

Pub hygiene during the closure

The following feature is a good guide to keeping your pub clean and hygienic during the closure.

As the Covid-19 lockdown continues and our city, town and village pubs remain closed for business, it's worth considering the safety steps you can take to make sure your venue will be ready to go when the Government gives the green light for trade to resume as normal.

How you close your pubs down and how you carry out simple maintenance checks will put you in a great position to open safely when the restrictions are finally lifted.

For many publicans, there is usually someone living on-site, so maintaining compliance is possible while heeding current Government advice to stay at home.

Following these simple steps will help make sure that you can reopen quickly when the time is right:

Water supply

- Turn off hot water to save money and help prevent the growth of Legionella bacteria
- Where possible, continue weekly water checks because stagnant water is a breeding ground for legionnaires' disease. Legionella can cause a potentially fatal type of pneumonia and is contracted by inhaling airborne water droplets containing the bacteria
- Visit the site weekly to flush taps through
- If you have accommodation, where possible, remove shower heads or place in the shower or bath basin and run taps and outlets regularly during the closure period

Pest management

- As we head into the warmer summer months, flies can be real pests if left unchecked, so we advise electric fly killers are left switched on
- We also recommend that you plug sinks to prevent flies from breeding and that U-bends are cleaned out
- Many venues may have dried goods left on-site that could attract pests – ensure these are stored in locations where pests are less likely to access them and store any open goods in resealable pest-proof containers
- Leave bait boxes in place and carry out any recommended pest proofing works to prevent pest entry

Bar hygiene

- You will probably have cleaned down your bar dispensers, bottles and bar surfaces on closure but make sure your optics are covered and they aren't sticky because any residue will attract fruit flies
- Remove spirits from bars and make sure the lids are firmly on to prevent alcohol loss

General hygiene

- You will have given the venue a thorough clean before closing the doors but keeping on top of hygiene while shut is important
- It is easy to miss something, so systematically check everywhere is clean and left as it should, for example:
 - Dishwashers – they should be empty and washer arms dismantled to remove risks of stagnant water
 - Fridges – these will have been emptied, cleaned and switched off, but have the doors been left ajar?
 - Cleaning – continue to clean and sanitise all surfaces and areas during closure, including floors, cupboards and underneath and behind equipment because this will mean your pub is sparkling and ready to open without delay
 - Check 'best before' dates – make sure that any foods remaining on-site, especially dried goods, have been correctly labelled with original manufacturer usage instructions and clearly show the 'best before' date. Monitor 'best before' dates on foods and drinks, and remove anything that becomes out of date during the period

Fire and security

- Periodically check your fire detection system, intruder alarm and CCTV are working
- Many employees will have either been furloughed or, in some cases, made redundant so review your list of key holders and change the alarm code and security locks if necessary

Maintaining records

- In addition to preserving a record of when your premises closed and the date of closure, maintaining your records for when the local authority officer calls is advisable during this period, for example:
 - Check and record freezer temperatures if these contain foods
 - Pest checks – make a note of checks carried out
 - Water maintenance – note when you flush the system through

Review food and health & safety procedures

- During our 'normal' working lives, there is little available time to stop, think and do, so where possible use this time to:
- Undertake those jobs that you have been putting off
- Update food safety, H&S policies and risk assessments
- Review your allergy information and processes
- Complete online training courses