

HUNTER VALLEY

WINE AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION



COVID-19 Best Practice Guidelines

Hunter Valley Cellar Doors

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Wine Country & HVWTA

The Hunter Valley is Australia's most visited wine region and the second biggest destination in NSW after Sydney. With 1.4 million visitors per year contributing over \$550m annually to the local economy.

As Australia's old continuous wine region at 192 years old, it boasts 130 wine producers, over 2,300 hectares of vineyards, 27 restaurants and bars, 57 businesses providing transportation, tourism experiences and attractions, 128 accommodation businesses and numerous convention facilities.

The Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism (HVWTA) is the peak body representing Wine Country. We are a not-for-profit, member-based organisation. HVWTA leads destination marketing and increasing visitation to Wine Country, and is an advocate for both the wine and tourism industries. The Association is overseen by an elected industry experienced and skills-based board.

Introduction

The mass COVID-19 shutdown has forced wineries to rethink their entire business model and way of operating.

This re-engineering of Cellar Door business – with a clear view to reduce as many touchpoints and risks of transmission of coronavirus will undoubtedly bring about a 'new normal' for wine tasting activities.

The following set of best practice guidelines has been developed by the Hunter Valley Wine & Tourism Association (in conjunction with Australian Grape and Wine AGW and NSW Wine Industry Association WIA, as well as generous support of the Restaurant and Catering Association RCA) to allow governments to set out a clear set of obligation and requirements that wine businesses, from the small cellar door to the largest winery, can follow to ensure they remain best practice once health advice states that limited wine tasting activities is permissible.

HVWTA believes adherence to these guidelines should be considered mandatory to re-open, coupled with a short accreditation process ensure customers can feel safe tasting wine again, once it is declared safe to do so.



COVID-19 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Tracking for each person before allowing entry, either:

- Encouraging pre-bookings or sign ins to taste (where practicable) with name, address/email address and contact number.
- When no booking was made, walk-in patrons are encouraged to then sign in.
- Encourage patrons to download federal government's Tracking App.

Refusing Entry to Patrons:

- Refusal to agree to Tracking requirements.
- Everyone has an obligation to stay at home while displaying any symptoms such as fever or coughing. Businesses have the right to refuse entry and insist that anyone with these symptoms leaves the premises.
- Placing signs at entry points to request customers not to enter the shop if they are unwell or have COVID19 symptoms.

2. CUSTOMER INTERACTION:

Queuing and Interaction between Patrons:

- Create floor markings that provide minimum guide distances between customers queuing for entry and using physical barriers where possible.
- Set up different areas for ordering and collection of wine purchases where possible.
- Use separate doors for entry and exit, if practicable, to avoid contact between people.

3. WINE TASTING

Capacity:

- Best practice of accepting patrons by bookings online/prior for cellar door tastings.
- Limit one person for every 4sqm of internal floor space per room including staff.
- Signage at each door clearly stating maximum number of people allowed inside each room at any one time.



Distance:

- Staff should maintain 1.5 metres from other staff and customers at all possible times
- Tables, chairs, stools and booth seating must be sanitized after every use.
- A group travelling together limited to 6 persons will not need to be 1.5 metres apart from each other.
- Social distance between customers is a minimum 1.5m between patrons standing at a bar or seated at different tables whether inside or outside.

Tasting glasses/utensils:

- Non-disposable glassware/utensils permitted when cleared after each tasting and washed using a commercial grade dishwasher or glasswasher only, OR;
- Disposable glassware/utensils when available.

Hygiene:

- Hand sanitisers mandatory at all entry points and freely available throughout the business based upon capacity for customer use.

Toilets -

- Limit one person for every 4sqm of floor space.
- Signage at doors clearly stating maximum number of people allowed inside communal toilets at any one time.

Water:

- Drinking water can only be provided as takeaway water bottles.
- No shared water jugs.

Food / Wine matching:

- Limit all shareable items from menus.
- No buffets or shared 'serve yourself' sections such as cheese/olives etc.
- No open food displays or food on display meant for consumption.
- No condiments left on tables (including salt & pepper), all serves of condiments should be disposable and not stored or disseminated from a common container.

Souvenirs / local produce:

- Unless being purchased, customers should refrain from touching souvenirs items or local produce for sale (eg Olives / Jams / Cheese etc)
- Clear signage reflecting these requirements.



Ancillary:

- No communal water stations.
- Single use disposable spittoons (such as 'milkshake containers' to be used). No permanent spittoons.
- No BYO alcohol bottles or containers.
- Tasting sheets/information either laminated to facilitate easy cleaning or completely disposable after each use or chalk board as appropriate.

4. COMPLETING SERVICE AND PAYMENT

Payments:

- Electronic payment only etc Tap&Go, ApplePay etc.
- Remove pin requirement for Tap&Go purchases over \$100.
- Encourage businesses to reduce face to face interaction with staff.
- Try to make provision for customers leaving the Cellar Door to do so via a different entrance to those entering as per above.

5. STAFF PRACTICES

General Measures:

- Limit physical interactions between workers, workers and clients, and workers and other persons at the site (e.g. deliveries) and use other methods such as mobile phone or radio to communicate.
- Where it is practical and safe to do so, review tasks and processes that usually require close interaction and identify ways to modify these to increase physical distancing between workers.

