



COVID-19 Transitioning – Standards and Guidelines for casinos, gaming, betting shops and bingo halls.

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The following standards are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in enforcement procedures as provided by the Act. Employers and workers must prevent the transmission of COVID-19 while at work, consistent with updated advice from the public health authorities. Employers and workers must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be ready to respond immediately, appropriately, effectively and efficiently, and consistent with specific recommendations from public health authorities.

Standards to be observed by casinos, gaming shops, betting shops and bingo halls

Casinos, gaming shops, betting shops and bingo halls shall:

- a) affix visible signage at the entrance of the establishment indicating the maximum capacity that the premises can hold at any one time;

ensure that maximum capacity of visitors inside the establishment at any one time is one person per 4 square metres, including staff. To achieve this 4 square metre 'rule';
 - calculate the area of the site (e.g. length of site in metres x width of museum/cultural site in metres = area of site in square metres),
 - divide the area of the site by 4, and
 - the answer of that division (ignoring any remainder) is the maximum capacity that the site can hold at any one time.
- by way of example, if a site is 25 square metres in size, $25 \div 4 = 6.25$, ignoring 0.25, the site should allow only six (2) persons at any time inside the site, including staff.
- b) refuse entry into the establishment to customers who are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms;

- c) make available hand sanitizers at the entrance of the establishment and ensure that all persons sanitise their hands prior to entering. Sanitizers should also be available in other strategic places in the establishment. Such places may include frequently touched items and also gaming consoles and dispensers amongst other. Sanitisers with sensors or foot pedals are recommended.
- d) indicate with visible markings outside and inside the establishment two (2) metre distances that customers shall respect whilst queuing.
- e) acrylic or tempered glass barriers must be fitted in manned reception areas (2metres from the floor). These barriers are not required if there is no manned reception.
- f) ensure that every person keeps a minimum distance of 2 metres from others while inside the establishment.
- g) Lockers and cloakrooms are allowed if they are disinfected regularly between uses.
- h) ensure that customers and staff always wear a face mask (covering mouth, nose and chin) or visor whilst inside the establishment.
- i) inform the general public about all restrictions on the establishment's website and at the entrance.

Understanding how COVID-19 spreads & the implication for museums

The virus which causes COVID-19 disease can be spread through droplets from a sick person or on contact (by touch). COVID-19 disease often presents with coughing or sneezing which release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets can fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, machinery, equipment, floors, walls, clothes, or telephones. People can catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose, or mouth. Being less than two metres away from a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time, one can catch the disease by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them.

In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. The most common symptoms of coronavirus include cough, fever, shortness of breath, tiredness, sore throat, runny / blocked nose, headache, muscle pain, loss of smell, loss of taste, diarrhoea, or vomiting. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness

rises with age. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.

Persons who develop any of these symptoms, even if mild, are to stay at home, contact their doctor and contact the Public Health team on (+356) 111 for further advice and guidance. For more information, seek guidance on www.covid19health.gov.mt

Guidance on the use of medical or cloth masks or visors

Legal Notice 402 of 2020 prescribes that persons shall wear a mask or visor in a proper manner covering the nose, mouth, and chin of the person outside their residence, both when going to an indoor place and outdoors. The mandatory use of medical or cloth masks or visors also applies to museums.

All staff and clients shall use medical or cloth masks or visors at all times. Where tolerated, masks (or masks together with visors) are preferred to visors alone. Masks or visors are to be invariably worn on entering or exiting museums and in all areas within the museums.

COVID Alert Malta

All staff are encouraged to download the COVID Alert Malta application to help facilitate the contact tracing process in case they develop COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone known to have COVID-19. The instructions for downloading the application can be found at <https://covidalert.gov.mt>

Guidelines for Casinos, gaming shops, betting shops and bingo hall owners / management

Guidelines for entry into casinos, gaming shops, betting shops and bingo halls:

- Exercise the right of refusal of entry into the establishment of customers if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms including coughing, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.
- Screen customers for an elevated body temperature prior to entry into the establishment. Should the temperature scan indicate an elevated body temperature above 37.2°C, the customers should not be allowed entry into the establishment.



