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COVID-19 safety tips for local businesses

The Environmental Health Team at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's Public Health Unit has visited over 360 businesses in July and August.

Professor Mark Ferson, Director, Public Health Unit, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, said the Environmental Health Team has been providing face-to-face education and support to business owners trying to operate safely during the pandemic.

"It's a different kind of front-line health work - Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are experts in preventive health. Our job is to prevent people getting sick and requiring hospitalisation."

Businesses should have a COVID-19 Safety Plan detailing how they will address staff and customer wellbeing, physical distancing, customer registration and cleaning and hygiene.

The EHOs have visited gyms, beauticians, massage parlours, nail salons, art galleries, cinemas, community sports facilities and major sports venues. They work closely with other agencies such as the Office of Liquor and Gaming, and NSW Police.

Businesses that are required by law to have a COVID Safety Plan can find information and templates on the NSW Government website at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/covid-safe-businesses>.

Other businesses should develop their own plans, even if not required to do so.

Having a reliable register of staff and customers who have been present in the premises is vitally important in the event that COVID-19 is diagnosed in someone who has been there.

"In addition to these measures, we strongly encourage hospitality workers to wear masks as they have contact with many people and may not be able to physically distance.

"Control of the COVID-19 pandemic requires a strong, collective, community response. Many COVID-19 resources have been translated into community languages.

"We thank those in the community who are doing their best and encourage them to keep going," Professor Ferson said.