



EUROPEAN  
VENDING & COFFEE  
SERVICE ASSOCIATION

## **Post Covid-19 lockdown:**

Restarting your vending  
& OCS business

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**VENDING MACHINES  
ARE SAFE TO USE**

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During the restrictions and lockdowns across Europe, in many countries vending machines were (rightfully) seen as an essential provider of food and beverages to consumers. On the other hand many buildings were closed as employees worked from home meaning a significant amount of machines were not accessible for vending operators, or in some circumstances when the building was still open the owner would not grant the operator building clearance for routine filling and maintenance.

Now as restrictions are eased and workplaces and offices gradually reopen, the EVA is unfortunately hearing a number of reports that the client does not consider a vending machine as a hygienic or safe means to obtain products. For this, the EVA has prepared the following arguments that can be used to counter these negative perceptions, and well as actions by operators that can help alleviate concerns:

- 1.** Vending machines are unattended and such no human to human interaction is required. Products are mostly prepacked and sealed since production.
- 2.** Vending machines are cleaned and stocked regularly. It may be useful to remind the client of the filler's schedule to demonstrate what 'regular' means.
- 3.** Additional signage and stickers are recommended to be placed on machines, encouraging consumers to maintain social distancing in front of a machine, and to sanitise their hands before touching buttons.
- 4.** For hot beverage machines, reusable cups should not be permitted. Single use cups are one of the most hygienic methods of consuming a beverage on the go.
- 5.** Staff are highly trained in hygiene rules and techniques. This means that no contamination of foodstuffs, ingredients, or coffee beans can occur. In addition beverage cups are inserted into fully automatic machines by its packaging sleeve, resulting in the cups not be directly handled by the filler.

6. Unlike in other retail environments like supermarkets or canteens, products available through a vending machine cannot be handled before being purchased.
7. During the crisis, vending machines have been considered as one of the (few) safe retail channels to provide food and drinks in hospital environments.
8. Both cash and cashless payments are safe at the vending machine. Indeed contactless payment systems may be preferred by the client (or requested to be installed).





**P**REPARATIONS AND RETURNING  
TO A CLIENT SITE

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Now that client sites are gradually reopening, it is not a simple return to the pre-coronavirus situation. It is likely that each client site has introduced or put in place additional rules to ensure the safety of their employees at work. It is therefore crucial that the operating business double checks what new rules are in place, and makes contact with any new contact person (e.g. a manager responsible for on-site covid-19 precautionary measures) to adjust if necessary the filling and maintaining schedule. Further to this, operators should agree a policy with the client, on when and how external cleaning by the cleaning company takes place in relation to the vending machine e.g. on buttons or dispensing area.

Importantly, the client should be contacted to ensure that vending machines which have been turned off for a period, should not just be turned back on without the below sanitising process being carried out.

Operators should ensure that fillers are technicians are appropriately trained on extra hygiene precautions, such as wearing masks, gloves or sanitising hands before working on or stocking a machine. In terms of best practice, after a visit to each client site the filler's gloves should be changed and disposed of, and a facemask should be replaced after every 4 hours. Operators working on the machines must wash their hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 60 seconds (or use an alcohol-based sanitiser).





**S**AFELY RESTARTING VENDING  
MACHINES AFTER A PERIOD  
OF INACTIVITY

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In order to guarantee a safe and hygienically perfect product quality, the following compilation of technical requirements and best practices should be adhered to for restarting vending machines for the first time after a period of inactivity:

## Hot drinks and OCS machines



1. In the first instance, thoroughly clean the machine and in particular the buttons, touchscreen and dispensing nozzles;
2. Empty and clean the coffee bean container, ensure the grinder is empty and refill;
3. Depending on the time the machine was out of action, replace ingredients in the canisters (such as milk or drink powders and sugar) completely;
4. Replace the water filter if required by the manufacturer;
5. Flush the tubing by a high temperature cleaning process or replace it;
6. Carry out the machine's complete flush routine with fresh water between 3 and 6 times;
7. Test the drink quality as from the second drink, and amend settings as required for quality as well as for the client's taste preferences.

## Refrigerated vending machines



1. In the first instance, thoroughly clean the machine and in particular the buttons, touchscreen, and glass window (if present);
2. Remove products and clean the interior shelves and dispensing area;
3. Check the stock for sell by dates. Replace products as necessary (Note: if the machine was turned off and not refrigerated as normal, product quality may have suffered and need replacing);
4. Check the temperature is correct for the product range;

For machine or model-specific instructions, please contact the manufacturer or your supplier directly.

## RESTART OF MACHINE MANUFACTURING

As machine production resumes, it is important to inform the EVA of any potential situations where due to the lockdowns and business constraints (such as delays in receiving imported parts from outside Europe), research and development investment is delayed or impacted which could result in difficulties to achieve technical legislative deadlines and targets. The EVA will communicate these concerns to the EU Commission and other relevant policy makers for urgent consideration.





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