Dealing with customers in the fight against COVID-19

Guide for businesses

Update 8/5/2021
According to experts, we will have to live with the COVID-19 virus for the foreseeable future. We, therefore, need to keep taking measures in order to prevent the further spread of the virus or new outbreaks as much as possible.

This ‘Generic Guide concerning the opening of businesses to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus’ sets out the necessary minimum preventive measures to ensure that contacts between retailers and self-employed traders with their customers are as safe as possible by minimising the risk of infection and avoiding contamination as much as possible.

The preventive measures may be supplemented at sectoral and/or company level to take the specific context into account as much as possible, so that activities can be resumed in safe conditions. Other appropriate measures offering equivalent protection may also be taken.

Sectoral protocols are approved by the competent ministers and apply to the entire profession. They are available in French and Dutch and are published on the websites of the concerned sectoral federations and on the website of the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue.

In addition to the prevention measures mentioned in this guide, it is also advisable to consult the "Generic guide to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at work" of the Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue.

The content of the guide was originally compiled with contributions from Comeos and the High Council for the Self-employed and SMEs. The essential provisions of the applicable sectoral protocols have also been included in this guide. The content of this guide can be supplemented according to the guidelines of the National Security Council, the legislation in force such as the Ministerial Decree of 28 October 2020 on urgent measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19 and on the basis of new scientific understanding and best practices.
Scope

- Retail activities (excluding catering) authorised to open
- Other liberal and independent professions authorised to open without physical contact
- Shopping centres
- Street trade
- Self-employed professions in their own premises, at customers’ home or on location
- Professions with physical contact
- Amusement parks
- Trade fairs and exhibitions

This guide no longer applies to fairgrounds, cinemas, wellness centres, indoor playgrounds, Class I and Class II gambling establishments, as all these establishments must currently remain closed.

Sectoral protocols

- Each sectoral protocol contains an item which mentions the official sources of the prevention measures against COVID-19 and a reference to the generic guides (“Guide for Businesses”, “Guide for Hospitality” and “Guide to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 at Work” of the FPS Employment). There are references to the various websites of these sources. Each protocol is regularly adapted to the developments concerning the norms. Each protocol is dated on the day of its publication and the dates are updated accordingly.

- Each sectoral protocol is approved by the competent ministers and distributed among the entire professional group. First-line supervision is the responsibility of the COVID coordinator, the operator or organiser of the activity, who can use a self-checking system (checklist). In addition, a second-line supervision can also be organised, for example by calling on an external certification body or an external prevention service from the sector or the professional organisations. Problems that come to light in the context of compliance are incorporated into the continuous improvement of the existing protocols.

- The list with the sectoral protocols can be found at info-coronavirus.be/nl/protocollen.

IMPORTANT

In this guide, ‘mouth mask or any other fabric alternative’ means the following: a mask without a one-way valve, made of fabric or disposable materials, which fits closely to the face, covers the nose, mouth and chin and is intended to prevent contamination in case of contact between people. Scarves, bandanas, neckerchiefs and masks with a one-way valve do not meet these requirements.
Guidelines for the customer

- **Do not go** to shops, if you **show symptoms of disease**. Please, respect the six golden rules under all circumstances:
  - Wash your hands regularly
  - Avoid contact with other people as much as possible
  - Think about people at risk
  - Keep your distance
  - Opt for outdoor activities
  - Respect the rules on gatherings

- Follow the **instructions** of the staff and the guidelines on display in the shop.

- It is recommended going to shops **near** where you live or work.

- A customer may be **accompanied** by a person from the same household or with whom the customer maintains close and lasting contact. Minors from the same household or persons in need of assistance may be accompanied by an adult.

- Limit your time in shops, shopping centres and other essential retail businesses to a maximum of **30 minutes**. This may be longer in shops that work exclusively by appointment.

- **Keep 1.5 metres away** from other customers (that don't belong to your family or your close contacts) and shop staff.

- **Wash your hands** when entering each shop and touch only the items you need.

- Customers must **wear a face mask** or a cloth alternative in shops, shopping centres and on trade fairs. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used. People who are unable to wear a face mask, a cloth mask or a face shield due to a disability, which is verified by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation. The obligation to wear a face mask or a cloth alternative also applies in shopping streets, on markets (including antique markets and jumble sales) and fairs and any private or public busy place, determined by the competent local authority and delimited by a notice specifying the times to which the obligation applies.

