

# COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines

## REVIEWING AND UPDATING YOUR COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN



This guide will help you review your COVID-19 Safety Plan that you may have developed when the COVID Safe Workplaces Framework was released in 2020.

You should review your COVID-19 Safety Plan regularly, but especially as circumstances change in the community and in your workplace, and when Public Health identifies new requirements.

When you review your COVID-19 Safety Plan, it's important that you look at the actual behaviours of workers and others in your workplace, as well as the control measures in the plan itself. It's the actions of your workers, contractors and customers while in your workplace that will determine if your control measures are effective and if COVID-19 will impact your business.



### Reviewing your existing COVID-19 Safety Plan

#### ▶ **STEP 1: Review your current plan and controls**

Reviewing your current COVID-19 Safety Plan requires you to ensure that it clearly documents all the controls that you will apply to reduce the risks of COVID-19 transmission.

You must also consider how your COVID-19 Safety Plan has been implemented and ensure that the controls identified are actually being applied every day within your workplace. Complacency can be a significant barrier to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in your workplace.

Consult with your workers and/or their health and safety representatives as you review your plan.

Take your plan and walk around your workplace to make sure that the controls identified in your plan are being actively applied.

- ▶ Have the floor markings for physical distancing faded or worn off over time?
- ▶ Have your posters reminding people about social distancing and hygiene become damaged and need to be replaced?
- ▶ Are you still providing hand sanitiser to workers and customers who enter your workplace?
- ▶ Do you enforce the requirements around the number of people permitted within a designated area?
- ▶ Are you still applying your daily cleaning schedule?

- ▶ Do you remind workers and visitors to stay away from your workplace if unwell?
- ▶ Are your workers familiar with the content of the plan?
- ▶ When did you last go over the plan at a staff meeting?
- ▶ Do you have adequate supplies of hand sanitiser, cleaning products, gloves and masks?
- ▶ Are there areas where you need to make changes to your workplace to ensure that controls are implemented effectively?

If you make any changes, document these in your COVID-19 Safety Plan.



#### **Stay at home when unwell messaging**

You should direct any worker with COVID-19 symptoms to stay at home until they have a COVID-19 test and confirm they do not have COVID-19.

You must educate and train your workers on the main symptoms of COVID 19:

- ▶ fever (or signs of fever, including chills or night sweats)
- ▶ cough
- ▶ sore/itchy throat
- ▶ runny nose
- ▶ shortness of breath
- ▶ loss of taste or smell.

# COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines

## REVIEWING AND UPDATING YOUR COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN



COVID-19 can also cause the following symptoms, on their own or with other symptoms:

- ▶ headaches
- ▶ muscle and joint pain
- ▶ nausea/feeling sick, vomiting
- ▶ diarrhoea
- ▶ loss of appetite
- ▶ fatigue/extreme tiredness.

Look at working from home arrangements (where possible). This will significantly reduce the impact on your operations while workers isolate at home awaiting their COVID-19 test results.

### Consult with your workers

You must consult with your workers and/or their health and safety representatives as you develop and implement your plan and control measures. Who else knows your business better than the people that do the work? Gather their input and involved them in the decision making process; you'll get a better outcome.

You must also provide your workers with the information, instruction and training needed to ensure they know what to do, how to do it, when to apply controls and why.

### **STEP 2: Additional controls to be included in your plan**

The controls required to reduce the risk of COVID-19 have changed over time and it is important that your plan reflects the most up-to-date information.

#### Vaccinations

Another important way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission is to be vaccinated.

Workers in some industries are required (under Public Health Directions) to be vaccinated. This should be reflected in your COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Where vaccinations are not mandated by a Public Health Direction, do a risk assessment to determine if the risks of COVID-19 are significant and if mandating vaccinations would reduce those risks.

A risk assessment should address things like if you deliver services to vulnerable people or communities, and determine whether you will require workers to be vaccinated under a lawful and reasonable direction. This should be done in consultation with your workers. See WorkSafe's guidance note on doing a COVID-19 risk assessment at [worksafe.tas.gov.au/covidframework](https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/covidframework).

It is important to note that when over 90% of the population is vaccinated, mandating vaccination may have minimal impact on reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in your workplace. The other control measures in your COVID-19 Safety Plan are much stronger defences.

