

The Vaping Industry Guide to Coronavirus

This guide is designed to provide everything there is to know about coronavirus for the vaping industry in order to safeguard the welfare of staff (and their families) and customers.

Whilst it follows the Government's announcement this week to close certain categories of shops, it still includes guidance on in-store requirements in the event of retail outlets reopening. Thank you to our members who have shared their best practice in dealing with coronavirus which has enabled the UKVIA to put this definitive guide together for the benefit of the industry as a whole. Whilst we provide advice, we urge all those in the vaping sector to closely follow government guidance at all times.

Ensure utmost cleanliness in your vape shops when you reopen

At the start of every day:

- Mop all hard floor surfaces using clean water and floor cleaner/disinfectant
- Hoover all surfaces
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces, including but not limited to;
 - Till areas
 - Flavour tables/stations
 - Displays
 - Counters
 - Door handles
 - Door 'push' surfaces
- Keep as many windows and doors open as possible throughout the day to keep fresh air circulating

At the end of every day:

- Mop all hard floor surfaces using clean water and floor cleaner/disinfectant (do not mop with dirty water or water from a previous day)
- Hoover all surfaces
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces, including but not limited to;
 - Till areas
 - Flavour tables/stations
 - Displays
 - Counters
 - Keyboards and mouse
 - Desk surfaces
 - Light switches
 - Window handles
- Clean and disinfect all toilets, sink and taps
- Clean and disinfect kitchen surfaces and used objects, such as but not limited to;
 - Kettle
 - Microwave
 - Wash all cutlery, cups, plates and bowls used
- Empty all bins and keep all waste securely bagged in black bags/allocated waste bags together ready for collection on dedicated days or place in outdoor bins if applicable
- Clean and disinfect all testers

Every 2 hours throughout the day:

- Clean and disinfect
 - All counters
 - Till areas
 - Flavour tables/stations
 - High touch areas such as door handles
- Clean tablets and iPads using a microfiber cloth to remove excess oils (do not use solutions as this may damage the screens/devices), offer hand sanitiser to customers before/after use

After every customer/customer group:

(customer group refers to when you have more than one customer in store)

- Clean and disinfect
 - Door handles
 - Door 'push' surfaces
 - Tester devices
 - Till surfaces
 - Flavour tables/stations
 - Any areas where a customer may have coughed or sneezed and there could be droplets

Protecting staff and customer welfare against the spread of Coronavirus

- All stores/manufacturing operations and employees must adhere to strict cleaning guidance provided.
- Keep as many doors and windows open throughout the day as possible to keep fresh air circulating.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze. See Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.
- Put used tissues in the bin straight away.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available. See hand washing guidance.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Wear gloves when cleaning high contaminated areas, emptying waste bins or using cleaning chemicals.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Face masks for the general public are not recommended to protect from infection, as there is no evidence of benefit from their use outside healthcare environments.

Social Distancing:

- All stores should have a Tape line 60cm from the front and side of their till point, ensuring enough social distance is put between customers and staff when standing behind the counter point.

- All stores should consider a poster/print to advise customers that you are trying to encourage social distancing and are adopting the following measures in all stores.
- Customers to remain behind the line unless paying.
- Customers to be advised that under the circumstances, preferred payment method is card or contactless to minimise risk handling money [Cash not banned but card is preferred].
- Customers to be encouraged to call ahead of coming in store so employees can bag their order, ready to collect and pay, minimizing time spent in store and aiding social distancing.

Testing e-liquids

- All tested tanks are to be kept in staff areas, leaving bottles and boxes displayed as normal on tables for customer view. As and when a customer would like to test a flavour, you can bring the select flavours out and use relevant hygiene tips, then clean down after use and return to staff areas. This way retail stores can minimise the need to repeatedly clean all tanks after a customer uses the station and clean specific used testers.
- The testing of e-liquids and tester devices is not prohibited. However, it is recommended to share the following advice with customers:

"In light of the Coronavirus, we are advising customers not to test e-liquids, however you are welcome to if you'd like to and we do have disposable hygiene tips"

Background to COVID-19

How it is spread

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are most likely to be the main means of transmission.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face). There is currently little evidence that people who are without symptoms are infectious to others.

Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you think you are affected:

- If you develop either or both of the below symptoms, you must isolate for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you live with others and it is yourself showing symptoms, then everyone else in the household must isolate for 14 days. If they then develop symptoms within the isolation period, their isolation changes to 7 days from their 1st day of symptoms.
- Everyone else in the household can continue the 14 days as originally started, this isolation period does not need to restart.
- If you have no symptoms, but someone else in your household does, they will need to self-isolate for 7 days and you and everyone else living there will need to self-isolate for 14 days (or 7 days if you develop symptoms, from the 1st day of symptoms).

Symptoms include:

- A high temperature – you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (37.8 Celsius)
- A new, continuous cough – this means you've started coughing repeatedly

Staff guidance for those who think they have symptoms

- Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.
- Testing for coronavirus is not needed if you're staying at home.
- Suggest you create a company policy which covers:
 - what staff need to do in terms of communicating with your company when absent or start to develop symptoms at home.
 - what staff should do if they develop symptoms at work.
 - once employees have started isolation and how this impacts on return to work.
 - reporting of household members of employees developing the symptoms.

More advice and information from NHS/PHE/Government can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Generally, these infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Staff guidance re: ending self-isolation

- If staff have been symptomatic, then they can end their isolation after 7 days. The 7-day period starts from the day when they first became ill.
- If living with others, then all household members who remain well may end their isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for Coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.
- After 7 days, if the first person to become ill feels better and no longer has a high temperature, they can return to their normal routine and work. If any other members of the household become ill during the 14-day household isolation period, they should follow the same advice - that is, after 7 days of their symptoms starting, if they feel better and no longer have a high temperature, they can also return to their normal routine.
- Should a household member develop Coronavirus symptoms late in the 14-day isolation period (for example, on day 13 or 14) **the isolation period does not need to be extended for the household or the first person who became ill, but the person with the new symptoms has to stay at home for 7 days.**
- The 14-day household-isolation period will have greatly reduced the overall amount of infection the rest of the household could pass on, and it is not necessary to re-start 14 days of isolation for the whole household. This will have provided a high level of community protection.
- Further isolation of members of this household will provide very little additional community protection.

Shielding for high risk employees

If your member of staff is contacted by the NHS by Sunday 29th March to advise them that they are within the category of people who should self-isolate and shield for 12 weeks, they will be entitled to SSP for this period of isolation.

If your staff are at high risk, they will be contacted by the NHS by Sunday 29 March 2020. They should not contact their GP or healthcare team at this stage – they should wait to be contacted.

If staff think they fall into one of the categories of extremely vulnerable people listed above **but have not received a letter by Sunday 29 March 2020 or been contacted by their GP**, they should discuss their concerns with their GP or hospital clinician.

Ensure you put in place procedures for staff to communicate their self-isolation and to provide evidence from the NHS to participate in the 12-week isolation/shielding, which is required by HMRC in order to process it through SSP.

Staff also need to be informed that if they are not advised by the NHS to self-isolate/shield, but choose to isolate without symptoms, they will not be paid SSP for this time off work, nor will they be eligible for the government retention scheme (of 80% of your wages) unless they were otherwise being laid off or made redundant. Support should be given to all employees who have concerns relating to the rules around self-isolation.

If an employee lives/cares for someone who is in this High Risk category and who is advised to carry out 12 week isolation and shielding, the staff member will not be required or advised to self-isolate and will be advised to carry out Social Distancing - advice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

The following information has been extracted from the Gov.uk website guidance. You can find more detail and information here if you wish to -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Advice for employees at high risk

If staff members are at high risk of getting seriously ill from coronavirus, there are extra things they should do to avoid catching it.

These include:

- not leaving their home – they should not go out to do shopping, visit friends or family, or attend any gatherings
- avoiding close contact with other people in their home as much as possible

Who is at high risk / Who is classed as extremely vulnerable?

According to the new guidance, people falling into this extremely vulnerable group include:

- Solid organ transplant recipients
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppressive drugs
- People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
- People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
- People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
- Women who are pregnant with significant heart disease, congenital or acquired.

There may be conditions outside of the above and if you do not get contacted by the 29th but think you should have been, please contact your GP by phone to discuss this.

Using the NHS 111 online coronavirus service

Please inform colleagues only to use this number if:

- They feel they cannot cope with their symptoms at home
- Their condition gets worse
- Their symptoms do not get better after 7 days

Additional resources

For more general advice on coronavirus and how to stay safe try these online sources:

- The UK Government [website](#) is being updated by the hour
- The NHS [website](#) regularly issues updates and can be found here.
- Welsh Government updates can be found [here](#).
- The Scottish Government updates can be found [here](#).
- The Northern Irish Government updates can be found [here](#).