- Discourage crowding of persons within and outside the establishment ensuring appropriate crowd management at all times. It is imperative that both staff and customers always maintain a physical distance of 2 metres between persons.
- Place floor stickers and signage that provide guidance for social distancing.
- Encourage contactless payment where possible.
- Provide alcohol wipes, sanitisers near payment stations.
- Keep a record of the names, contact details and date and time of visit for all customers in order to facilitate contact tracing should this be required.
- Where possible, ensure that separate flows of entrances and exits are maintained and provide a one-way direction and maintain adequate crowd management.
- Security personnel must be assigned to reception desks and inside the halls/rooms, to ensure that there is enough social distancing between customers and staff, and between customers is observed at all times.

Guidelines for staff:

- Ensure staff are aware that they should refrain from attending work if they have any symptom of ill-health and encourage them to call the Helpline 111 to book a test for COVID in case they develop symptoms. Provide training and educational materials for staff on sanitation, handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette, use of face masks, visors, gloves and aprons, and other protective behaviours to prevent the spread of COVID19.
- Actively encourage employees to take COVID-19 vaccination.
- Ensure staff rooms are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized and not allow staff to congregate. Ensure that they maintain social distancing at all times.
- Consider flexible work schedules/hours to reduce the number of people (employees and customers) in the establishments at all times in order to maintain social distancing where possible.
- Ensure that where possible different staff rosters do not mix between each other.
- Provide staff with the required adequate personal protective equipment all the times.

Guidelines for procedures to follow inside the establishment:



- Remove non-essential high touch items such as promotional material and information leaflets.
- Provide beverages and refreshments in accordance with Standards by Public Health and MTA guidance and license for same category of establishment.
- Ensure that all wash hand basins have antibacterial soap and paper towels available. No air flow driers or revolving cloth towels are allowed.
- Place handwashing signs in the restrooms.
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of premises and frequently touched surfaces including switches, handles, telephones as per updated national guidelines.
- Clean all accessible areas in the establishment regularly.
- Place hand sanitizers in accessible strategic positions around the establishment.
- Interior doors should be left open whenever possible. This also helps ventilation and circulation of air. Otherwise, it would be ideal if they are disinfected after each person opens them.
- Access to rooms and facilities that cannot be fully cleaned or disinfected should be restricted.
- Elevators must be reserved to individuals with mobility problems and ensuring a distance of 2 metres is respected between every person. Push buttons should be disinfected regularly.
- The openings of common commercial areas such as cafeterias, and bars within such establishments are subject to specific Standards and Guidances by Public Health and MTA and compliance with the applicable check lists.

Guidelines specific to gaming equipment:

- Each active game table should be separated from the next by at least 2 metres. Alternatively avoid using a set or more of gaming equipment to ensure that there would be around 2 metres between users.
- It is advisable that there is a maximum of three players on five/six position tables with unoccupied seats in between. For example, seven position tables have a limit of four players.



- No customers should be allowed to stand at the table or behind seated players. Rope and stanchions can be placed around each game to prevent non-playing customers from getting too close to the active table game.
- In the case of slot machines in a bank or cluster, the number of shut down machines between customers shall ensure that a minimum of 2-meter distance is present between operating machines.
- For casinos that accept “backline” betting (betting on someone else’s betting position), the player must be seated at the table, and the backline bet must be placed through the dealer to avoid leaning across the table. Other games like roulette and craps should also have social distancing restrictions by including proper seated spacing at the table as well as direct wagering placement restrictions.
- Establishments should operate fewer open tables and gaming positions to allow operators to reduce the number of staff members required to operate the games.
- Proper hygiene maintenance of gaming equipment should be maintained in establishments. Most standard casino table games that utilize playing cards should not have a problem maintaining the sanitised safety of the cards, as games such as blackjack and baccarat can be dealt in a “face-up” manner where only the dealer touches the cards, and reusing these cards for the entire day should not represent any health risks. Dealers entering the game will be required to wash their hands with soap and water prior to relieving the previous dealer. Dealers should wear the appropriate protective equipment, including a visor and/or face mask.
- Hand-dealt games, especially alternative card games such as Three Card Poker and Ultimate Texas Holdem should not take place since customers touch the cards while making their playing / additional betting decisions.
- The use of dice and tiles in games such as craps involve handling by customers. Thus, establishments need to replace this equipment on a regular basis and sanitise used dice appropriately.

Communication with visitors:

- Ensure that customers are aware of what is expected of them as part of the hygiene and infection control measures being practiced at the establishment site BEFORE



entering the site. These can be communicated to customers before entering the establishment.