- **Pay** as much as possible **electronically** or contactless.

- It is advisable to give **priority** to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.
Guidelines for retailers

Regardless of the type of business, the guidelines mentioned in this guide must be applied. Traders who do not comply with them risk having their establishment closed down by the control authorities.

- All shops can open on their usual days and times. Night shops must close by 10pm at the latest.

- Queues outside the shop should be avoided. Every effort must be made to ensure that the distance of 1.5 metres is respected between people in the queues and to avoid gatherings. If arrangements are made by the local authorities, they must be respected.

- A customer may be accompanied by a person from the same household or with whom the customer maintains close and lasting contact. Minors from the same household or persons in need of assistance may be accompanied by an adult.

- The duration of the shopping must be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.

- The duration of a visit may be longer in the case of shops that work exclusively by appointment.

- Display instructions visibly outside and inside the shop, for example regarding the maximum number of customers who can enter the shop at the same time, the wearing of a face mask or regarding the use of toilets. A template for a display and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy ([bit.ly/GuideCommerces](http://bit.ly/GuideCommerces)).

- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to inform them about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions - make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.

- Admit no more than 1 customer per 10 square meters of accessible floor surface. However, if the floor surface accessible to customers is less than 20 square metres, no more than 2 customers can enter the premises, as long as a distance of 1.5 metres can be ensured between customers.

- Customers must be able to easily maintain a distance of 1.5 metres both inside and outside the premises. Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.

- If the area accessible to the public is greater than 400 m², adequate access control must be provided. Adequate access control involves organised monitoring of compliance with specific measures. These include control of the limited number of customers admitted, the compulsory wearing of a mask, the prohibition of assembly, the rule that specifies how many people are authorized to shop together and social distancing.

- Make sure your shop is well ventilated.

- In the case of non-automatic doors, leave the doors open as much as possible.
• Ensure the necessary hand hygiene for staff and customers by providing suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make the products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the shop (e.g., fitting rooms, ticket machines or payment terminal).

• Set up the till area so that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained between staff and customers, and between waiting customers in the queue. If this is not possible, provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.

• Ensure the shop is set up in such a way that the customer only touches the product he or she wants to buy. If this is not possible, limit as much as possible the number of times the product is handled by both seller and buyer.

• The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in all establishments, including vending machines, from 10 pm to 5 am.

• Everybody from the age of 13 (including the staff of the store) must cover ones mouth and nose with a face mask or cloth alternative. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used.

• Encourage electronic payments by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.

• The payment terminal must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, or provide hand gels or cotton buds for customers.

• If possible, work with orders and pick-up times.

• Take preventive measures in the fitting room: limit the number of people, respect 1.5 metres distance when setting up the cubicles and organising the queue. Disinfect the cubicle after each fitting. Provide hand gel before and after use of the fitting room.

• Pay attention to the layout of your car park, e.g., by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes, so a safe distance can be guaranteed.

• Street sales and displays, flags or other attributes outside the shops are prohibited.

• It is advisable to give priority to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.

• Door-to-door sales are prohibited, however, street trading activities in articles of food are permitted. Home deliveries of pre-ordered goods are allowed.
Guidelines for shopping centres

- Contact your staff, including temporary workers and trainees, in good time to inform them of the rules in force in the shopping centre and train them in their implementation. Do the same with outsiders, such as customers, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, relatives, etc. who may be in contact with your company. Many people are likely to ask concrete questions: it is essential to make it clear to them who they can talk to, via posters, information boards, your intranet or your website.

- Display instructions visibly outside the shopping centre, for example regarding the maximum number of customers who can enter the shop at the same time, the wearing of a face mask, or regarding the use of toilets. A template for a display and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy (bit.ly/GuideCommerces).

- Provide a separate entrance and exit for customers in the shopping centre.

- Provide hand washing facilities for staff and clients (suitable gel or disinfectant). Install these devices at entrances, exits and wherever necessary in the shopping centre.

- Make sure your shop is well ventilated.

- For non-automatic doors, leave the doors open as much as possible.

