

# Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the hospitality sector:

## How to effectively operate and use ventilation systems

Businesses opening to sell food and drink need to manage the risks of COVID-19 to their workers and customers. A general recommendation is to stay away from crowded and poorly ventilated spaces, so in addition to social distancing measures, steps should be taken to effectively operate ventilation systems to be COVID-secure.

### COVID-19 Transmission Routes:



**Large droplets or small airborne particles**  
(emitted when sneezing, coughing or talking)



**Surface contact**  
(such as hand-to-hand or hand-to-surface)

### Recommendations for good ventilation:

1

Check that all installed mechanical ventilation is fully working, ducting is free of obstructions, and that key staff know how to access and adjust the controls



2

Set ventilation to come on at normal operating speed at least 2 hours before anyone enters the building and stay on until 2 hours after the building closes. Keep systems running at a lower speed when the space is not operating. For manual ventilation, consider keeping it running 24/7



3

Keep toilet extract ventilation in operation 24/7 and put up signs asking users to close the lid when flushing. Where extract ventilation is operating, avoid opening windows in toilets to prevent the spread of contaminated air



4

For centralised systems, switch off recirculation in air handling units or switch to 100% outdoor air



5

Maintain normal maintenance and cleaning plans. Filter and duct maintenance works should be performed with standard protective measures including respiratory protection



6

Regular airing via windows can further boost ventilation (except in toilets as per recommendation 3) and is essential where there is no mechanical ventilation

