



Forestry and
Land Scotland
Coilltearachd agus
Fearann Alba

Reopening of Visitor Facilities - Visitor Centres, Cafes & Shops



Introduction

This document is to provide guidance on the re-opening and use of our Visitor Centre's, Cafés and shops during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance aims to protect our workforce, tenants, visitors and general public and minimise the spread of COVID-19.

Our visitor centres are all different: the buildings and site layout, the visitor offer, tenants, locations and audiences. This guidance then establishes a framework for local risk assessments and safe systems of working that will be required for each site.

Prior to the opening of any commercial premises, tenants must seek authorisation from Local FLS Visitor Services.

Context - buildings procedures and advice

The *Covid-19 Building Closure Protocol* outlined weekly inspections of the buildings to ensure they were kept secure, wind and watertight. Further to this, the Agency ensures that all statutory inspections and maintenance are undertaken at the prescribed intervals. However, due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns to movement, some shorter-interval compliance checks performed by service providers will have been missed, such as measures to counter Legionella water safety. It is therefore important that this guidance is followed to ensure our buildings are safe, compliant and opened in a controlled manner.

Where these checks are the responsibility of the tenant, they will be expected to provide evidence to FLS Local VS Regional manager that all statutory inspections and maintenance are up to date prior to reopening.

This document has been prepared as an addendum to the 'Buildings Re-Opening Guidance' document to provide further information and guidance for our commercial premises and visitor facilities. The Buildings Re-Opening



Guidance should be followed and Risk Assessments and Checklists should still be completed as part of the opening process.

[FLS Guidance Re-Opening of Buildings](#)

[Buildings Pre -Opening Checklist](#)

[COVID - 19 Buildings Checklist and Risk Assessment](#)

Use Checklist in appendix 1 of the building checklist and risk assessment guidance

Should you have any building specific queries, please direct them to the National Buildings Team, specifically your regional Building Surveyor or the National Building Compliance Officer. We have asset registers and schematic drawings to assist, as well as access to specialist service providers.

[Buildings Team Contacts](#)

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1. Assessing and Managing risk

Objective: To assess risk and reduce it to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Each visitor centre will need a Bespoke Risk Assessment and safe system of work controlling its operation.

Our Visitor Centre buildings are operated by our tenants. All parties need to be clear about their responsibilities and those of others.

FLS should conduct an over-arching risk assessment (RA) on management of the visitor centres in writing in order to ensure the health and safety of FLS staff, non-employees and other users.

Tenants will be required to carry out their own risk assessments / safety method statement (operating plan) for each site, to not only protect their workforce and on site or visiting FLS staff but also members of the public. The Method Statement (operating plan) will be used to describe how to control identified health and safety risks. Following the preparation of a risk assessment, the method statement (operating plan) will serve as a 'live' document that will continually be reviewed. This will help account for any sudden occurrences that may need adoption of revised work practices. The risk assessment should be bespoke to the FLS site and not a generic company Risk Assessment.

Examples of what the Risk Assessment should address.

- Staff welfare and physical distancing
- Ensuring physical distancing can be achieved for general public
- Cleaning regimes and protocols
- Preparation and serving of food
- Regular review of working procedures

If comment on the Risk Assessments is required it should be done by Safety Health and Wellbeing staff.



Examples of what the operating plan should include:

- Detail of staff Covid training.
- a plan of proposed visitor/staff flow
- How to manage the test and protect requirements (if applicable)
Guidance [here](#)
- Manage indoor capacity if proposing indoor visitor access.

Food Standards Scotland has produced guidance for food businesses - [Food Standard Scotland Guidance](#). on how to provide a safe working environment. Food Standards Scotland separate [Guidance for the businesses take-away sector](#) for the food business take-away sector should be referred to.

Further reading Information

[Scottish Government Covid-19 regulations](#)

2. Pre-Opening Checklist

Objective: To ensure that any building that has been closed or partially operated during lockdown is safe, compliant, clean and ready to restart

The [Buildings Pre -Opening Checklist](#) will be completed as a joint task between FLS and the building tenant. This must be signed by the Regional Manager and tenant and returned to Forestry and Land Scotland before the building is reopened.

Evidence that catering businesses have been in touch with their Local Authority Environmental Health Officer should be supplied.



The FLS Design and Planning team will design all signage for use within our visitor centres. Submission of building specific Covid signage and screens planned with any available images will be shared with, and their erection discussed with tenants at an early stage prior to any re-opening.

If it's required to drill any holes to hang screens or make any other adjustments, tenants must liaise with the local building managers in advance of the work. [Buildings Team Contacts](#)

If it's proposed to include any additional tables and chairs or structures such as marquees, images and proposed location of these to be submitted to the visitor services manager.

Further information available

[Visit Scotland Get Tourism Ready](#) has checklists for business to use

[Scottish Government Tourism and Hospitality Sector Guide](#)

If a building has outstanding compliance items these must be immediately communicated via your local Buildings Team our national Building Compliance Officer for advice and rectification [Contact Info here](#)

3 Physical Distancing

Objective: Take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing occurs, including staff and general public, while arriving, departing and utilising the building.

