongside sporting fixtures or musical entertainment in arenas, other guidance or legislation may be more applicable for specific activities.

Acknowledgements

This guidance outlines what measures exhibition organisers, venues and the supply chain are taking to ensure the health and safety of all its visitors, exhibitors, and event personnel in response to Covid-19.

The objective of this document is to provide considerations and guidance as an input into your risk assessment.

Our thanks go to members of the Cross-Association Event Recovery Group, AEV Event Re-Open Ops Group and AEV working groups.

SD1: Contractor & exhibitor build up and breakdown

Shared equipment, personnel, high touch point areas.

1 Organisers may consider allocating contractor and exhibitor specific build-up and breakdown times to allow distancing to be maintained during build up and breakdown of shows.

2 Venues may facilitate additional build up and breakdown time, where possible, to help.

3 Contractors may be subject to temperature checks before being granted access to site.

4 Signage should be in place along with regular tannoy announcements to remind workers to maintain distancing wherever possible.

5 Hand washing facilities (provided via venue toilets) along with hand sanitiser stations should be readily available during build and break and will be signposted accordingly.

6 Stewards to regularly patrol the space to encourage compliance with distancing measures.

7 Appropriate protective clothing to be worn by contractors if deemed appropriate through the risk assessment process.

8 Exhibitors to be encouraged to place orders in advance to reduce on-site service staff.

SD2: Crowd density standard (CDS)

1 The CDS needs to be calculated based on UK Government Social Distancing Measures (SDM). Venues to advise organisers on event by event basis.

2 By controlling the density, appropriate social distancing can occur by consideration of both the number of people and potential pinch points to determine the number of people in that area.

3 All queuing systems, venue furniture layouts and general spaces will need to be redesigned and marked out to reflect this. This will therefore reduce some capacities in spaces however still allow the circulation of people.

4 Event staff shift arrival should be staggered to ensure physical distancing can take place and a queuing system in line with SDM will be in place at venue entrances. Event Staff briefings to take place in room large enough to allow distancing (e.g. empty halls). Breaks can also be staggered to avoid congestions in rest areas.

5 Venues may become cashless environments and contactless wherever possible. Cash machines, if on site will still be available.

6 Designated stewards can be appointed by the organiser during build, live event and breakdown to encourage distancing measures are adhered to.

SD3: Non-contact policy

- 1 Contactless greeting may be appropriately encouraged throughout the venue supported by organiser attendee safe guarding communications.
- 2 This recommendation will be reinforced with the on-site signage.
- 3 It is encouraged that non-contact scanners and other technology is used.
- 4 The elimination of physical materials in favour of sharing promotional items digitally can also contribute to sustainability efforts in addition to minimising risk and contact between people.

SD4: Food & Beverage

Venues and catering partners will explore methods of safely providing/serving food in line with current Government guidance, such as the providing food served in pre-packaged or in closed containers if requested by the organiser. Where possible, food and beverage should be ordered in advance. Seating areas may be reduced or can be arranged to follow the CDS, and cash will ideally not be accepted as a form of payment.

Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible:

- 1 The capacity of each catering area should be clearly identified at the entry to each facility, and where necessary attendants provided to supervise compliance with social distancing measures and queuing protocols.
- 2 Current UK guidance prevents the use of drinking water fountains; however, venues will endeavour to make water available in other ways and enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced where applicable.
- 3 Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly, using standard cleaning products e.g. kettles, refrigerators, microwaves.
- 4 Seating and tables should be reconfigured to reduce face to face interactions.
- 5 Tables should be cleaned between each use.
- 6 Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used unless they are disposable or washed and dried between use.
- 7 Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.
- 8 Catering staff must wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- 9 Catering staff and workers may use the same rest areas if they apply the same social distancing measures.

10 Organisers are encouraged to stagger break and lunch times to minimise queuing at catering points and maintain a constant flow of delegates across the event footprint.

11 Venues and organisers to agree the catering provision for contractors during build up and breakdown.

SD5: Floor planning

Looking at solutions such as entry and exit protocols, one-way visitor traffic could create a logical flow through venues. This can prevent bottlenecks in addition to cross walking, keeping CDS guidelines at all times. Event floors can be demarcated to communicate the monitored flow.