- Information about games, facilities and prices should be provided electronically, over the phone or through virtual methods to avoid handing out leaflets/papers/information cards etc.
- Notify the public of context-related restrictions on the institution's website (if applicable) and before entering the establishment.
- Proactively communicate the precautions in place in term of social distancing, customer registration (where applicable) and temperature screening.
- Place posters in prominent places.
- Appeal to customers to cooperate and practice good hand hygiene

Maintaining good hygiene practices

Staff should:

- Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth at all times.
- Wash hands frequently especially:
 - Before and after contact with a customer
 - After handling cash and other payment devices for individuals who do not know how to use contactless methods of payment.
 - Before and after eating
 - Before and after cigarette breaks
 - Before putting on and after removing face masks, visors, or any protective equipment
 - Before and after cleaning equipment and the environment in the establishment
 - After using the rest room
 - Upon arriving at work and at home
- Washing hands with soap should be given priority over using alcohol hand rub. The application of alcohol hand rub should not be done in place of hand washing but rather as a complementary step AFTER handwashing or if hand washing is not convenient. Alcohol hand rub should contain a minimum of 70% alcohol.



10 STEPS TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS



Fig. 1: 10 steps to wash your hands properly



Fig.2 proper removal of gloves



- Use disposable hand towels to dry hands and to open and turn off taps.
- Not use handshakes/hugs when greeting customers and colleagues.
- Postpone or cancel non-essential meetings or training. If meetings or training are essential, use non face-to-face options such as tele and video conferencing.
- Monitor employees' personal health and condition for any symptoms, however mild.
- Implement temperature checks on entry.
- All staff to wear face masks or visors.
- Staff will clean their workplace daily with alcohol-based wipes or paper towels, regardless of the cleaning service in place
- Practice good respiratory etiquette requiring everyone at the establishment to, at all times:
 - cover their coughs and sneezes with a clean tissue or use their elbow (and no spitting)
 - avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth
 - dispose of used tissues and cigarette butts hygienically, e.g. in closed bins
 - clean and disinfect shared equipment and machinery after use
 - wash body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day
 - have no intentional physical contact such as shaking hands and patting backs
- Staff who develop a mild cough, fever (i.e. a temperature of 37.2°C or higher), shortness of breath, headaches, tiredness, loss of taste, loss of smell or diarrhoea, should call the Public Health helpline on 111 giving details of their symptoms.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) by staff

- Staff should wear a surgical or cotton mask or face visor when providing a service to a customer.
- The face mask should completely cover the face from the bridge of the nose down to the chin.
- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser before putting on and taking off the face mask.
- When taking off the face mask, remove it from behind, avoiding to touching the front side.



- Dispose of the face mask safely by placing it in a plastic bag and put it in the trash if it is disposable.
- Wash your hands or apply 70% alcohol hand-rub immediately after removing the face mask.



Wash your hands with soap and water or sanitizer before touching the mask



Inspect the mask for tears or holes



Find the top side where the metal piece or stiff edge is



Hold the mask from the elastic loops and place it on your face. Ensure the coloured-side faces outwards



Avoid touching the front side of the mask while putting it on your face



Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose



Cover your mouth, nose and chin. Do not leave gaps on the side



Remove the mask from behind the ears or from the elastic loops



Keep the used mask away from you and surfaces once it is removed



Dispose of the mask immediately after use in a safe way



Wash your hands either with soap and water or sanitizer after discarding the mask

- Washable, reusable face masks should be washed as soon as possible after each use, using common laundry detergent at 60 °C.
- Surgical masks are not intended to be used more than once. If your mask is damaged or soiled, or if breathing through the mask becomes difficult, you should remove the face mask, discard it safely, and replace it with a new one.
- Visors should ideally be the reusable type, should reach below one's chin and should be disinfected appropriately.



Used PPE should be disposed of safely in the mixed waste stream (black bag), in double bags.