Cleaning

- Usual cleaning schedules will need to be increased.
 - Frequently touched surfaces (such as handrails, scanners, plant controls, machinery and doors) should be cleaned regularly using appropriate detergent solutions. Once cleaned, they should ideally be disinfected regularly using appropriate disinfectant solutions.
 - Personal items used in the workplace such glasses and phones should be cleansed and ideally disinfected frequently (e.g. by using isopropyl alcohol wipes).
 - Workers must wash their hands between each wine tasting experience/session before serving another customer



- Workplace amenities including kitchens, lunch rooms, communal areas, change rooms, toilets, drink fountains and vending machines, should be cleaned industrially and the frequency of this cleaning should increase.
- Wine tasting areas and equipment and front of house areas where customers access should be cleaned in line with Safe Work Australia's guidance on Cleaning and COVID-19 and the frequency of cleaning should be increased.
- Frequently touched surfaces, including counters, tasting sheets, handrails, doors, till, phones, keyboards and EFTPOS facilities, should be cleaned regularly using appropriate detergent solutions where possible. Once cleaned, they should ideally be disinfected regularly using appropriate disinfectant solutions.
- Also consider reducing the number of touch points for workers. For example, leaving access doors open, where appropriate. Sanitiser must be available at entry and exit points so workers can use it when arriving and leaving.
- Gloves and alcohol-based hand sanitiser must be made available. The workplace should provide closed bins for workers where appropriate to hygienically dispose of waste and rubbish such as used tissues, immediately (or if away from amenities, as soon as possible) after use. Hand washing facilities or alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be available for workers to use after they dispose of their waste.

6. MANAGING AN OUTBREAK IN YOUR BUSINESS

Safework Australia has prepared the following guide for hospitality businesses who require advice and information relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

A person who has recently been at your workplace such as a worker, client or customer may inform you they have, or may potentially have, COVID-19. Depending on the circumstances (e.g. how recently the person was at your workplace and how closely they were in contact with others) you may have reasonable concerns about the health of others in your workplace.

You must always continue to meet your WHS duties. This may mean taking steps above and beyond public health requirements to eliminate or minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of workers and others in your workplace (such as customers) contracting COVID-19.

1. Seek advice and assess the risks

Seek government health advice by calling the NSW Health Hotline on 13 77 88. Follow the advice of the NSW public health unit. You can also contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080, which operates 24 hours a day,



seven days a week. The National Helpline can provide advice on when and how to seek medical help or about how to get tested for COVID-19.

Ensure that you have current contact details for the person and make a note about the areas they had been in the workplace, who they had been in close contact within the workplace and for how long. This will inform you about risks to others and areas to clean and disinfect. This information may also assist your state and territory public health unit if they need to follow up with you later.

2. Identify and tell close contacts

The NSW state public health unit will identify close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case and provide them with instructions, for example, in relation to quarantine requirements.

In the meantime, for the purposes of undertaking a workplace risk assessment and to assist the NSW public health unit, consider who the affected person may have had recent close contact with. If instructed by health officials, tell close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and the requirements for quarantine. You must maintain the privacy of all individuals involved.

Seek information about the areas that close contacts have been in the workplace, who they have been in close contact within the workplace and for how long. This will inform you about possible risks to others, and additional areas that may also need to be cleaned and disinfected.

3. Clean and disinfect

Close off the affected areas and do not let others use or enter them until they have been cleaned and disinfected. Open outside doors and windows if possible, to increase air flow.

All areas, for example offices, bathrooms, kitchens and common areas as well as equipment or PPE that were used by the person concerned must then be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Cleaners must wear appropriate PPE, for example disposable gloves or gloves appropriate to the cleaning chemicals being used, and safety eyewear to protect against chemical splashes. If there is visible contamination with respiratory secretions or other body fluids in the area, the cleaners should also wear a disposable apron.

The NSW public health unit may also provide you with further information about how and where to clean. You must follow those instructions.



4. Review risk management controls

Review your COVID-19 risk management controls, in consultation with your workers and assess and decide whether any changes or additional control measures are required.

You must always continue to meet your WHS duties. This may mean taking steps above and beyond public health requirements to eliminate or minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of workers and others in the workplace (such as customers) contracting COVID-19.

Do I need to close my workplace for cleaning?

There is no automatic requirement to close an entire workplace following a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19. It may be unnecessary if the person has only visited parts of your workplace or if government health officials advise you the risk of others being exposed are low.

Whether you need to suspend operations in your workplace will depend on factors such as the size of the workplace, nature of work, number of people and suspected areas of contamination in your workplace.

7. TRAINING:

SOCIAL DISTANCE PROGRAM - Cellar Door Operations in response to COVID-19

Introduction of a short accreditation course (TBC) to be completed by Cellar Door businesses (either owner, manager, or licensee).

Certification will need to be displayed at entrance to business.

Key Competencies to include:

- What is Social Distancing?
- Creating a Social Distancing Plan.
- Staff Induction for Working During COVID-19.
- Work Practices During COVID-19.
- Managing Customers During Social Distancing.
- Cleaning Premises and Equipment During COVID-19.
- What to do if COVID-19 is found to be at the premises by a previous customer, or staff member.



CONCLUSION

HVWTA welcomes the opportunity to provide these guidelines to help set a roadmap to allowing wine tasting options for wineries through the current COVID-19 crisis once health advice deems appropriate.

These best practice guidelines are designed to provide businesses owners and customers with a greater degree of certainty as to what is expected in a post COVID-19 world.

We will continue to evolve these guidelines as the COVID-19 situation requires.

