

COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION TRADE SERVICES INDUSTRY



Purpose

The COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines set out what employers should do as they continue, or seek to resume, business operations. By following these guidelines you will be able to show how you will comply with minimum standards determined by Public Health, and with the requirements of the Work Health and Safety Act. This will help keep your workers and others safe from COVID-19. Workplaces that do not show compliance with the standards may be subject to enforcement actions.

About the building construction and construction trade services industry

The building, construction and construction trade services industries provide residential, commercial, and other construction services (including heavy and civil engineering related services and activities). Consistent with Division E of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), these services include: building construction, non-building construction, site preparation services, building structure services, installation trade services, building completion services, and other construction services such as landscaping.

Building and construction may take place indoors at construction sites or in finished structures, or outdoors on roads or earthworks sites. These services are undertaken by businesses of varying sizes, including sole traders and sub-contractors that do not employ any other persons. Businesses providing these services may also work on or operate multiple sites.

How to comply with the new standards

Businesses must implement measures to achieve the minimum standards and must also document these measures.

You will need to do a risk assessment to decide which control measures are most suited to your industry and business. You will need to take into account the level of risk of the virus spreading that exists at the time. On the following pages are **examples** of control measures that will help you meet each new standard.

- ▶ [Template and example COVID-19 risk register](#) (Safe Work Australia): a template for doing a risk assessment.

Managing other risks

You must manage other risks associated with COVID-19. These include:

- ▶ the risks to health and safety of workers doing unfamiliar tasks. Consult with these workers about their skills, training needs and workloads before they start new work
- ▶ the risks to mental health of workers due to the pandemic. Offer information and support, including counselling through an employee assistance program, a supportive workplace culture, or external service providers such as [Lifeline](#) or [Beyond Blue](#).

Checklists and templates

A COVID-19 Safety Plan is a great way for businesses to document measures and show how they are keeping their customers, their workers and the community safe.

- ▶ These templates and checklist will help you develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan. [COVID-19 Workplace Checklist](#): Use this checklist to keep your workers and others safe at the workplace and limit the spread of COVID-19. It covers working from home, physical distancing, handwashing/hygiene, cleaning and more. Update it on a regular basis.
- ▶ [COVID-19 Safety Plan small business template](#)
- ▶ [COVID-19 Safety Plan medium business template](#): Use these templates to show how you are planning to manage any risks arising from restarting your small or medium business.

Other resources that may assist you in completing your COVID-19 Safety Plan include:

- ▶ [Safe Work Australia building and construction industry information for COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [COVIDSafe Planning tool](#) (National COVID-19 Coordination Commission): online planning tool to help you keep your workers, customers and the community safe.
- ▶ [Pandemic Plan Advice](#) (WorkSafe Tasmania): includes planning, communication and consultation, risk management, and general control measures.
- ▶ [How to clean and disinfect your workplace](#) (Safe Work Australia): explains products to use and how to clean items.
- ▶ [Safe Work Australia COVID-19 Resource Kit](#): includes checklists for:
 - Cleaning
 - Physical distancing
 - Health, hygiene and facilities
 - Printable signage.
- ▶ A number of industry bodies including the Master Builders Association Tasmania and Housing Industry Association have developed more detailed information that is available via the [WorkSafe Tasmania website](#).
- ▶ [Tasmanian Government Advice on gatherings](#)
Check this site regularly, as the numbers permitted to attend gatherings will change as the three recovery stages are worked through.

When you undertake your business activities they must be consistent with the Public Health directives at that time.

