

COVID 19 STATEMENT



Some international chains like Starbucks and McDonalds have temporarily suspended service in customers' own reusable cups as a coronavirus containment measure.

Reliance on single-use cups is a wasteful use of resources and leads to environmental harm. Reusable cup lending systems like ours can provide a real alternative to disposables while minimising the risks from COVID-19 associated with personal reusable cups.

Orbit Cups understands that the risk these corporations seek to protect against is members of staff handling a personal cup that carries the Covid-19 virus on its surface, which is then spread either via staff hands or by direct transfer to other surfaces and equipment.

According to Health Protection Scotland, COVID 19 is spread by droplets, most likely from the coughs and sneezes of an infected person. This can happen either (1) directly from close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person; or (2) by touching a surface that has been contaminated with the virus and then touching own mouth, nose or eyes.

Health Protection Scotland gives guidance relating to how long the virus can survive on surfaces. This depends on various factors (surface type, temperature, humidity, disinfection, etc) but the virus can survive for days, although risk of infection is significantly decreased by 72 hours. Frequent hand cleansing and decontamination of frequently touched surfaces are the recommended courses of action to reduce risk of infection.

Health Protection Scotland advice for the routine operation of hospitality venues is that standard procedures can be used for cleaning crockery and cutlery. It is therefore our advice that Orbit members treat our reusable cups in the same way as sit-in cups.

Hospitality outlets already have measures in place to ensure that customer health is protected during visits. All our member cafes have been awarded a Pass by the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) which assesses, amongst other areas, understanding of and procedures relating to cleaning and hygiene.

Our response

Based on Health Protection Scotland guidance, Orbit Cups has developed the following procedure to minimise the risks associated with use of our bank of reusable cups. Potential risk arises when staff receive returned cups. Our cups can be handled in exactly the same way as crockery cups, with the added protection of a return point for reusable cups situated away from the counter (comparable to the use of sit-in cups at tables).

ORBIT CUPS WORKFLOW PROCEDURE for COVID-19 CONTAINMENT:

1. Each order served in an Orbit cup will be in a fresh, sanitised cup and fresh disposable lid. This includes orders from customers returning a used Orbit cup.
2. Customers should return used cups to a container situated away from the counter and clearly marked for this purpose. This can be inside or outside your premises, depending on your particular situation.
3. Café staff should clean all returned cups according to existing procedures for sit-in crockery employed in that premises. Hand hygiene and contact surface cleaning processes may be enhanced for the current time.

4. Deposits are preferred by card payment (added to customer's bill). Any incoming cash deposits can be collected in a dedicated jar, to be disinfected later.
5. Outgoing (returned) cash deposits can be from a dedicated jar of cleaned coins, passed using a pair of tongs. If you wish to avoid handling cash completely, ask customers to keep their cup(s) at home until they come back, when they can 'drop & swap' their cup.

This workflow has been passed by DCC's Food Safety team.

We support our members to minimise single-use waste in their operations and this workflow procedure allows the continued safe use of our reusables during this uncertain time. We appreciate that large, busy coffee shops may not have the resources to take such steps with customers' own reusable cups. Cup lending systems like ours offer a safe, low-waste solution.

JUNE 2020 UPDATE

Guidance on reusables from Food Standards Scotland

We have received this statement from FSS:

"Any businesses who wanted to participate in the OrbitCup scheme would need to consider the issuing/return of cups as part of their Food Safety Management System. FSS have issued [guidance for food businesses](#) regarding infection prevention and control measures against COVID-19. The document includes a number of prompting questions to help businesses consider the impact COVID-19 may have on their existing FSMS, particularly with relation to cleaning and disinfection measures.

I've spoken to the colleagues who developed the reusable items guidance that you provided the enquirer [[available here](#)] & confirmed that the advice is still current. I'm conscious that a number of businesses (including the large multinational chains) were not accepting reusable cups/containers prior to lockdown as an infection control measure, so I imagine this reluctance may continue for a period of time after premises reopen. However, **from an FSS perspective, provided that interested FBOs consider the potential risks & address them adequately we would have no additional concerns.**"

Dundee's own Food Safety team agrees with this guidance, as does a statement given by the UK Food Standards Agency to our colleagues at [Shrewsbury Cup](#), who have been running their deposit-return network for over a year now.

"If consumers do wish to use a reusable cup/container, it should be washed thoroughly in hot soapy water or in a dishwasher, if suitable." - Food Standards Agency

It's clear that there is no need to reject reusable cups as a safety measure. **As independents, our network members are free to support a less wasteful system than disposables**, which we are seeing litter the city once again, compostable and paper cups alike.