Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic guidance note: queueing outside business premises

June 2020
Introduction

With the progressive lifting of lockdown restrictions more businesses are starting to reopen on our high streets. However, remaining social distancing requirements means that special arrangements will need to remain in place to ensure a further spike in infections is avoided. This is likely to include the need to facilitate appropriate queueing outside premises. Where businesses have their own forecourts, they are free to make appropriate arrangements according to their own requirements. Where they do not have their own forecourts, measures may need to be put in place on the highway.

The Council is keen to do everything that it can to enable businesses to put measures in place to protect their customers and the general public. In this context it is content for businesses to mark out spacing on the footway and put up relevant signage provided certain guidelines are followed.

Guidelines

1. Before undertaking any measures, it is recommended that businesses contact their local Business Improvement District (BID) or equivalent organisations within their town centres to ensure actions are coordinated and complementary and that best practice is shared. If there is no such organisation the Council’s Town Centres Team can be reached at: towncentres@bexley.gov.uk.

2. Businesses should also consider available guidance and advice published by the government, the Health and Safety Executive or other relevant groups or bodies. The Council has signposted some of this guidance at https://www.bexleyforbusiness.co.uk/business-recovery.

3. When designing a scheme, consider both the needs of your business and the impact on the wider area. Think not only about your customers, but those that walk past it to get elsewhere. Also look at what neighbours have done and take account of that wherever possible. You may, additionally want to discuss your ideas with them.

4. Also consider the needs of those guests with disabilities when laying out and running your queueing system. This will include those who are wheelchair dependent or visually impaired and other guests who may not understand the concept of queuing or are unable to queue for any length of time.

5. Make sure that any design relates well to how your premises is currently laid out, for example if you have two entrances consider a one way in, one way out arrangement,

6. Any measures should be temporary and easily removed or modified to reflect a phased approach to the lifting of lockdown restrictions or their possible re-imposition.

7. Measures should be the minimum necessary to create a clear and simple guide for customers.

8. Where there is potential confusion or congestion consider stewarding, especially if you need to manage the number of patrons in your premises at any one time. ‘Do not join the queue’ signs may be appropriate if you are expecting to get very busy.

9. Measures should not create slip or trip hazards – tape and signage should be firmly stuck down on the footpath and, where likely to be walked on, should have a rough rather than smooth surface. The Council will not accept any liability for injuries or damage resulting directly from any measures you undertake on the highway.
10. ‘A’ boards or temporary barriers for the mounting of signs and/or enclosure of areas should be avoided – use existing structures and street furniture wherever possible. Where barriers are used, they should be weighted to prevent being blown over and moved inside after closing.

11. Measures must not cause damage to any highway asset including paving surfaces and street furniture. All due care should be taken when mounting and removing interventions.

12. Queueing areas should currently maintain a least a two metre distance around them where practically possible (see note 7) to allow for the flow of pedestrians. When measuring this, account should be taken of access, loading and parking arrangements, existing street furniture including bus shelter and temporary obstructions such as permitted market stalls.

13. You should seek to ensure that queuing areas run parallel to your shop front in a single line and do not encroach on the frontages of adjacent premises.

14. You should inspect your measures regularly – at least once a day – to ensure they remain in place and do not cause a hazard to the general public.

15. The Council will continue to cleanse the highway. Although all due care will be taken, the Council will not be liable for any damage to temporary measures resulting from the carrying out of its normal activities.

If you have any questions or queries, please email the Council at: Transport&Development@bexley.gov.uk