

# MONASH UNIVERSITY COVIDSAFE CATERING GUIDELINES

## SCOPE

This document provides recommended controls and measures to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus through workplace catering. The guidelines are recommendations only and convey preferred, not prescriptive or mandatory, practices. This information has been collated by OH&S and references the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) directives and restrictions. Stay up to date by checking the [Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\) Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) daily.

## 1. What is COVIDSafe Catering?

- 1.1 COVIDSafe workplace catering means single serve options with no sharing of food, drinks, crockery or cutlery between people. The advice in this document covers COVIDsafe catering from casual single serve lunch boxes to more formal sit-down plated dinners. In general, Monash recommends:
  - 1.1.1 No shared platters
  - 1.1.2 No shared serving utensils (tongs, salad servers, etc.)
  - 1.1.3 No buffets/salad bars/self-serve options
- 1.2 COVIDsafe catering refers to both casual catering (office lunches, bbqs, meetings where the caterer provides food and/or drinks but no service staff, etc.) and full service catering (where the caterer provides food and/or drinks and service staff to serve the food). If you are holding an event where the caterer provides food, drinks and service staff, request contactless serving from your caterer. You can also ask to see your caterer's COVIDSafe plan.
- 1.3 If single-serve options are not available and food can only be served on large plates or platters, ensure there is a dedicated server who uses gloved hands or dedicated serving utensils to serve the food to individuals, to avoid cross-contamination.
- 1.4 Always ensure regular food safety advice is also followed – keep foods at a safe temperature and always wash hands and/or sanitise before eating and drinking.
- 1.5 Ensure your caterer understands your catering requirements and is following the Monash COVIDSafe Catering Guidelines.

## 2. What about sustainability?

- 2.1 COVIDSafe catering doesn't need to generate more plastic and food waste.
  - 2.1.1 Reusable cutlery, crockery and beverage containers can be used if appropriate hygiene, cleaning and disinfection processes are in place. Disposable serving ware is not essential.
  - 2.1.2 Have clearly signed designated areas (tables or trays) to leave used items.
  - 2.1.3 If single-use containers are provided, cardboard or compostable material is best.
  - 2.1.4 If ordering lunchbox-style catering, uneaten food should not be left in communal areas for others to help themselves to. Preferably, distribute unopened lunch boxes directly to individuals in an equitable manner.

## 3. How do we provide drinks (tea, coffee, other beverages) in a COVIDSafe way?

- 3.1 Self-service and communal drink stations are not recommended.

- 3.2 If providing a tea/coffee/water station, place decals on the floor to provide guidance on physical distancing (1.5m apart), particularly in places people are likely to queue. Provide station capacity signage for the area (e.g. allow only 1-2 patrons at the station at one time). Place the drinks station on a separate table and away from high traffic areas to avoid congestion.
- 3.3 If possible, have a dedicated server use the 'contactless pour' technique. The 'contactless pour' technique means that the only person to touch the reusable cup is the person who will drink from it.
- 3.4 The contactless pour technique involves:
  - 3.4.1 the consumer placing their clean reusable cup onto the counter or tray without the lid
  - 3.4.2 the beverage being made in an in-house vessel (jug, urn) and poured into the consumer's cup without touching it
  - 3.4.3 the consumer placing the lid on their reusable cup
- 3.5 If the event is sit-down, free drinking water should be provided via table service rather than at self-serve stations or via communal jugs.
- 3.6 Single serve drinks set out on tables to ensure people can choose one, without touching others, is suitable. Communal ice buckets full of drinks is not recommended due to the risk of multiple people touching multiple drinks.
- 3.7 Provide hand sanitiser at the start point of the drinks area and in easily accessible areas for people to use before and after eating/drinking.
  - 3.7.1 It is important to have hand sanitiser available in accessible areas for use before and after putting on and removing masks and before and after eating and drinking.
- 3.8 If providing or permitting BYO alcohol at the event, follow the controls outlined in the OH&S centrally managed risk assessment template #10653 titled "Minimum requirements for the provision of alcohol at Monash University events".
- 3.9 Depending on the event type, consider implementing the following COVIDSafe measures, where available:
  - 3.9.1 Single-serve bottles and cans, if not providing wait or bar staff
  - 3.9.2 Contactless pour technique with multiple-serve alcoholic beverages, such as wine
  - 3.9.3 Wait or bar staff to provide table service
- 3.10 Take into consideration the effects of alcohol and how it affects compliance with other COVIDSafe measures, such as physical distancing.

## 4. What about condiments (salt, pepper and sauces)?

- 4.1 Shared condiments should not be provided. If shared condiments are placed on tables, they must be cleaned and disinfected after each group of patrons. This includes items like sugar, salt, pepper, sauces, spices, etc. For catered events, single serve condiments are preferred.

## 5. What about on-campus BBQ events?

- 5.1 Please refer to the DHHS website for current information about [social gatherings](#). Regarding events that include BBQ-style catering, please refer to the guidelines above regarding COVIDSafe catering, beverages and condiments. Again, a dedicated server is recommended for a BBQ event. Avoid communal sauce bottles.

## 6. How should I prepare for student events?

- 6.1 As for all activities, events for students and student-run events should be risk assessed.

## 7. Where can I find more information about events and event planning?

- 7.1 OH&S has developed [centrally managed risk assessment templates](#) which provide health and safety measures and controls for minimising risk when providing food and alcohol at Monash events.
  - 7.1.1 #10560 Minimum requirements for the provision of food during events (v1.0)
  - 7.1.2 #10653 Minimum requirements for the provision of alcohol at Monash University events

7.2 Businesses that provide catering, whether external to Monash or one of our retailers, should have their own COVIDSafe plan. When planning your event, request a copy of their COVIDSafe plan, review it and check that it complies with Monash's COVIDSafe plan, and include it in the risk assessment. Further resources can be found below:

7.2.1 OH&S Events and People Health and Safety Topic <https://www.monash.edu/ohs/info-docs/safety-topics/events-and-people>

7.2.2 OH&S Health and Safety Considerations for Event Planning <https://www.monash.edu/ohs/info-docs/safety-topics/events-and-people/health-and-safety-considerations-for-event-planning>

7.2.3 OHS Roles, Responsibilities and Committees Procedure [https://www.monash.edu/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/129614/OHS-Roles,-Responsibilities-and-Committees-Procedure.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/129614/OHS-Roles,-Responsibilities-and-Committees-Procedure.pdf)

## 8. In preparation for your catered event, check for updated guidance on the following websites:

8.1 [DHHS Hospitality Sector Guidance](#)

8.2 [Food Standards Australia](#)

## DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Changes made to document
1.0	16 February 2021	Monash University COVIDSafe Catering Guidelines V.1
2.0	4 March 2021	Included additional information around the various types of catering, drinks and alcohol provision , student events, and information about events and event planning.
3.0	8 April 2021	Included additional information around providing shared platters at events.