- Admit no more than 1 customer per 10 square meters of accessible floor surface, for a period no longer than necessary and usual.

- A customer may be accompanied by a person from the same household or with whom the customer maintains close and lasting contact. Minors from the same household or persons in need of assistance may be accompanied by an adult.

- Organise a system to check how many customers are present in the shopping centre. Adequate access control involves organised monitoring of compliance with specific measures. These include control of the limited number of customers admitted, the compulsory wearing of a mask, the prohibition of assembly, the rule that shopping must be done individually and social distancing.

- Queues outside the shopping centre and at the entrances to the centre's shops should be avoided.

- Customers must be able to easily maintain a distance of 1.5 metres both inside and outside the premises. Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.

- Everybody from the age of 13 (including the staff of the store) must cover ones mouth and nose with a face mask or cloth alternative. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used.

- If possible, give the necessary instructions to customers of the shopping centre via the public address system.
• The guidelines for retailers also apply to the individual shops in a shopping centre.

• Pay attention to the layout of your car park, e.g. by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes, so a safe distance can be guaranteed.

• Street sales and sales in the aisles of shopping centres displays, flags or other attributes outside and inside the shopping centres are prohibited.

• It is advisable to give priority to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.
Guidelines in other sectors without physical contact

- Keep **1.5 metres distance**. Apply floor markings where possible.
- Make sure your shop is **well ventilated**.
- For non-automatic doors, leave the **doors open** as much as possible.
- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to **inform them** about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions - make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.
- A customer may be **accompanied** by a person from the same household or with whom the customer maintains close and lasting contact. Minors from the same household or persons in need of assistance may be accompanied by an adult.
- Admit customers for no more than **30 minutes**. Use alternatives for consultation and meetings, such as teleworking or digital meetings, as much as possible.
- Professionals, who **only work by appointment**, may welcome their customers for a longer period of time.
- **Schedule appointments and plan** customer contact as spread out as possible. Avoid using waiting areas. If a waiting area is used anyway, organise the area with respect for the distance of 1.5 metres, and make sure that customers do not sit opposite each other. Position chairs with their backs to each other. Do not offer drinks to customers.
- Everybody from the age of 13 (including the staff of the store) must cover ones mouth and nose with a **face mask** or cloth alternative in the **spaces open to the public**. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used.
- If possible, admit customers in a **separate area** and limit the number of employees present.
- Reorganise the **reception area**, so that the 1.5 metres distance between staff and customers can be maintained. If this is not possible, provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.
- Ensure the necessary **hand hygiene** for staff and customers by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make these products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the establishment, e.g. when signing documents.
In the case of customer contacts outside the premises: provide clear instructions for visits/work and ask timely for information about the location. Limit the number of employees/customers present in an area. If the presence of the resident is not required during the work, he or she must move to another area. Provide individual protective equipment.

- **Door-to-door sales** are prohibited, however, street trading activities in articles of food are permitted. **Home deliveries** of pre-ordered goods are allowed.

- The provision of services in the home and those where the **distance of 1.5 m cannot be guaranteed are prohibited**, except for the provision of services which are legally defined as being necessary for the protection of the vital needs of the Nation and the needs of the population.

- **Street sales** and displays, flags, door-to-door sales or other attributes outside the businesses are prohibited.
Guidelines for sectors with physical contact

- **Guidelines** should be posted clearly visible, both inside and outside the business, for example regarding the maximum number of customers allowed inside at one time or the use of toilets. A model poster and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy (bit.ly/GuideCommerces).

- The details of a **contact person** should be mentioned on a poster in your shop and on your website (if you have one) so that customers and staff members can report a possible COVID-19 contamination, in order to facilitate contact tracing.

- Employees including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents, etc. who may be in contact with your business, must be **informed** in time about the rules applicable in your establishment. Many people may have concrete questions: it is important to tell them who they can turn to, by means of information boards, your intranet or your website.

- Service providers and staff members must take their **temperature** at home every day before going to work. If they have a fever, it is highly recommended that they stay at home. This is a self-assessment gesture, the results of which may not be requested by the employer nor be communicated by the employees.

- Clients are only admitted **by appointment** and no longer than strictly necessary.

- Children under 13 may only be accompanied by one parent.