Workers required to be vaccinated and who have an adverse reaction to vaccination may be entitled to workers compensation.

### Excluding visitors from your workplace

Excluding visitors from your workplace based on their vaccination status may have minimal impact on reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in your workplace when over 90% of the population is vaccinated. The other control measures in your COVID-19 Safety Plan are much stronger defences.

In some high risk circumstances, Public Health Directions apply and place requirements around the vaccination status of people entering workplaces. Regularly check [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/resources](https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/resources) to see if these apply to you.

### Check in TAS

From 2 May 2022, Check In TAS is no longer required at any workplace or premises. Businesses should keep their code in case it is needed in future.

### Ventilation

COVID-19 droplets spread between people and be inhaled more easily indoors than outdoors. Good ventilation can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, so review the ventilation systems in your workplace.

Ways to do this include opening a window to allow greater air movement in a room or area, avoiding using rooms where there is no air conditioning, and leaving a

# COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines

## REVIEWING AND UPDATING YOUR COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN



door open when having multiple persons in the room.

Contact an air conditioning professional if you want to have your air conditioning arrangements assessed.

### Other COVID-19 controls

#### Face Masks

Using face masks is an effective means of controlling the risk of COVID-19 transmission, particularly when physical distancing is not possible or where there may be the potential of a high volume of people entering your workplace. Make sure workers know how to safely take face masks off and on..

#### Physical Barriers

Many workplaces have adopted Perspex barriers in high-traffic areas to protect workers, particularly where physical distancing is not possible (for example, supermarket checkouts). If you use these barriers, make sure they are cleaned regularly.

Looking at your work processes will help you identify high-risk areas where barriers may be useful.



## Response Planning



### Case and Outbreak Management

Your COVID-19 Safety Plan should include how you will respond if there is a COVID-19 case in your workplace.

You should:

- ▶ state how your workplace will help COVID-19 positive workers isolate/quarantine
- ▶ outline the reporting mechanisms you will have in place so you can respond as soon as possible to a COVID-19 case
- ▶ state how you will clean and disinfect the workplace.



### Management of close contacts

From 2 May 2022, there is no longer quarantine requirements for close contacts. Instead, there is a new set of rules that will apply to close contacts. These include:

- ▶ close contacts must stay at home if they have symptoms of COVID 19, even mild
- ▶ close contacts must have a RAT or PCR as soon as they are aware they are a close contact
- ▶ close contacts must undergo PCR or RAT test daily for 7 days if they are leaving their home or primary residence and not remaining in quarantine

- ▶ close contacts must notify their workplace as soon as they are aware they are close contacts and if they intend to return to the workplace
- ▶ close contacts must wear a fitted face mask in indoor settings when away from their primary residence
- ▶ close contacts must not visit or enter a high-risk facility during the close contact period.
- ▶ a critical worker exemption remains in place for workers in high-risk settings.
- ▶ close contacts should avoid large gatherings or social events
- ▶ close contacts should avoid contact with those who are at risk of severe disease – this includes elderly, immunocompromised or those with chronic medical conditions
- ▶ close contacts should continue to practice COVID Safe behaviours.

The definition of a close contact can be found at: [www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/advice-for-contacts](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/advice-for-contacts)



### Testing

Public Health will continue to offer testing to identify people infected with COVID-19. Management of close contacts

# COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines

## REVIEWING AND UPDATING YOUR COVID-19 SAFETY PLAN



### Closing your business if identified as an exposure site

You should not need to close your business down if there is a case identified in your workplace.

If your workplace is deemed an exposure site, you will be expected to undertake normal cleaning and disinfecting of your workplace to reduce any residual COVID-19 risks and you should be able to continue to operate without closure.

If your workplace has multiple transmissions, Public Health may require additional actions including closing down for a period of time.

See more about case and outbreak management go to [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au) and search for 'outbreak'.



### Closing your business if identified as an exposure site

You should not need to close your business down if there is a case identified in your workplace.

#### Disclaimer

To ensure this information is as accessible and easy to understand as possible, we refer to 'employers' and their responsibilities.

However, under the model WHS laws, duties apply to any person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) which includes employers, but also others who engage workers. For more information about who is a PCBU see [worksafe.tas.gov.au](https://worksafe.tas.gov.au).