

COVID-19 Sale of food

Restriction on buffets and self-service foods

This circular provides guidance for operators of food businesses to help reduce the transmission of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Who needs to take action?

A person who owns, operates or controls a food business that includes buffets and/or self-service foods and/or share plates needs to take action. Businesses included are those that sell food products including fresh food and groceries such as supermarkets and any other grocery or delicatessen retailer. It also includes a food service, which is a business which provides food and/or drink, whether pre-prepared or prepared on site. This includes, but is not limited to cafes, restaurants, and fast-food outlets. It also includes those businesses who may not require a food business licence, for example non-profit organisations.

What is the risk?

While COVID-19 is generally spread from one person to another through respiratory droplets, there is a risk that a person can be infected by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes. The shared use of tongs, scoops, spoons or other utensils or equipment which may be touched by multiple people increases the risk of spreading pathogens.

Action to be taken

Food service businesses have in place a COVID Safe Checklist which include the removal of any self-serve buffet style food services. However, it is important that all food businesses take action to remove or restrict access to self-serve foods or provide staff to serve or package the food.

Self-serve foods to be removed, or access restricted, may include but are not limited to:

- Buffet foods
- Shared menu items or grazing plates are to be served on individual plates and separate cutlery provided for each person.
- Sushi, salads, meats, cheese, olives, and other delicatessen items
- Customer's own (BYO) cups/containers are not to be used

As an extra precaution to help avoid the transmission of COVID-19 through surface contact, frequent washing and sanitising of all food contact surfaces including counters, containers, door handles, equipment and utensils is recommended. Staff must practice frequent hand washing including before and after serving or packaging food and ensure social distancing measures are in place.

Businesses are required to comply with the published [Chief Health Officer public health directions](#). Non-compliance may result in enforcement action being undertaken which may include the issuing of on-the-spot Prescribed Infringement Notices.

Further information

Coronavirus updates and information: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>

Queensland Health Public Health Units: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/contact-us/contact/public-health-units>

Local government contacts: <http://www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/local-government/local-government-directory/search-the-local-government-directory.html>