- **Persons requiring assistance** may be accompanied by one adult.

- A **10 minute pause between each customer** is needed to disinfect all instruments and treatment surfaces which the customer came into contact with.

- Clients must wait **outside** the shop. Waiting rooms are closed.

- Only one customer is allowed **per 10 m² of accessible floor space**. If the floor area accessible to customers is less than 20 m², it is permitted to receive two customers, provided that a distance of 1.5 m between each person is guaranteed.

- The studio of a professional photographer is an exception to the previous point. There, professional photographers are allowed to receive people from the same household, people who have a lasting contact or children up to 12 years old, without having to observe the rule of 1.5 metres between each person. The rule of a maximum of one client per 10 m² does not apply here.

- **No drinks, food or snacks** are served and no magazines or newspapers are provided.

- The social distancing rules, in particular the maintenance of a distance of **1.5 m** between each person, must always be respected, except between the client and the service provider or his
assistant, to the extent strictly necessary for the provision of care.

- **Movements of clients** within the premises shall be organised so as to minimise any contact under all circumstances.

- The room must be sufficiently ventilated, at least by opening windows and doors, even in bad weather. If the room is equipped with a CO2 meter that measures the actual CO2 concentration continuously and in real time, windows and doors can remain closed. If the CO2 concentration is too high, i.e. more than 800 ppm, then better ventilation of the room must be ensured so the concentration drops below 800 ppm.

- Wearing a mouth mask inside the shop or at the place of provision of the service is compulsory for customers from the age of 13. If it is impossible to wear a mouth mask for medical reasons, customers may wear a face shield. Persons who, due to a disability proven by a medical certificate, cannot wear a mouth mask, a fabric alternative or a face shield, are not bound by this obligation.

- The service provider and his staff must wear a CE-approved surgical mask.

- A client may only remove the mouth mask for facial treatment and only for the time strictly necessary for that treatment. The clients of professional photographers are also allowed to remove their masks during the photo shoot.

- Hand hygiene devices and products are available at the entrance and at various places within the shop.

- Staff members must wash their hands before treating a new customer.

- Electronic payments by bank card or contactless payments should be encouraged, and cash payments must be avoided as much as possible.

- Payment terminals should be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Hand gel or cotton swabs may also be available to customers for the use of the terminals.

- Sales promotions on the street and in the aisles of shopping centres are prohibited, as are displays, flags or other attributes outside the establishment.

- The provision of services at home is prohibited, including at the service provider's home if that is not the establishment, with the exception of hair care services that must be provided in accordance with the applicable sector protocol. Beard care at home is prohibited.

- Duo treatments are prohibited. “Duo treatment” means that two professionals take care of the same client at the same time. On the other hand, it is not forbidden for a professional to treat several people at the same time, as long as all the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled.
These guidelines apply to street trade, including markets.

Street activity refers to any sale, offer for sale or display with a view to the sale to consumers of products and ancillary services relating to those products by a trader outside the establishments mentioned in their registration in the Crossroads Bank for Enterprises or by a person who does not have such an establishment.

A market is regarded as a manifestation organized or previously authorized by the municipality, to bring together persons who sell products or services at fixed places and times.

These guidelines do not affect the powers of the local authorities to regulate street and fair activities in accordance with the law of 25 June 1993 on the exercise and organisation of street and fair activities.

General guidelines for street trading

- **Door-to-door sales** are prohibited, however, street trading activities in articles of food are permitted. The delivery and placement of previously ordered goods at home is permitted.

- **Food trucks** can offer food and drinks to take away until 10 pm at the latest. On-site consumption is not permitted. The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited between 10 pm and 5 am.

- Ensure that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained at all times between visitors to the street business and the traders.

- Draft a corona circulation plan with clear demarcation of queueing line and walking route via ribbon barriers or crowd control barriers, and mark the queueing line every 1.5 metres.

- Ensure the necessary hand hygiene by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Install them in such a way that they are accessible to the seller and the customer.

- Display the preventive measures that apply to street businesses in a clearly visible place.

- Encourage electronic payments by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.

- The payment terminal must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, or provide hand gels or cotton buds for customers.

