



ASVA/BALPPA COVID-19 Attraction Relaunch Advice

As visitor attractions plan to re-launch after the pandemic de-escalates, there will be a need to ensure that these activities are both safe for visitors and staff.

After operating for the 2020 season in similar and challenging circumstances, we can at least approach the 2021 season with this experience. This experience will be vital for our operators to call upon and hopefully allow for a successful season going forward. With the vaccine rollout having started in such a positive way across Scotland and the rest of the UK there may be some different visitor behaviours which we have to adapt to as the season develops and guidance changes.

There may be many challenges ahead dependent on what guidance is given from the Scottish Government on how we can start the process of returning to normal operation and the various stages that may entail. Although this will be an ever-changing environment, ASVA and BALPPA have put together some thoughts on re-opening, including the possibility of re-opening and operating on a reduced capacity for attractions.

Safety

Although the need to re-open for financial reasons is going to be essential for all operators, this still needs to be conducted in a controlled and safely managed process.

Here in the Scotland, we have an excellent safety record and operational standards. This period is going to mean for many operators that competency and historical knowledge are going to be lost temporarily or permanently from the business. It is strongly advised that operators apply the same policies and procedures that are currently in place. Policies may have to be changed in some circumstances, but the standards should remain. Training, assessment, support and supervision will be critical during the initial opening period in all areas of your operation.

Covid – 19 Risk Assessment

When considering re-opening, in line with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, all attraction operators will be required to prepare a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the hazards associated with Covid-19, considering how their employees, visitors and others whom may be on site such as contractors, might be affected. A risk assessment is a tool to identify the risk level associated with Covid-19 and the control measures being put in place for both employees and visitors in order to protect their health and safety. For further information on risk assessment please visit the Public Health Scotland - Healthy Working Lives Website: [Example Risk Assessments COVID-19 and worker safety guidance \(healthyworkinglives.scot\)](https://www.healthyscotland.gov.scot/healthyworkinglives)

As with any other Risk Assessment it is important that the Covid related documents used last season are all reviewed before the start of the new season. This is to take into account any experience gained from operating in 2020 and any changes to guidance/ legislation.

Health and Welfare of Staff

The Health and welfare of staff is of paramount importance in order to keep employees safe and healthy and give them confidence in being able to return to work. The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places a general duty on Operators to protect the health and safety of its employees and others. Suitable arrangements are to be put in place (as derived from the risk assessment process), to enable employees and visitors to be kept safe and healthy.

Once these arrangements are put in place, communicating and engaging with employees about these arrangements and protection measures in place is key. It is important they understand what the measures are for and their part to play in implementing them. Employees should be told how to report something to line management if something is not as it should be, they have concerns or they are short of materials such as cleaning products or PPE.

Physical distancing is a key part of the Governments Covid-19 protection strategy; therefore, consideration needs to be given to how social distancing measures can be applied to employees during their work and rest periods.

Physical distancing may mean the re-thinking of how tasks are carried out. Where safety critical tasks cannot be altered and physical distancing during these tasks cannot be maintained, then suitable PPE needs to be worn such as for example, the fitting and checking of lap bars/ restraint systems and the like. Your risk assessment should identify these tasks and assess what protective measures are suitable.

PPE

The provision of PPE to employees is often considered a last resort, in that all other types of measures should be considered before the use of PPE. That said, with Covid-19 being transmittable via human airborne particulates, PPE is a key protective measure needed to ensure the health and safety of employees and visitors.

There are many different types of PPE available. The main types of PPE for consideration might be gloves and masks. All PPE purchased should come from reputable suppliers and be CE marked.

The correct use and removal of such PPE is key in order to protect employees and stop the spread of germs as the PPE is worn and removed. All PPE should be discarded of by suitable waste removal means.

Visitor Communications

Visitor communications and visitor behaviours will play a large part in the relaunch of our attractions. Communication throughout the entire visitor journey will assist with the day-to-day operation and compliance with potential new attraction rules and guidance. Managing the visitor's expectations before booking will reduce complaints.