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<p>1. Managing risks to health and safety</p>	<p>An employer must manage the risk of a person contracting or spreading COVID-19 disease:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> in the workplace; or in connection with the conduct of the business or undertaking. <p>The employer must identify and manage the risks that may contribute to a person contracting or spreading COVID-19</p> <p>In managing the risks, the employer must take into account information that is published and accessible by the employer about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a duty or obligation imposed under the WHS Act, the Public Health Act or Emergency Management Act relevant information, recommendations or guidance materials published or specified by a public authority, an equivalent Commonwealth authority, or a relevant industry body, in relation to COVID-19 the nature of the work being performed the nature of the industry in which the work is being performed the environmental conditions of the workplace, such as design, layout or systems of work, which may increase a person's exposure to COVID-19. <p>The above information needs to be considered when:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> implementing the controls, and reviewing and adjusting the controls: 	<p>In managing risks, you must seek to eliminate the risk first, as far as is reasonably practicable. If you can't eliminate it, you must minimise the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Apply the hierarchy of controls using the highest level of control that is reasonably practicable. You may need a combination of controls.</p> <p>Eliminating the risk is the best option, followed by substitution, then isolation and engineering controls. If the above can't be achieved, then reduce the risk through administrative controls. Reducing the risk by using personal protective equipment (PPE) is the lowest level of control.</p> <p>Maintain your control measures and review them regularly to ensure the highest level of effective control is being used.</p> <p>Consult with workers and/or their health and safety representatives (HSRs) throughout this process</p> <p>The first step is to undertake a risk assessment. This can help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ identify which workers are at risk of exposure ▶ determine what sources and processes are causing the risk ▶ identify what kind of control measures should be put in place, and ▶ check the effectiveness of existing control measures. <p>Complete and review your risk assessment regularly to ensure your control measures are still working; or if risk levels change.</p> <p>Key things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are the current legal requirements (e.g. public health orders, health directions) for my area and how do they apply to my business? ▶ Does the nature of the work undertaken by my business increase the risk of my workers being exposed to COVID-19? ▶ What effect may the COVID-19 controls you put in place have on other hazard management controls you already have in place? ▶ Does my workplace have facilities for hand washing and/or hand sanitising? ▶ Does my workplace environment/layout increase the risk of my workers and/or clients being exposed to COVID-19 and can this be changed? ▶ Do I have workers that fall within a vulnerable worker category? ▶ What are my current cleaning and disinfecting arrangements? ▶ How prepared is my business if there is a case of COVID-19 in the workplace? ▶ Is there an increased risk of violence in my workplace? ▶ What worker communication and support mechanisms are in place? ▶ Do the changes I plan to make to my business or changes arising from COVID-19 change the risk? ▶ Do I have a plan to review my control measures to ensure they are effective?

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<p>2. Cleaning and hygiene</p>	<p>Cleaning</p> <p>The employer must prepare, implement and maintain a schedule for cleaning, and where appropriate disinfecting, that ensures the workplace is routinely cleaned. This must include furniture, equipment and other items</p> <p>The cleaning schedule should be in writing so that all workers are aware of the requirements. The schedule should take into account the level of risk of exposure to, contracting or spreading COVID-19 within the workplace.</p> <p>This schedule is to set out both the frequency and manner in which cleaning and disinfecting is to be done.</p> <p>Hygiene</p> <p>The employer is to put a hygiene procedure in place to ensure all persons at the workplace are observing appropriate hygiene measures to minimise the risk of exposure to, contracting or spreading COVID-19 within the workplace.</p> <p>This procedure is to address the cleaning of hands by workers and other persons in the workplace using soap and water or the use of hand sanitiser, as appropriate for the circumstances.</p> <p>Supplies and Equipment</p> <p>The employer must provide all the supplies and equipment necessary to ensure that the cleaning schedule and hygiene procedure implemented for the workplace is able to be complied with.</p>	<p>Cleaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ You should arrange for extra cleaning of frequently used surfaces. Document this in your cleaning schedule. <p>Frequently used or touched surfaces or items, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - table tops, counters, desks and furniture, handrails, doors, door handles, cupboards, cupboard handles and light switches - keys, phones and keyboards - amenities, including toilets and taps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean the inside of mobile plant/equipment at the start and end of each work day and when changing operators. Specific attention should be paid to steering wheels, handles, controls or buttons, seatbelt, keys etc. ▶ Shared tools may include items such as but not limited to drop saws, grinders, ladders, scaffold and hoists ▶ Ensure the cleaning of less frequently used surfaces at least daily ▶ Any surfaces that are visibly dirty, or have a spill, should be cleaned as soon as this is noticed, regardless of when they were last cleaned ▶ Using detergent and water is appropriate for cleaning. ▶ Cleaning should start with the cleanest surface first, progressively moving towards the dirtiest surface ▶ When surfaces are clean they should be as dry as possible, to prevent slips/falls and the spread of viruses and bacteria through droplets ▶ Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. These can be in the form of liquids/sprays or wipes, and are labelled as “disinfectant” on their packaging ▶ Disinfectants are usually only necessary if a surface is contaminated with potentially infectious material, or if your workplace has many customers or others entering each day ▶ It is important to clean before disinfecting ▶ Consult with staff responsible for cleaning, or your cleaning contractor. Ensure they can maintain the increased cleaning schedule. