



## JOINT STATEMENT

MR No.: 011/20

### **(Updated) Implementing Safe Distancing Measures at Food & Beverage Establishments**

1. On 24 March 2020, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced stricter safe distancing measures<sup>1</sup> to reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19. Tightened measures include reducing the size of group gatherings outside of work and school, and ensuring physical separation of at least one metre between one another.
2. In line with this announcement, Enterprise Singapore (ESG), Housing & Development Board (HDB), National Environment Agency (NEA), Singapore Food Agency (SFA), Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) have drawn up safe distancing measures for food and beverage (F&B) establishments to provide a safer dining environment for customers. All F&B establishments – from smaller ones like takeaway kiosks and cafes, to larger outfits such as restaurants – must comply with these enhanced safe distancing measures, which will take effect from 26 March 2020, 2359 hours until 30 April 2020.

#### **Closure of Bars and Entertainment Venues:**

3. All bars and entertainment venues must be closed. There is a high risk of transmission due to sustained close contact over a period of time.

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<sup>1</sup> Tighter measures to minimise further spread of COVID-19: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/tighter-measures-to-minimise-further-spread-of-covid-19> (Ministry of Health, 24 March 2020); Stricter safe distancing measures to prevent further spread of COVID-19 cases: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/stricter-safe-distancing-measures-to-prevent-further-spread-of-covid-19-cases> (Ministry of Health, 20 March 2020)

## **Safe distancing measures for F&B establishments:**

### **4. Crowd and queue management:**

- a. Reduce the length of queues by putting in place queue management processes. For example, take down diner details and call them when there are seats available or use electronic reservation systems.
- b. Where queues are unavoidable, clearly mark queueing areas and space customers out in the queue, at a distance of at least one metre apart.
- c. Incorporate mobile ordering and payment solutions<sup>2</sup> so that diners can order and make payments directly without having to wait at the cashier.
- d. Pre-ordering solutions are recommended for F&B kiosks to minimise physical clustering of customers waiting to pick up their orders.

### **5. Table and seating management:**

- a. Tables and seats for different groups of diners must be at least one metre apart. Related diners (e.g. family members, couples) can be seated together
- b. Groups of diners must be limited to 10 persons or fewer. F&B establishments must disperse congregations of more than 10 persons by splitting the group into separate tables and ensuring a distance of at least one metre between tables.
- c. F&B establishments with fixed seating must mark out seats which should not be used. They must ensure that unrelated diners are seated at least one meter apart from one another.

### **6. Suspension of large group and communal activities:**

- a. Close common areas such as infant and children's play areas or playgrounds.
- b. Cease activities which are likely to cause patrons to congregate, such as live music performances, dancing or karaoke.

## **Baseline measures**

7. In addition, F&B establishments with seated diners must:

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<sup>2</sup> F&B businesses that are keen to adopt some of these solutions can find them at <https://www.smeportal.sg/content/tech-depot/en/psg/specific-it-solution-category/digital-online-ordering-and-payment-system.html>

- a. Facilitate contact tracing by taking down of the contact details of at least one member in each dining group. GovTech has made available a cloud-based visitor registration system<sup>3</sup>. F&B establishments are encouraged to use the system or their own equivalent apps or processes.
- b. Implement temperature screening and health declaration measures for diners, as well as turn away those who are unwell.
- c. Improve ventilation (e.g. open windows for natural ventilation).
- d. Provide hand sanitisers to frontline staff who handle cash and other devices, and who are unable to wash their hands frequently with soap and water.
- e. Place hand sanitisers in close proximity to high touch surfaces like door handles so that staff and diners can sanitise their hands after touching these surfaces.
- f. Frequently disinfect common spaces, and increase frequency of cleaning for high touch surfaces and interactive components within the establishment (e.g. turnstiles and smart kiosks).
- g. Clean tables thoroughly with disinfecting agents<sup>4</sup> after each diner vacates the table.

**8. Communication:**

- a. Service staff must provide clear communication on safe distancing measures with customers.
- b. Put up simple signage to clearly communicate these practices to customers.

**Other measures to ensure the well-being of customers:**

9. All F&B establishments must implement temperature screening and health declaration by employees each time they report for work; ensure cleanliness and hygiene practices; and comply with MOH health advisories.
10. Establishments must implement the sanitation and hygiene practices recommended under the SG Clean campaign.

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<sup>3</sup> Details on the GovTech system can be found at <https://www.ndi-api.gov.sg/travel-health-declaration>

<sup>4</sup> List of suggested cleaning products and disinfecting agents can be found at <https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/public-cleanliness/environmental-cleaning-guidelines/guidelines/interim-list-of-household-products-and-active-ingredients-for-disinfection-of-covid-19>

11. In implementing the abovementioned measures, employers should establish open communication channels with their staff and customers. Employers, staff and customers must be regularly reminded to exercise social responsibility by observing good personal hygiene and monitoring their health conditions. Those who are unwell, even with mild flu-like symptoms, must see a doctor and stay at home to prevent spreading illness to others.

**Safe distancing measures for hawker centres:**

12. Hawker centres are food establishments with mostly fixed seating, not under the control of stallholders, located within a naturally ventilated environment. NEA and Town Councils have marked out alternative seats in the common dining areas at our hawker centres to guide patrons on how to practise safe distancing. Patrons should sit on unmarked seats. When queuing up for food, patrons should keep at least one metre apart from one another.
13. With this arrangement, seating capacity for dining at our hawker centres will be reduced. To support our hawkers and hawker culture, patrons can continue making cooked food purchase by considering food deliveries or take-outs. When dining at our hawker centres, patrons should not leave food scraps or soiled tissue paper on the tables, and should return all used crockery and trays to keep the table clean for the next patron. This will help minimise the risk of disease transmission, maintain the cleanliness of our hawker centres, and safeguard public health.

**Enforcement of measures**

14. Government agencies will be stepping up enforcement of these safe distancing measures. Non-compliance to the safe distancing measures is an offence under the Infectious Diseases Act. Penalties for non-compliance include a fine of up to S\$10,000 or imprisonment of up to six months or both. In addition, existing levers under the Infectious Diseases Act, including the temporary suspension of operations, may be used against persons and operators who do not comply with the Regulations.
15. The Government encourages trade associations and chambers to explain these precautionary measures to their respective members. We seek your understanding on the safe distancing arrangements and your cooperation in adopting these measures.

**Enterprise Singapore  
Housing & Development Board  
National Environment Agency  
Singapore Food Agency  
Singapore Tourism Board  
Urban Redevelopment Authority**

**Updated as of 26 March 2020**

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## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### 1. **Is it mandatory for F&B establishments to exercise safe distancing?**

F&B establishments must comply with safe distancing measures. These precautionary measures can help reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19. Businesses which do not implement or comply with the government's safe distancing advisories may be ineligible for government grants and loan assistance.

Any non-compliance to the safe distancing measures may be prosecuted under the Infectious Diseases Act and any regulations promulgated thereunder. The penalty for an offence under the Regulations would be a fine of up to S\$10,000 or imprisonment of up to six months or both. In addition, existing levers under the Infectious Diseases Act, including the temporary suspension of operations, may be used against persons and operators found to be non-compliant with the Regulations.

### 2. **Smaller F&B establishments may find it challenging to implement safe distancing measures. Any recommendations for them?**

The Government understands that seating configurations may differ from establishment to establishment due to the size of the dining space or the presence of fixed tables and seats. Smaller establishments can either reduce the number of tables or implement staggered seating by blocking out or removing some seats. The general principle is to maintain a practical physical distance of at least a metre, while allowing dining to carry on as normally as possible.

Coffee shops and food courts can consider putting up signage to educate and encourage consumers to observe safe distancing.

### 3. **My outlet is a kiosk that offers take-outs only. How do I carry out contact tracing and temperature screening of my customers?**

For kiosk outlets where there is shorter contact duration, we understand that contact tracing and temperature screening may not be feasible. However, staff at these outlets should be trained to communicate good practices to customers (e.g. avoid forming

clusters while waiting for the food). You could also put up signage to communicate these messages.

GovTech has launched a new TraceTogether app, which will help to log data of close contacts, stored locally on mobile phones. You could encourage your customers to download the app.