

Vending and Covid-19

Background

Vending operators are faced with a number of unusual situations as a result of the Covid-19 virus pandemic. This document is intended to provide advice for current operations, for shutdowns and subsequent start-up of sites.

Continuing operations

Where sites are still operating it is important to reassure clients that vending operators are aware of the risks and are taking appropriate precautions to protect their own staff and those on clients' premises.

The vending company should have a written policy of ensuring that anyone with symptoms of the illness should self-isolate and this should be rigorously enforced.

Operating personnel should wash their hands according to the recommended procedure before starting work and at the end of the shift. Operators should wash their hands on entering a new site if the facilities in the site are suitable, or they should use an alcohol hand gel to clean their hands. After carrying out operations on the machine they should clean the keypad with an alcohol wipe.

During their visit to the site they should maintain a distance of 2 meters between themselves and any other person wherever possible. If they have to use a lift, they should try to ensure that they are the only person in the lift.

Shutting down

Clients should be made aware that proper shutting down of machines is the key to speedy and lower cost starting up.

Snack and food machines should have the coin box emptied, all product removed and the meter readings recorded. The machine should be secured and switched off. In some circumstances you may consider it prudent to remove the coin mechanism.

Drinks machines should have their meter readings recorded, have the coin box emptied and be emptied of all ingredients. They should be cleaned as usual, drained down, the water turned off and then the tubing removed to be dried completely at base.

(see AVA 'Closing down a Drinks or Snack machine" guide)

It is fashionable to "remember" that in the war we all pulled together. This is not true.

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Crime rates went up, and there is no reason to suggest that criminals will not seize opportunities presented by the current problem, so it is important that precautions are taken to minimise the risk of pilfering while offices are empty.

Starting up

Snack and food machines should be checked to ensure they are clean and brushed out if necessary, before being refilled. Data should be checked to see if there has been pilferage during the shutdown. Coin mechanisms should be replaced and refilled.

The tubing removed from drinks machines should be cleaned and replaced. The mixing bowls should be cleaned, the augers removed and brushed off. Follow guidance from the filter supplier as to whether the filter should be replaced. The inlet hose should be replaced if the shutdown has been longer than 3 months as there is a risk of excessive biofilm growth leading to bits of unsightly biofilm in drinks. The ingredient canisters should be refilled and the coin mechanism replaced and refilled.

There is a risk that the contraction of the boiler will have caused valves and seals to shrink or metal to crack so the machine should be checked after filling to ensure there are no leaks.

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