1 All floor plans to be reviewed to accommodate CDS guideline gangways and distances between each stand based on the event risk assessment.

2 The venue and organiser must work together to manage footfall numbers whilst maintaining CDS measures. Requirements may vary between venues.

3 Organisers consider the use of graphics carpet and other methods of reinforcing SDM.

SD6: Meeting rooms

With recommended density and seating arrangements for a variety of room sets, all conference and break room seating can follow distancing guidance. Organisers should provide hands-free technology where possible in addition to streaming sessions to virtual attendees to aid in the facilitation of sharing information.

1 All meeting rooms will be subject to new spacing layouts to adhere to distancing.

2 The Venue will work with customers to ensure that live streaming is available as an option to manage delegate numbers.

3 Caterers to ensure top table water in sessions will move to individual bottles per presenter.

SD7: Monitoring control

Show organisers can appoint a competent person, to enforce that the relevant controls are applied.

1 COVID-19 Training. It is recommended that all Event Industry employees (venue, organiser and supplier) should receive adequate COVID-19 training whether this be through formal or informal formats (e.g. a pre-event briefing regarding responsibilities and what measures the event is taking regarding protection).

2 Information and briefing documents should be digitised where possible and set out all procedures.

Training from the World Health Organisation can be found here:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/training/online-training>

The following have been highlighted as potentially helpful depending on experience levels / involvement in the resumption measures;

- Standard precautions: Environmental cleaning and disinfection.
- COVID-19: How to put on and remove personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Standard precautions: Waste management.
- Standard precautions: Hand hygiene.

SD8: Delegate flow

Looking at solutions such as one-way visitor traffic could create a logical flow at entry and exit points and through venues. This can prevent bottlenecks in addition to cross walking, keeping CDS guidelines at all times. Event floors can be demarcated to communicate the monitored flow. Aisle widths could also be increased to achieve above the CDS standard.

SD9: Registration/staggered admission

Through an increased use of technology, our industry can endeavour to provide means to minimise queuing and contact during the registration process. The use of mobile and digital technologies can facilitate seamless and contactless access upon entry and exit. Additionally, digital credentials can eliminate physical badges and lanyards where appropriate and enable contact tracing (only where visitors and exhibitors share or swap credentials).

Some event formats could be divided into time slots across the days of their occurrence. Organisers could consider providing the ability to facilitate visitors' attendance during a designated time slot in order to evenly spread the attendance in combination with encouraging meetings set in advance. Controls over the maximum number of visitors can also be set.

1 Upon arrival at the designated entrance a queuing system adhering to current SDM should be in place, ideally with floor markings identifying appropriate distances.

2 An organiser may request delegates to undertake a non-contact temperature test before entry.

3 Ideally where practical and when weather conditions permit, main venue entry doors will be automatic or manned requiring no points of touch.

4 The venue will work with the client to establish the safest and swiftest way to deal with delegate luggage.

5 Registration: it is highly recommended that all events utilise systems to ensure delegates can print accreditations/badges at home or they are posted out to them. If printing on site is required, it is recommended that registration staff are the only personnel to utilise the touch screens and sanitise them after each use, always maintaining a safe SDM distance with the delegate.

SD10: Social functions

All functions within organised gatherings can follow the CDS, including social functions like drinks, dinners, awards, and gatherings. Where possible, public addresses and speeches should be delivered virtually.

1 Reduced number for formal dining will be implemented with drinks receptions served at individual tables.

2 All drinks for the table where possible should be pre-ordered, as operational bars will be only be used for the dispensing of beverages to servers.

3 If available the use of hospitality ordering apps can allow guests to place individual orders and have them delivered to a designated area on their table.

4 Whilst this will reduce capacity, venues can assist organisers with the redesign of floor plans to endeavour to achieve desired capacities.

SD11: Transport: staff, contractors, exhibitors and visitors

1 All travel to and from the event should be undertaken within the current UK Government guidance.

2 Individual venues will have their own transport procedures reflecting current COVID-19 guidance which will cover all traffic movement including car parking and use of public transport.

This should reflect current UK government advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

CH1: Cleaning regimes

Every venue can offer a visible, enhanced cleaning regime. Cleaners are offered PPE on a risk assessed basis with an increased focus on key touch points, including restrooms, food and beverage areas, and help points. Electrostatic cleaning methods could also be deployed.

Enhanced and visible cleaning regimes throughout the event and particularly in key areas can provide a visible representation of the industry's dedication to health and safety.

1 Enhanced cleaning procedures should be in place across the venue, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including:

- Taps and washing facilities.
- Toilet flush and seats.
- Door handles and push plates.
- Hand rails on staircases and corridors.
- Lift and hoist controls.
- Machinery and equipment controls.
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices.
- Telephone equipment.
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly.

CH2: Toilet cleaning

Considerations for toilet use:

1 Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time (e.g. use a welfare attendant) and use signage, such as floor markings, to ensure SDM 1 metre distance is maintained between people when queuing.

2 Wash or sanitise hands before and after using the facilities.

3 Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities, particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush.

- 4 Portable toilets should be cleaned and emptied more frequently.
- 5 Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.
- 6 Male toilets who have double spaced urinals may close every other off if necessary.
- 7 Use of radar keys to gain access to disabled toilets will be sanitised by the venue team after each use.

CH3: Stand cleaning

- 1 Instructions and guidelines for exhibitors may be available from the venue of how to regularly disinfect exhibition stands.
- 2 Organisers & contractors may opt to utilise fogging machines at the end of each event should a shell scheme be left in place for the next event organiser to utilise.
- 3 Venue should have available and offer enhanced cleaning packages to exhibitors.

CH4: Hand sanitisers

Hand sanitiser stations can be positioned at key locations throughout the venue and event, including restrooms, food and beverage locations, and conference rooms, with regular use encouraged to all visitors and exhibitors.

In addition to washing hands regularly, UK Government recommend alcohol-based hand sanitiser to prevent the spread of infections and decrease the risk of getting sick.

- 1 Venues are committed to make hand sanitiser stations readily available throughout the event spaces, particularly at key locations. Some will be placed at key areas such as entrances, catering areas, and entry to session areas.
- 2 Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance to any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area.
- 3 All meeting/conference rooms should have their own supply of cleaning equipment to allow any facilitators/delegates to clean and sanitise lecterns, laptops, remotes, flip chart pens etc.

CH5: Waste management

The collection and removal of waste receptacles can be increased during events in order to minimise risk, with a proposed schedule to regularly disinfect the waste receptacles themselves.

All waste will be removed by venues and dealt with in a suitable manner adhering to current UK government advice. The waste receptacles themselves can also be regularly disinfected.

These efforts follow recommendations and advice of world and country specific health organisations.

CH6: Conference/seminar rooms

- 1 Shared equipment within conference rooms can be removed, including stationary and hand held microphones. All equipment, including audio and visual, can be disinfected between each use, and conference rooms should have an increased cleaning schedule throughout the day.
- 2 Conference furniture should be wiped and sanitised daily with the appropriate cleaning products in line with current Government advice.
- 3 Seating to be arranged to allow for social distancing.

CH7: Venue ambient controls

- 1 Venues should ensure that the proper ventilation, temperature, humidity, UV air purification controls, etc. are in place. Reduced exposure can be based on the ability of filters to remove particles that contain viruses.
- 2 Where applicable filters should be properly installed and maintained in appropriate systems to treat recirculated air, and filters should be appropriately designed for the building in which they are used.
- 3 Air-conditioning systems should be configured to maximise the flow of fresh air and minimise recirculated air.

PD1: Contact tracing

Venues may make available a holding room should attendees become unwell with the appropriately trained staff and medical teams on site to advise.

PD2: PPE

- 1** All venue employees or contractors working on behalf of the venue only will be provided with PPE where appropriate, determined on a risk assessed basis.
- 2** Organisers and contractors are responsible for ensuring suitable PPE is provided for those working on their behalf determined on a risk assessed basis.

PD3: Thermal scanners – detect and object

Whilst not current government guidelines, infrared thermal imaging and temperature screening equipment may be used at the entrances to venues. Venues and organisers should work together on policy covering any detected symptomatic person to prevent them from entering the venue.

PD4: Medical policies – enhanced first aid

A Medical Response Plan should be created by organisers in conjunction with venues Emergency Response Plans.

- 1** If determined as a high risk, organisers with the assistance of the venue should look to increase the number of First Aid stations located throughout the event with enhanced medical support available.
- 2** While at an event, signage should indicate where to go for expert medical attention in the event of any illness.
- 3** When planning site activities, the provision of adequate first aid resources must be agreed between the relevant parties on site.
 - Emergency plans including contact details should be kept up to date
 - Consideration must also be given to potential delays in emergency services response, due to the current pressure on resources
 - Consider preventing or rescheduling high-risk work or providing additional competent first aid or trauma resources.

The HSE lists first aid requirements in non-healthcare settings during the outbreak, as well as first aid cover and qualifications at this time.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/first-aid-and-medicals/first-aid-certificate-coronavirus.htm>

PD5: Quarantine areas

Venue may offer a dedicated quarantine area for people with symptoms of COVID-19 if deemed necessary. This area could change from event to event and be a temporary facility.

PD6: Separation screens

1 In areas of close interaction, at times when social distancing cannot be applied, including reception and help desks, food and beverage stations and security, separation screens can be offered.

2 Screens should be fireproof and withstand frequent cleaning with chemical disinfectant.

PD7: Health authority engagement

1 Organisers/venues/contractors will ensure that their risk assessments are completed in accordance with current Public Health Authority guidance.

2 This assessment can broadly communicate the assessed risk associated with organised industry gathering occurring.

C1: Emergency Contingency plan

- 1** Venues to ensure that Emergency Contingency Plans have been updated to include processes for possible COVID-19 incidents with appropriate protocol to follow.
- 2** Information and briefing documents will be digitised where possible and will set out all procedures. They will be permanently accessible on the venue's internal communication platforms. The guidance contained within will be managed and updated in accordance with any change in expert advice.
- 3** Threat to life emergency procedures will override social distancing protocols.

C2: Code of conduct (behaviour)

- 1** The measures necessary to minimise the risk of spread of infection rely on everyone in the industry taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours.
- 2** Encourage an open and collaborative approach between workers and employers on site where any issues can be openly discussed and addressed.
- 3** Venues will liaise with all venue suppliers to ensure they are complying with all necessary procedures at their own premises and during any deliveries to or whilst undertaking work at the venue and may ask for copies of policies accordingly.

C3: Venue signage

- 1** Event signage can include common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as communicated by the appropriate medical and health authorities as well as actions to take if necessary. The signage can be displayed prominently in all common areas of the venue.
- 2** Venue's programme of enhanced measures provides assurance and confidence that shows and events have health and safety as a number one priority, including opportunities to prominently display event signage with common signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- 3** Clear signage should be in place throughout all front and back of house areas reminding all staff and visitors on the importance of hygiene and maintaining physical distance.
- 4** Consider supplying an information pack that can be included in Organiser stakeholder communications. This will advise all attendees on the measures they can expect to find in place at the venue to allow them to plan accordingly.

C4: Public address messaging

1 Throughout events, public addresses can repeat messages about the importance of maintaining physical distance and the importance of washing and sanitising hands in addition to other best practices shared from medical and government authorities.

2 Venues can work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure measures in place are practical, effective, and considered best practice. Part of this effort can include public addresses repeating messages about the importance of maintaining physical distance and washing hands.

C5: Pre show messaging

1 Messaging in advance of any industry organised gathering can communicate key pieces of information, including updates from global and local health organisations, show admission policies, hygiene briefings and health protection measures, among other items.

2 Venues are able to advise organisers of arrival protocols giving forewarning of what to expect upon arrival – this information can be then incorporated into any pre-event communications and supported on venue websites/newsletters etc.