- Ensure the shop is set up in such a way that the customer only touches the product he or she wants to buy. If this is not possible, limit the number of times the product is handled by both seller and buyer as much as possible.
Additional guidelines for markets

- Markets must be pre-approved by the city council, which must adapt all the guidelines below to the local situation.
- Fairs, and annual fairs, are prohibited.
- The outdoor areas of antique and flea markets organised by professionals are allowed.
- The competent local authority may require all visitors from the age of 13 to wear a face mask or cloth alternative.
- Display the prevention measures that apply to the market clearly visible at all entrances to the market area.
- A customer may be accompanied by a person from the same household or with whom the customer maintains close and lasting contact. Minors from the same household or persons in need of assistance may be accompanied by an adult.
- Shopping can only be carried out for a period of maximum 30 minutes.
- The rules of social distancing are adhered to. Customers, market vendors, carneys and their staff always keep 1.5 metres away from each other.
- A one-way circulation plan is being developed, with separate entrances and exits to the market. Only in exceptional circumstances, a motivated deviation from this is possible by the local government, which will provide an alternative solution.
- Clearly separate the aisles and queues, using ribbons and crush barriers. Use ground markings and/or signs to ensure the distance of 1.5 metres.
- Means for the necessary hand hygiene should be made available at the entrance of the market and at every stall.
- The maximum amount of visitors admitted to the market is 1 visitor per 1.5 running metres at a stall.
- A system is provided to check how many customers are present on the market.
- Provide a filter system at the entrances to the market to limit the number of visitors.
- Set up market stalls at a sufficient distance from each other and ensure a sufficiently wide walk-through path.
- Market vendors, carneys and their staff must cover their mouth and nose with a face mask or a cloth alternative. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used.
- It is strongly recommended that market visitors also wear a face mask or a cloth alternative on the market.
- The consumption of food and drink on the spot at the market is prohibited. No food or drink is offered in the form of tastings for the customers.
- Foodtrucks can offer food and drinks on take-away until 10 pm at the latest. On-site consumption is not permitted.
- The sale of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in all establishments, including vending machines, from 10 pm to 5 am.
- The general guidelines for street trading also apply to the individual market vendor or carny on the market.
Concerning eating and drinking facilities in amusement parks, the recommendations in the “Guide for hospitality” apply.

Guidelines for visitors

- Do not come to the amusement park if you show symptoms of disease.
- Follow the instructions of the staff and the guidelines on display in the amusement park.
- The rules of social distancing do not apply to playing children up to and including 12 years of age.
- The adults accompanying the children respect the rules of social distancing, in particular, maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres between each person. Keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other people who are not part of your bubble and follow the instructions (such as the walking route to be followed).
- Ensure good hand hygiene, and only touch the products you need.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or into a paper tissue that you immediately discard in a dustbin with a lid (e.g. in the toilets).
- It is strongly recommended that visitors from the age of 13 wear a face mask or a cloth alternative. The mouth mask is compulsory from the age of 13 (including amusement park staff) when crowded or when third parties cannot be protected by the 1.5 metre distance.
- If this is impossible due to medical reasons, visitors are allowed to use a face shield. Persons who are unable to wear a face mask, a cloth alternative or a face shield because of a disability, documented by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation.
- Pay as much as possible electronically or contactless.

Guidelines for amusement parks

- Before the restart, ensure complete cleaning and disinfection of the materials and areas used by staff and visitors.
- Display instructions visibly inside and outside the park, a.o. regarding the maximum number of visitors who can be inside at the same time, or regarding the use of toilets. Display the rules at the entrance of the amusement park and repeat them inside as much as possible.
- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to inform them about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions: make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.
• Visitors must be able to easily maintain a distance of 1.5 metres both inside and outside the park and attractions (unless they belong to the same group). Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.

• Offering and consuming drinks and food on the spot is prohibited.

• The sale of food products and non-alcoholic beverages by take-away is permitted.

• Pay attention to the layout of your car park, e.g. by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes, so a safe distance can be guaranteed.

• Provide digital ticket sales and the reservation of a time slot.

• Allow a maximum of 1 visitor per 10 square metres in the amusement park.

• Manage the maximum number of visitors that can be in the amusement park at the same time and avoid inflow and outflow.

• The inflow and outflow of visitors must be controlled, and visits must be spread as much as possible.

