

Ventilation is the First Step to Prepare Pubs for Reopening in Government COVID-19 Guidance

Submitted by: MacLean Communications

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Evaluating ventilation systems, before pubs reopen on 4 July as the COVID-19 lockdown eases, is the first step to take before reopening as laid out in the Government's new guidance. In 'Keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services' (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>) guidance, published on 24 June 2020, the document states that steps that will usually be needed before reopening include: "Checking whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels due to lower than normal occupancy levels." This guidance is designed to ensure time spent in pubs, bars and restaurants is as safe as possible for staff and customers, and is a clear demonstration of how vital effective ventilation is. Ensuring ventilation (<https://www.vent-axia.com/tseries>) works effectively and does not under-ventilate is critical to reduce airborne transmission of COVID-19.

This guidance follows Prime Minister Boris Johnson's announcement (https://youtu.be/vJuHj__70ww?t=330) on 23 June that lockdown was set to ease on 4 July with pubs reopening and a relaxing of social distancing from 2m to 1m-plus while taking "mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission" including "improving ventilation"². This also echoes an earlier statement by Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the Government's COVID-19 press briefing on 29 April 2020 where he said, "There is a definite truism across all of the science literature, that ventilation is a most critical part of reducing transmission from respiratory viruses." This all confirms the vital role ventilation plays in the fight against COVID-19.

With the UK COVID-19 lockdown now set to ease pubs are keen to return to business. But first publicans need to ensure their properties are COVID-secure before reopening to help protect both customers and employees. Businesses need to undertake a risk assessment to ensure they meet their duty of care to protect workers and others from risk to their health and safety, and then reduce risk to the lowest reasonably practical level by taking preventative measures. When smoking was allowed in pubs, building guidance was to replace the air in a room every 8 minutes to extract the smoke and create a healthier indoor environment, protecting staff and customers. The same solution can be used to help maintain a COVID-secure establishment. Installed and correctly commissioned in pubs, fans will extract the polluted air, including any viruses, replacing it with fresh air every 8 minutes, thereby diluting the impact of the virus and reducing transmission.

"At Vent-Axia we are here to provide ventilation solutions and advice to pubs, bars and restaurants. A raft of global scientific evidence has confirmed aerosol transmission of COVID-19, making it a higher risk to be inside a building than outside. With the lockdown set to ease on the 4 July and pubs reopening, publicans need to ensure their premises are as safe as possible for staff and customers. To lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission inside a building it is vital to increase airflow and ventilate effectively. Now is the time to check ventilation to ensure there is enough airflow to dilute the virus in the air and improve indoor air quality. Ventilating for longer and opting for ventilation with higher airflow volumes will help reduce the risk," said Jenny Smith, Head of Marketing at Vent-Axia (<https://www.vent-axia.com/tseries>).

With the current Government guidance lacking detail on practical ventilation measures to implement, what steps should publicans be taking now to minimise virus transmission risks? When it comes to a pub's risk assessment publicans should first ensure their premises are adequately ventilated and check whether existing extract fans are installed. If extract fans are installed, they should check they work. If not, they should be repaired or replaced. Publicans can speak to their facilities manager, ventilation specialist or ventilation manufacturer for advice on their ventilation systems.

Vent-Axia is committed to improving indoor air quality and public health and has helped in the national response against COVID-19. The company has already supplied ventilation to a wide-range of essential projects, such as the Nightingale Hospital in London, and now is available to support pubs as they prepare to reopen. The company has a vast amount of experience previously helping the pub industry by supplying ventilation to them before the smoking ban where its T-Series fan was particularly popular.

Many pubs will already have a Vent-Axia T-Series installed since the trusted T-Series has been the industry's no.1 commercial ventilation unit for over 30 years. Known for its robustness and quality, the T-series' high-quality design has stood the test of time and has evolved with new and improved motors, impellers and grilles. With both window and wall options available, as well as Lo-Carbon models, it is both durable and reliable. Available with four sizes of extract/intake fans and an easy fit connector Top Socket allowing fast and trouble-free mains connection, the T-Series is easy to install and replace.

Due to its continued popularity, when older models of the T-Series need replacing it's straightforward to replace like-for-like with no need for re-wiring, thus saving time on site. Vent-Axia also has an extensive spares department if a fan replacement part is needed. The company supports its wide product range with useful spares, such as motors, impellers and electrical connectors, meaning current installations can be kept functioning effectively rather than needing to be replaced. This ensures companies needing to replace or improve ventilation can still gain parts.

With over 80 years of ventilation experience, Vent-Axia is committed to public health by improving indoor air quality and so creating a healthy environment. The company is therefore encouraging pubs to be a COVID-Aware Establishment by checking pubs are adequately ventilated according to government guidelines (<https://www.vent-axia.com/tseries>). For publicans who are unsure about whether their ventilation is adequate or need expert advice Vent-Axia's technical Support Team is available for advice on 0844 856 0590. Vent-Axia is also issuing a free COVID-AWARE window sticker with every T-Series purchase to help re-assure customers when pubs re-open.

For further information on all products and services offered by Sussex-based Vent-Axia visit www.vent-axia.com.

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Notes for Editors

1. 'Keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19 in restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaway services' was published by the Government on 24 June 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>

2. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's statement in the House of Commons on 23 June 2020

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJuHj__70ww&feature=youtu.be&t=330

3. Boasting over 80 years' experience, Vent-Axia is the ventilation sector's clear leader, chief innovator and forerunner in developing energy efficient products that help provide good indoor air quality. Committed to improving indoor air quality and comfort in both homes and buildings, Vent-Axia provides the sector's most comprehensive choice from any single manufacturer. Vent-Axia's range covers not just air movement and ventilation technologies but heat recovery, electric heating, hand dryers, cooling and clean-air systems for residential, commercial, public sector and industrial applications.

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