

AVA BUSINESS GUIDANCE ON CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) – Issue 4b

CORONAVIRUS: VENDING MACHINES REMAIN OPEN & SAFE

As severe restrictions are introduced, vending machines remain an open and safe channel for consumers to purchase food and beverages.

The AVA would like to inform consumers and customers that, during the coronavirus outbreak, there is no increased risk of using vending machines for drinks and snacks.

Never-the-less, we would like to provide the following advice and guidance to consumers:

- Please sanitise your hands before touching the buttons on a vending machine
- Don't cough or sneeze on a vending machine
- Keep a distance of at least 1 metre between consumers
- Choose a single use cup over a reusable one.
- Wear a face mask & gloves if the Company Health & Safety Risk Assessment requires it

The spread of the coronavirus is causing great uncertainty among consumers and customers, and we would like to reiterate that vending machines are a reliable and safe way to obtain food and beverages. Vending machine operators, fillers and technicians place food safety and hygiene as top priorities in their daily service and are trained in both personal hygiene and protection against infections. During the current health crisis, Operators have also put in place measures to ensure that the disinfection of machine surfaces is also carried out as regularly as possible.

Consumers can be confident that the drink or snack purchased from the vending machine is safe. The disposable vending machine cup - which has recently been the subject of much criticism - is considered the safest and most hygienic way to consume a beverage.

Finally, the AVA would like to confirm that as a provider of food and beverages, the vending industry is considered a supplier of 'essential services' during the restrictions and lockdowns seen in many European markets, and remains open 24/7 as a useful channel for convenient consumer purchases.

COVID-19 and SURFACES

According to the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching one's own face "is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads". Even so, the CDC, the World Health Organization and others health authorities, have emphasised that both washing one's hands and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces daily are key in preventing Covid-19's spread. The US National Institute for Health study found that the

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SARS-CoV-2 virus, similar to Covid-19, can survive for longer on cardboard – up to 24 hours – and up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless-steel surfaces. The findings suggest the virus might last this long on door handles, plastic-coated or laminated worktops and other hard surfaces.

Research has shown that coronaviruses can be inactivated within a minute by disinfecting surfaces with 62-71% alcohol, or 0.5% hydrogen peroxide bleach or household bleach containing 0.1% sodium hypochlorite. Higher temperatures and humidity also tend to result in other coronaviruses dying quicker.

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