• For non-automatic doors, leave the doors open as much as possible.

• Ensure good ventilation in all rooms.

• If possible, give the necessary instructions to the visitors of the amusement park via screens and/or sound installations.

• Provide internal guidelines for the first aid posts. Wearing a face mask or cloth alternative is mandatory for staff at the first aid posts.

• Ensure the necessary hand hygiene for staff and customers by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make these products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the amusement park (e.g., attractions, toilets or payment terminal).

• Only provide paper towels or paper and lockable bins in the toilets. The sanitary facilities must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

• After each contact with visitors, clean and disinfect the parts of the attractions that come into contact with visitors.

• Meeting moments with live actors can take place in an appropriate setting and as long as the distance of 1.5 metres with the visitors can be safeguarded.

• The use of mascots is advised against.

• Indoor shows are not allowed.

• The guidelines for retailers (see p. 5) also apply to the individual shops in an amusement park.

• The guidelines for indoor playgrounds also apply to an indoor playground in an amusement park.

• Set up the till area so that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained between staff and visitors, and between waiting visitors in the queue. If this is not possible, provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.

• Encourage electronic payments by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.

• The payment terminal must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, or provide hand gels or cotton buds for visitors.
Guidelines for organising trade fairs

These guidelines apply to the professional organisation of trade fairs, including exhibitions, whether they are organised for individuals or professionals. A trade fair is considered to be an exhibition of goods or services.

These guidelines only apply to the organisation of trade fairs outside.

They do not affect the powers of the local authorities to require an operating licence to operate an exhibition building or to lay down the licensing requirements for this purpose.

For a trade fair that is organised at a location without a fixed operating licence, as described in the Ministerial Decree of 30 June 2020, the CERM assessment is mandatory. The organiser must add the assessment report to the application for a licence from the local authority.

Concerning eating and drinking facilities on the site of the trade fair, the recommendations in the “Guide for hospitality” apply.

Guidelines for visitors

- Reserve or buy your ticket in advance via the fair’s registration/ticket platform.
- Respect the time slot as determined by the organiser.
- Do not go to the fair if you are showing symptoms of disease.
- Arrive at the fair’s venue no earlier than 30 minutes before the start of the fair or the start of your time slot.
- Follow the instructions of the staff and the guidelines on display in the exhibition hall.
- Ensure good hand hygiene and only touch the products you need.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or into a paper tissue that you immediately discard in a dustbin with a lid (e.g. in the toilets).
- Visitors from the age of 13 must wear a face mask or other cloth alternative.
- If this is impossible due to medical reasons, visitors are allowed to use a face shield. Persons who are unable to wear a face mask, a cloth alternative or a face shield because of a disability, documented by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation.
- Pay as much as possible electronically or contactless.
Guidelines for the organiser

- Before opening the fair and after every day of the fair, ensure complete **cleaning and disinfection** of the materials and areas used by staff and visitors.

- **Display instructions visibly outside** and inside the fair’s venue, including the maximum number of customers who can enter at the same time, the wearing of a face mask or the use of toilets. Display the rules at the entrance to the exhibition building and in every exhibition hall and repeat them inside as much as possible.

- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors and others who come into contact with the company, to **inform** them about the rules at the fair. Many people may well have practical questions: it is important to tell them whom they can turn to via information panels, your intranet or your website.

- A **contact person** will be appointed and communicated so that visitors of the trade fair can report a possible infection with the coronavirus Covid-19 in order to facilitate contact tracing.

- Everyone from the age of 13 (including the staff of the trade fair) is obliged to cover their mouth and nose with a **face mask** or a cloth alternative.

- If this is impossible due to **medical reasons**, visitors are allowed to use a face shield. Persons who are unable to wear a face mask, a cloth alternative or a face shield because of a disability, documented by a medical certificate, do not have to comply with this obligation.

- Only the **outside areas** of the fair are open to the public, with the exception of the entrance, the exit, sanitary facilities and the first aid and medical assistance rooms.

- Visitors must easily be able to keep a **distance of 1.5 metres** (unless they belong to the same group). Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.

- Offering and consuming **drinks and food** on the spot is prohibited.

- The sale of food products and beverages by **take-away** is permitted until 10 pm.