Our visitors will be more accustomed to our operating procedures and requirements having now lived through the pandemic and multiple lockdowns for a year. That said, some will be keen to see the end of these restrictions and it is important any communication is clear and details exactly what is expected of them both before and during their visit.

- Updated website giving guests pre-visit information on what the attraction has in place to control risks
- Information on elements of attractions closed due to Scottish Government guidance. e.g soft play closed until early June. Where possible clear reopening dates for these elements should be made clear.
- Information about visitors not attending your attraction if they are feeling ill
- What a visitor should do if they start to feel ill whilst on site
- Signage around the attraction about physical distancing and hygiene stations
- Visitor communications given via PA where appropriate
- Signage in toilets and washroom about how to clean your hands correctly
- Attraction maps indicating hygiene stations
- Information that some elements may close during the day for cleaning
- Policy around temperature checking for visitors on entry

- Try and promote your site as a contactless payment preferred venue
- The use of social media to demonstrate the work and control measures that have been put in place by the attractions

Staff Communications

It is vital to ensure Staff Communication is thought of at this time. Many staff may have been out of the business for some time and only seeing any attraction updates via social media. Update your staff on your plans and listen to any concerns or inputs. Staff will no doubt have a lot of questions when returning to work and may be nervous about large crowds. Ensure that your staff are fully prepared and have all the skills and knowledge they will need when facing our guests for the first time.

As we are reopening at the start of a new season consideration must be given especially to new employees. With the Covid measures in place there is a lot of information for them to take in as well as their normal roles. Operators must put aside suitable time and resource for this and as well as a thorough induction process.

Make use of videos and other means to carry out training or familiarisation for suitable roles from a distance where possible. Videos will guarantee a consistent message is relayed every time.

Physical Distancing

When attractions open for the 2021 season, this will be with a controlled capacity to enable some form of physical distancing whilst within our businesses. Attractions should use information and experience from the 2020 operating season to manage these capacities at a suitable level. Points for consideration/ action are as follows:

- Start with a manageable capacity to monitor if your new procedures are affective and then increase as appropriate
- Close your park entrances to make it pay to enter rather than free to enter or apply a one in one out policy
- Try and encourage visitors to print out tickets at home or use technology for visitors to gain entry to our attractions
- Leave additional spaces when parking cars which arrive at the same time
- Mark on the floor in queue lines showing physical distancing points or physically modify queue lines
- Assess restaurant capacities and control measures to comply with physical distancing (please note hospitality settings are subject to 1 metre distancing restrictions in Scotland, whereas in other areas of the attraction, 2 metres must be maintained)
- Assess what areas of your business will be unable to reopen in line with government guidance. Also consider attractions/ areas which may be unviable to open even after this date depending on the operational requirements around them.
- Avoid gathering visitors in areas where possible. Shows, meet and greets and similar must be carefully managed to ensure they don't create a negative impact on physical distancing. Use barriers, distance, and alternative locations where appropriate, whilst carefully controlling capacity in or around any show/ display areas.
- Assess if rides cannot be run at full capacity due to fixed distancing, one family in a gondola, spaces between seats if visitors are riding from different groups
- Think about your staff, split morning briefs into smaller groups, look at issuing briefs using notice boards or technology, if staff have been working from home then maybe look at some workers continuing to do so or where possible, management to continue to use technology such as skype/myteams to hold meetings
- Refrain from having staff socials for the foreseeable future
- Removal of some attraction furnishings or the spreading out of attraction furnishings such as benches and picnic tables
- Hygiene screens to be used in areas such as retail till areas, receptions and guest services

Hygiene

Although our attractions already have high standards of hygiene there will be a more focused attention on this from our visitors and staff. Additional cleaning throughout the day and extra procedures may need to be put in place during the initial re-opening period.

