

# REPAIR CAFE

## Ideas for Repair Café in the 1.5 meter society

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**Note:** this paper was “translated” from the Dutch by Google Translate, and has been revised by an English speaker.

### Preface

This document has been prepared by volunteers from various Repair Cafés in the Netherlands, in collaboration with Repair Café International. It offers ideas for Repair Café groups that want to be able to resume some of their repair activities in ways that are safe during the coronavirus pandemic. Consult your government website for current restrictions regarding meetings in your region.

We are sharing this document so that Repair Café organizers can prepare for future events. The situation in every Repair Café is different. That is why we cordially invite everyone to ‘translate’ the tips and advice to the local situation. We hope that all Repair Cafés will soon be able to provide the best possible safety practices.

We thank Peter Rommens (Repair Café Zuidplas, Netherlands, [sazrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:sazrepaircafe@gmail.com)) and Leo van den Berg (Repair Café Venlo-East, Netherlands, [repaircafevenlo@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafevenlo@gmail.com)) who have written this document, and John Wackman (Repair Cafés in the Hudson Valley, New York, US, [jwackman@gmail.com](mailto:jwackman@gmail.com)) who helped to translate it to English. Anyone who has questions or additions can reach them by e-mail.

Good luck and stay healthy!

### Location

It goes without saying that you start with consulting the organization in whose area your Repair Café takes place. When will they open again and do they have protocols in place? Don't try to be more lenient than the owner/manager. Many things will be generally regulated. Think, for example, of the maximum number of people allowed indoors, the use of restrooms, hygiene and cleaning.

For those who normally rent their space, payment is a difficult situation. Talk to your landlord about how to deal with this and try to work it out together. Be honest that your normal “Donation Jar” income has ceased. If you receive a subsidy, we hope that it will not be cut.

## Working models

The situation differs greatly per Repair Café. A number of measures are mandatory. Other things are suggestions. The most important measure is to establish and maintain sufficient **social distancing** between people. The guideline is 1.5 meters; more is better. The second measure is maintaining **clean surfaces**. Above all, be **extra patient** and ask the same of your visitors.

Three working models are conceivable:

### 1. Drop-Off Repair

Visitors bring their object (whether or not by appointment). You will need a good registration system. Together with a volunteer, visitors will fill in the intake form to describe as well as possible the repair needed. Arrange to contact the visitor when the item is ready to be picked up. You will also need a place to keep items until pick-up. Make sure you do not get left with (unrepairable) stuff.

### 2. Separate visitor and work area

In this model, the volunteers work in a different room from where the visitors are waiting. Visitors bring their object (whether or not by appointment). They fill out the intake form with a volunteer, after which the volunteer takes the object to a repairer. For example, you can use a tea trolley. It is important that the visitors keep a sufficient distance from each other while waiting. If the weather and your location allow it, sitting outside is preferable.

### 3. Repairing together in a safe location

After intake, visitors go to the relevant repairer themselves. Every repair person has his/her own table where he/she sits 1.5 meters from the visitor. This table is no less than two meters away from other worktables. Standing or wandering around is not allowed. Make a one-way walking route through the room. Indicate this with arrows the floor. Make the visitors aware of this.

Choose one of these working models in consultation with the volunteers, the coordinator and the manager. The one who is strictest has the final say. Everyone must be safe and themselves feel safe. In any case, stick to the requirements and wishes of the owner/landlord. The choice depends on the location you have available, the number of volunteers and visitors you can accommodate, and the comfort level of your volunteers.

## Fixed measures

- At the entrance, display a sign or poster with the event regulations. Ensure that these are consistent with established health guidelines. Be clear that the Repair Café is committed to mitigating the risk but bears no responsibility for the health of visitors. Let visitors read the information carefully and talk about it.
- Everyone must wear protective masks all of the time.
- Ask visitors to wash their hands before coming. Provide disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer and disposable gloves.
- Preferably, do the item intake outdoors under a party tent, awning or parasol. Provide an abundance of table space.
- Visitors must thoroughly wipe down their item with disinfectant themselves. A volunteer will fill out the registration form to prevent possible spread of the virus via pen and paper.
- Volunteer repairers will use (preferably) only their own tools. It may be possible to divide some shared tools per category: electrical, electronics, mechanical, bicycles and general tools.
- Disinfect tools before, during and after repairing. This is the job of the repairers; the coordinator supervises to ensure compliance.
- Disinfect tables, chairs, counter, all surfaces regularly through the event.
- In the 1.5 meter society we unfortunately cannot allow people to linger and socialize, so you will not have your normal reading or café tables.
- Only count the money from the tip box a few days later and then with disposable gloves. The virus survives quite a long time on paper and coins.
- Have extra masks and disposable latex gloves available.

## Behaviour

The main risk of the virus spreading is human behavior. Especially now that businesses are re-opening, we must continue to pay attention to this. Many of our volunteers are in risk groups. Make it clear that no one is being asked to do anything they are not completely comfortable with.

- People with any symptoms of corona (cough, fever, breathing problems) must **not** participate in any way.

- Explicitly ask visitors and repairers to **come alone**, that is, without partners, children or parents. With fewer people in the room, it is easier to maintain social distancing.
- If you decide that visitors are not allowed into the repair area, provide seats where they can sit and wait. Obviously, the seats must be at least 1.5 meters apart. No benches. The waiting area is preferably outside.
- If you decide to serve coffee and tea, use disposable cups. No bottles of coffee creamer or sugar cubes. Do not serve cookies or treats, etc.
- Don't be afraid to be tough with visitors or repairers who don't follow your guidelines. Organizers set the tone. A Repair Café is a social event. We expect everyone to behave responsibly toward their neighbors.

## Individual practical tips

- Set up an appointment system
- Extend opening hours if possible to allow for more repairs
- Consider a pick-up and delivery service
- Organize your event to be “Open Air” in an outdoor area (weather dependent).
- Start an online consultation service if some of your volunteers are willing to give of their time and skills in that way. Some may also be willing to carry out repairs in their home during the lockdown. Ask yourself whether these types of services fall within the responsibility of your Repair Café.