- Pay attention to the **layout of your car park**, e.g. by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes to guarantee a safe distance.

- Provide for the **digital sale of tickets** and the reservation of a **time slot**.

- Allow a maximum of **1 visitor per 10m²** on the premises of the trade fair, with a maximum of 50 persons.
The inflow and outflow of visitors must be controlled and the visits spread out as far as possible.

Provide separate entrances and exits so that there is as little interaction as possible between arriving and departing visitors. If possible, provide multiple entrances so that the arriving visitor flow is spread out.

For non-automatic doors, leave the doors open as far as possible. In other cases: use as many elbow handles as possible.

Provide sufficient staff (awareness hosts, security guards, etc.) to guide visitors and give instructions on respecting the 1.5-metres distance.

Organise a counting system that makes it possible to check how many visitors are present at any time during the exhibition and to check the time slots allocated to the visitors.

Ideally, a managed cloakroom should be provided, with staff wearing gloves and a face mask.

Ensure good ventilation in all rooms.

Avoid using elevators or limit the number of people using the elevator at the same time.

If possible, give the necessary instructions to the fair’s visitors via screens and/or sound installations.

Provide internal guidelines for the first-aid posts. Wearing a face mask or other fabric alternative is mandatory for personnel in the first-aid posts.

Ensure the necessary hand hygiene for the staff and visitors by providing means of disinfecting the hands with suitable hand gel or disinfectants. Make these resources available at the entrance and exit and, where necessary, in the building (e.g. exhibition stand, toilets, cloakroom, conference room entrance or payment terminal).

Provide only paper towels or paper and lockable bins in the toilets. The sanitary facilities must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

Set up exhibition stands at a sufficient distance from each other and ensure a sufficiently wide walkway.

Exhibitors and stand staff should wear a face mask or a cloth alternative at all times. If this is not possible for medical reasons, a face shield may be used.

Try to keep the exchange of documents, information leaflets or business cards to a minimum. Use the organiser’s available digital alternatives (such as scanning visitor badges).

Thoroughly clean tables, chairs and other furniture after every visitor or use.
• Ensure a system is set up in such a way that only the customer touches the product he or she wants to buy. If this is not possible, then limit as much as possible the number of times the product is handled by both seller and buyer.

• Seminar or conference rooms may not be used. For conferences and demonstrations outside: make sure that the distance of 1.5 metres can be respected. Provide sufficient time between sessions with different audiences. After each session and use, these rooms should be disinfected, including the furniture and the materials used by the speakers (on-stage furniture, podium, etc.).

• Set up the till area so that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained between staff and customers, and between customers waiting in the queue. If this is not possible, then provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.

• Encourage electronic payments by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.

• When using the payment terminal, it must be cleaned and disinfected after each use, or make hand gels or cotton buds available to customers.
Ventilation and COVID-19

When we breathe, speak, shout, sing, cough or sneeze, the air we exhale releases a number of small water droplets. In people infected with COVID-19, these droplets are full of virus. The larger droplets quickly fall on surfaces and on the ground and can infect people in the immediate vicinity; therefore, it is important to keep a certain physical distance, to wear a face mask and of course to follow the health measures in place. The smaller droplets or mirodroplets, on the other hand, can float in the air for several hours. These are the so-called “aerosols”.

In a room, these aerosols gradually spread through the room by way of air movement. Their spread is similar to that of perfume or cigarette smoke, which we can smell even if the person who spread it is on the other side of the room.

The higher the concentration of aerosols in an area, the higher the risk of contamination when an infected person is present in that area.

That is why it is essential for every business or company to pay attention to the quality of the ambient air.

CO₂ and COVID-19

Measuring the concentration of virus particles in the air is not easy. When we breathe, we emit CO₂. Just like aerosols, CO₂ spreads around the room and is carried along by the air movement in the room. However, contrary to aerosols, CO₂ is much easier to detect and to measure.

Therefore, measuring the CO₂ concentration in the air can be a good indicator of the ambient air quality in an enclosed space: a high CO₂ concentration indicates that the ventilation is insufficient for the use of that room and that air quality is not good.