- A more detailed clean of areas that have mass contact each morning such as tills, ride containment systems, cash machines, lockers, scanners, counters or shared equipment such as radios and phones
- Closure/suspension of an attraction/kiosk/visitor services during the day for a clean down at reasonably practicable intervals
- Hygiene stations placed around the attraction on a risk assessment basis
- Dependent on guidance, masks and or gloves may be needed to be worn by all or some visitors/staff. Ensure all PPE is always adequately stocked for expected visitor numbers and staff
- Additional breaks for staff to ensure that they can wash hands
- Staff to be trained about COVID 19
- Smoking areas to be made larger or closed
- Open bin styles or kick lids
- Clothing in retail outlets should not be tried on and returned to the rail
- Pick and mix should be pre bagged
- Onsite first aid centres should have a quarantine area and clean down processes
- Unmanned staff rooms should have a cleaning program in place
- Hand clocking in machines not to be used and data input manually, or timesheets move to a supervisor submission
- Ensure that the relevant training and COSHH information is available if new chemicals are being used for disinfecting areas or equipment
- Ensure where chemicals are used in areas of staff and guest contact that these chemicals are touch safe
- If continuing to use character costumes, then ensure that they are cleaned before each use especially if being used by multiple staff
- If offering animal handling experiences, considerations to be made about not offering these types of experiences until further guidance is available
- Encourage contactless payment at all points
- People cash handling and cash offices will need suitable PPE and cleaning programs
- Consider staff workstations, office layouts, contractors or business visitors. Physical distancing is not just for the public. It is critical we keep our staff safe

Staff Competence

Staff in all departments of our businesses may have had extended time away from their job roles resulting in a loss of competence. Still apply your policies and procedures on relaunch as you would at any other time. If amendments are to be made to current policy and procedure, then approach this on a risk assessed basis. Each department will have different complexity of tasks and the staff members completing the most complex of tasks should at minimum be reassessed. A few thoughts on training and assessment.

- Use the most relevant person/people to complete training and assessment, it is not always the managers that know how the equipment and processes work the best, it's the people who have been completing the tasks for lengthy periods.

- Review your own training policies if needed and only change them if no other options are available
- If you do not have competent people at the initial stages of re-opening in some areas or on certain rides/attractions then do not operate them until training can be completed, the public will understand through an open and honest approach

Maintenance

Many attractions may have been sitting for lengthy periods with little or no operation. These attractions will need to have a detailed assessment before being put back into public use. Although most attractions would have recently completed their annual inspections, there is an array of issues that could occur during an extended closed period including corrosion, change in characteristics of lubricants, rodents, flat spots on wheels, excess dust to name just a few. Many planned preventative checks would have been missed during this period including daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly checks etc. It will be essential that your maintenance program is reviewed and missed checks either completed or risk assessed. Some simple tips could include:

- Reviewing O&M manuals supplied by manufacturers for any details regarding lengthy non-operational periods
- Contact your manufacturer for advice
- Contacting your third-party independent inspection body for advice
- Review/complete missed planned preventative maintenance checks
- Complete additional test runs of attractions before recommencing operation
- Deep clean of all attractions

Water Quality/Legionella control

It is essential that when buildings reopen following the lifting of COVID 19 restrictions, that any water system is not simply put straight back into use. During the period of shutdown, it would be sensible to formulate a recommissioning plan for each water system to allow safe start-up and assurance to users that it is safe. Where buildings have been empty for some time and during warm weather, it is likely that some increase in bacteria levels and biofilm will occur.

- Consider individual water systems
- Complete testing over a period of time before putting back into use
- Source third party advice and testing if the skill set is not within the business
- Keep records of your testing and results
- Normal water testing should continue for water attractions such as log flumes, rapid rides, water cannons, water spray effects etc as in accordance with the management of bathing water quality and repealing directive 76/160/EEC
- Flush through all water filters/softeners and coffee machines that may have been idle for extended periods