Arriving at and leaving facility

Objective: Take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing, on arrival and leaving and to ensure hand sanitising facilities are available on arriving and leaving



We can achieve this by:

Taking all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing for staff and visitors using buildings - this will be determined by the building specific risk assessment and the number of people who can safely access a facility while maintaining physical distancing.

- Reviewing and changing layouts of shops, cafes, and facilities to ensure physical distancing. Face covering will be worn in all shops or retail areas and by visitors queuing for non-seated catering near a retail area., tenants will manage this. Face coverings should not be used for children under the age of five years Or people with certain medical conditions [Face Coverings Scottish Government advice and guidance](#)
- Putting in place procedures to control overcrowding
- Provision of clear signage at the entry to carparks, buildings and along approach footpaths this will be managed between the tenant and FLS
- Considering if access into the facility is actually required or can service be provided externally – such as takeaways from cafes, bike repairs etc.
- Putting in place pick-up and drop-off collection points where possible.
- Providing facilities such as bike- racks to help people cycle to the facility, with a means of cleaning the rack after use provided.
- Encouraging reverse parking vehicles at all times to ensure people do not come in to close contact with one another when exiting cars.
- Where building layout allows introducing one-way flows at entry and exit points.
- Removing superseded temporary closure signage and ensure COVID-19 signage is as clear as possible



- Clear floor demarcation at entry points both inside and externally on paths, to maintain physical distancing.

Moving around the buildings

Objective: Take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing while people utilise the facility

We can achieve this by:

- Introducing one-way routes through buildings where possible, using clear floor markings and signage, and additional entry and exit points. Where one way systems are not possible, pinch points, narrow corridors and dead ends shall be identified and clearly signed. This should be considered on a case by case basis.
- Closing off non-essential areas, with appropriate signage in place
- Review layouts so employees work further apart from each other where possible. Follow section 4 of the buildings guidance if Physical distancing not possible. [information here](#)
- Ensure suitable signage or visual aids are in place advising of protocols, how to use the facility and travel through it safely.
- Over the counter food outlet points/orders should be adopted instead of self service areas to minimise contamination.
- Additional external seating should be provided where possible to encourage eating outside – additional litter facilities should also be provided. Internal seating must be laid out to ensure physical distancing can be achieved.
- Procedure for seating and eating areas to be suitably cleaned down after



every use.

- Any payment areas are to provide suitable protection between the staff and the general public ideally with the use of plexi-screens.
- Payments should be made by contactless if possible and cash should only be accepted as a last resort. Where cash is accepted, hygiene measures should be detailed in the risk assessment.
- Increase ventilation where possible and where it is safe to do so. i.e. do not keep fire safety doors open.
- You should take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are informed about new procedures, and are able to access facilities, i.e. handwashing facilities at wheelchair height, verbal direction for those unable to see floor markings or signage etc.
- Limiting the number of people in the facility at any one time based on risk assessment.
- Areas of the building accessible to the public should utilise floor markings to ensure physical distancing and direction of travel through the building for the duration of a visit. Face coverings are only required in shops in Scotland and not in Visitor Centres so we should only recommend but not impose to visitors - each tenant to do their own RA for their own staff/customers and FLS staff to wear if FLS decides.
- Considering the use of hold open devices on doors, especially to common areas. **THESE SHALL NOT BE USED ON FIRE DOORS.**
- Ensure suitable protocols are in place for emergencies and adequate signage is in place to advise on these. For example, an accident or fire, people do not have to physical distance if it would be unsafe.
- Ensure suitable protocols are in place if someone displays signs of COVID



19 while in the premises. Signage advising if feeling unwell do not enter
Develop a Medical Response Plan in relation to COVID-19 review with
SHW advisor prior to opening



4. Hygiene – Handwashing, Sanitation Facilities and Toilets

Objective: To help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day

[Scottish Government public-and-customer-toilets-guidance](#)

FLS has prepared guidance on assessing and planning for public toilets:

[FLS Generic RA for public toilet](#)

[FLS Public Toilet opening checklist](#)

We can achieve this by:

- Ensure hands free sanitation stations are provided throughout but at least at all access and egress points, food outlet points, kitchen areas, washrooms and internal and external toilet facilities.
- Treating door handles and hand rails, which are high touch areas, as a possible source of cross contamination. Where general public are accessing buildings regular cleaning of handles during the day shall be undertaken, and immediate washing or application of hand sanitiser shall be used after cleaning.
- Careful consideration will be required on toilet provision if buildings are opened to the general public and the number of toilets provided if they cannot all be utilised. Complete removal of toilet provision could result in the building being non-compliant.
- Displaying signage and posters throughout the building to encourage and raise awareness. Signage shall include as a minimum good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and avoid touching your face, to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available and to maintain physical distancing.



- Providing clear guidance on the usage of the toilet facilities, any restrictions, cleaning regimes etc.
- Considering the use of all available toilet facilities to maintain physical distancing. This may include single person use of the facilities at any one time, and may require locks fitting to the facilities doors.
- Provision of hand drying facilities which can include electric dryers and signage demonstrating hand washing technique.
- Providing more waste facilities and if required more frequent rubbish collection.



5. Appendix – Case study – The Lodge

[Follow this link to read a case study on Saltire.](#)