In order to guarantee good air quality and to reduce the risk of aerosol contamination, ventilation must therefore be used to freshen the air in the room in all circumstances. This removes excess CO₂ from the room, as well aerosols in the air that are possibly loaded with virus particles.

Why measure CO₂ concentration?

Of course, a high concentration of CO₂ in an enclosed space is not necessarily synonymous with the presence of COVID-19. However, by measuring the CO₂ level, reference thresholds that indicate that the air in the room needs to be freshened can be identified. The natural CO₂ concentration in the open air is on average 0.04% or 400 CO₂ parts per million. In an enclosed space, the closer to this percentage, the more efficiently the space is ventilated.

Some scientific studies have shown that CO₂ above a concentration of 1,000 ppm has effects on human performance (mainly intellectual performance) and that it is advised to stay below this threshold. Therefore, even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was recommended that the CO₂ level in a room be kept below 900 ppm as much as possible. Some COVID protocols, including those for contact professions, set that threshold even lower (800 ppm).
Measuring, ventilating, eliminating

For all activities mentioned in this guide, it is recommended to ensure good ventilation of the premises. Even though the use of a device that measures CO₂ is not always obligatory, it is the first step towards improving the air quality of your business or establishment.

The use of a CO₂ measuring instrument does not affect the quality of ambient air in a room. A human or mechanical intervention is necessary to bring fresh air into the room that has to be ventilated and to evacuate the indoor air, after the device has measured the CO₂ content.

There are mechanical systems designed specifically for ventilation. However, sometimes such systems are lacking, or the existing systems work inadequately or inefficiently. In such cases, the simplest and least intrusive solution is to constantly and either partially (e.g. turn-tilt windows) or fully open windows and doors that let in the outside air.

A CO₂ detector:
- makes it possible to ensure that the CO₂ concentration in an enclosed space remains as low as possible.
- indicates when the room needs to be ventilated
- improves the comfort of the people present in the room. After all, if a room is constantly or too frequently ventilated during winter, the temperature is will become too low; and throughout the year, open windows potentially lead to noise pollution, which is not very pleasant.

With a good CO₂ measurement, you know when to open windows or doors, and for how long. Not too often, not too short and not too long!

Most CO₂ measuring instruments are equipped with visual or sound systems that warn users when it is time to ventilate the room. The task force “Ventilation” of the Government Commissioner for Corona has prepared the document “Selection and use of CO₂ meters in the context of COVID-19” to help you choose and use such devices correctly. This document is an addition to the implementation plan on the website of the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue.

Refreshing the air in a room not only helps to reduce the CO₂ concentration, but also to remove floating virus particles. However, do not lose sight of the other safety measures. Measuring the CO₂ concentration in a room with a low occupancy rate may give a low CO₂ concentration for that room, but it will never completely eliminate the risk of contamination.
Monitoring compliance with the crisis measures

The police services are authorised to monitor the compliance with all crisis measures in the ministerial decree from 28 October 2020 concerning the urgent measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus COVID-19. Various federal inspection services also carry out part of this monitoring. This mainly concerns

- the social inspection services,
- the inspection service of the Animal, Plant and Food Directorate-General of the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
- and the General Directorate for Economic Inspection of the SPF Economy.

In accordance with article 27, §4 of the ministerial decree of 28 October 2020, the Economic Inspection monitors the prohibition of door-to-door activities, as well as the measures concerning service providers, including non-medical contact professions. In this context, inspectors and auditors may carry out on-site inspections of service providers, verifying compliance with the prohibition on professional activities, or compliance with the applicable protocols, including compliance with the mandatory distance of 1.5 metres from customers.

If an infringement is established, the Economic Inspection has the possibility to send a warning to the offender, propose a transaction (administrative amicable settlement) or submit an official report to the public prosecutor’s office for appropriate action. This is done in accordance with Book XV of the Code of Economic Law. Based on Article 26 of the ministerial decree of 28 October 2020, offenders risk imprisonment from eight days up to three months and/or a fine from €208 to €4,000 (amounts already increased by the surcharges). In addition, the competent local authority or the public prosecutor’s office may close the establishment.
Communication material

The FPS Economy created a communication kit with posters, banners and pictograms for merchants, the self-employed, market vendors and municipalities.

You will find this communication material on bit.ly/covid19-commkit.