



AACS Covid-19 response

Wednesday, 29 April 2020

Background

Covid-19, also known as Coronavirus, is a global pandemic affecting countries around the world in some cases with devastating results. Officially named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO) on February 11, 2020, the respiratory disease is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that was first detected in Central China's city of Wuhan on December 8, 2019. Loss of life, business closures, unemployment and lockdowns are unfortunately now commonplace. We are experiencing an event not seen for around 100 years since the Spanish flu pandemic. Governments around the world have reacted very differently and we are fortunate that the Australian government had the foresight to act early and even ahead of the WHO declaration of a pandemic.

We do however see many businesses shuttered and government spending at levels never before seen to support small businesses and people affected by this virus. Many businesses are taking different approaches to keep trading and even innovate during these times as we can no longer just do business the old way.

Whilst suffering downturns in fuel volume as has been widely reported in the media, we have to date successfully lobbied for our industry to be allowed to be able to continue to operate during this pandemic. This however comes with enormous responsibilities to our staff and customers whether retailers or suppliers from a health and wellbeing perspective. We will ultimately get through this; however there are still many months of uncertainty and various restrictions ahead for our country. The question is how AACCS can take a greater lead in assisting our Members through the months ahead and bringing useful information to them to chart a course through what lies ahead.

AACS considerations

As with other trade associations we are not health experts. What we can do is evaluate the various factors and influences in our channel where we may bring expert advice to bear as well as assistance to share best practice across the business to ensure that we are operating in the most appropriate manner to keep our staff, customers and anyone visiting our sites as safe as is practical. We can draw on both local and overseas sources for ideas and concepts that may be innovative and also possibly lead to improved ways of doing business even once the crisis has passed.

There are a number of resources available and companies have already instituted practices for their circumstances. We have collated a number of these in our AACS website.

In **Australia**, convenience operators have implemented their own measures to manage the virus threat.

Cleaning/service regimes are in place in many stores to cover a number of areas such as:

- Coffee Machine buttons / touch screens
- FCB machines
- Bakery / food utensils
- EFTPOS Pin pads and also encouraging contactless payments
- Service Counters
- ATM
- Cool room / freezer door handles
- Microwave
- Service counter and surrounding area
- Petrol pump nozzles
- Watering can and squeegee.
- Ice cabinet
- Air hose nozzles and buttons
- Ensuring towel holders are full at the pumps
- Sanitizer at store entry
- Sanitizer, wipes, disposable gloves at the petrol pumps
- Perspex shields installed to protect staff
- No customer reusable cups refilled
- Clear 'social distancing' guidelines in place
- Truckies dining/rest area / bathrooms instructions clear and in force

Some questions/suggestions to address for our industry may include [but not limited to]:

- How do staff manage cash handling
- How are deliveries managed
- Are there protocols for store visitors such as delivery staff
- Are staff temperatures taken and recorded prior to each shift

- Are there information posters available as reminders for staff on hygiene e.g. hand washing
- Should/could we offer a petrol filling service option for motorists - community service and possible employment opportunity
- How are other franchises on the site managed to prevent cross contamination
- How secure is the supply chain and what health assurances are in place
- Have staff downloaded the COVIDSafe app and can they carry their mobiles during work hours
- How is customer aggression managed – is it declining or at high levels
- Current position and use of face masks by employees
- Use of Perspex screens or not.
- Temperature checks yes or no

AACS Action:

We will convene a Forum to discuss the current situation, gaps and areas where AACS maybe able to assist.

From this we may share ideas as well as take up any issues with governments at various levels where required.