Customer safety

Customers:

- Should have their temperature checked used a contactless forehead thermometer before entering the casino, gaming shop, betting shop or bingo hall.
- Should apply alcohol hand rub upon entering the establishment. An appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub should be provided at the entrance of the site.
- Must wear a mask (covering mouth and nose and chin) at all times.
- Should limit the personal belongings they bring with them ideally to just a mobile phone and mode of payment.
- Should limit the time spent at the establishment
- Should have access to toilets; with soap and water being available at the restrooms to be able to wash their hands.
- Markings on the floor should be made to guide customers about the required distance they should keep from each other.
- In case of informative clips or demonstrations being shown:
 - ensure that the number of visitors that the premises can hold at any one time is one person per 4 square metres of the seating area, including staff
 - ensure that audiences are seated in such a way that each seated group maintains social distancing of at least 2m from other seated groups, with no more than six people in each group
 - equipment that can be reused by multiple customers is not allowed

The Casino, Gaming Shop, Betting Shop and Bingo Hall Environment

- Please refer to guidance on air conditioning and ventilation systems available on oncovid19health.gov.mt.¹
- All precautions must be taken to ensure water systems are safe to prevent the risk of infections derived from water such as Legionnaire's disease. If the water supply is

¹ https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Guidance_Air-conditioning-and-ventilation-systems_23Jun20.pdf



direct from mains, flushing of the water system by opening all taps for a few minutes should suffice. However, if the supply of water is through a roof tank, this should be cleaned, and the water system is flushed through for a few minutes. It is important that the water heater temperature is raised to 60°C and thus there is no need to take samples and get approval from the Environmental Health Directorate. If the establishment site forms part of a complex and the water supply is through the complex main water system, please follow the procedure indicated in Annex 1.

Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves while cleaning and disinfecting the environment.
- Where feasible use disposable cloths or when using non-disposable cloths, they must be changed after every use and washed at a temperature of at least 60°C.
- Wipe down all surfaces (floors, worktops, trolleys, chairs, sinks/basins etc) with medical grade cleaner and disinfectant following guidelines and let them air dry. Contact time on label must be observed for disinfectant to work. Contact time refers to how long the disinfectant is visibly wet on the surface allowing it to thoroughly destroy all of the pathogens. Typical contact time for immersion /sprays is 10 minutes, for disinfectant wipes is 2-4 minutes.
- Remember to clean all touch points with medical grade disinfectant & cleaner frequently during the day. These include door push plates/handles, light switches, fridge handles, touch points on any shelving, soap dispenser, toilet flush and taps, card machine.
- Acrylic or tempered glass barriers should also be wiped clean.
- Items on hard surfaces should be kept to a minimum.
- Where possible avoid using any materials or furniture in the establishment that are difficult to clean such as carpets, material couches, etc.
- Ensure that devices such as equipment that require handling are systematically disinfected after each use.
- Disability-assisted facilities and exposed devices with control buttons for educational purposes should be cleaned frequently with disinfectants.



Annex 1

The following are the legal requirements to be carried out on the water systems prior re-opening of the premises:

1. Carry out a full system disinfection of the cold-water system, flushing through to all outlets to achieve 50 mg/l free chlorine for at least an hour checking that this level is achieved at the furthest outlets. This may be also achieved by making uses e.g. 5 mg/l for 10 hours (this all depends on the water piping system condition). It is important to top up when required throughout this process.
2. Flush out and refill the system to achieve maximum normal operating target levels of disinfection (equivalent to at least 0.2 mg/l free chlorine).
3. Refill and carry out a thermal shock by raising the temperature of the whole of the contents of the hot water storage heater from 70°C to 80°C then circulating this water throughout the system for up to three days. To be effective, the capacity and temperature of the hot water storage heater should be sufficient to ensure that the temperatures at the taps and appliances do not fall below 65°C. Each tap and appliance should be run sequentially for at least five minutes at the full temperature, taking appropriate precautions to minimise the risk of scalding.
4. Monitor temperatures and biocide levels where applicable, adjust where necessary, for at least 48-72 hours and then take Legionella samples from sentinel outlets (microbiological samples taken before 48 hours following disinfection may give false negative results).
5. Ensure you keep all documentation for inspection by the Competent Authority, including the review and update of the risk assessment manual including monitoring data, etc., with evidence of who carried out the monitoring, add time, date and signature.
6. Laboratory results for Legionella analysis which have to be carried out at an accredited laboratory, together with all the necessary documentation referred to in point 5 above and a declaration from the private water consultant under whom this water system treatment has been carried out are to be sent to the Water Regulatory and Auditing Unit within the Environmental Health Directorate prior reopening of the establishment.
7. Once it is found that your systems of the hot and cold water are under control then the establishment can reopen.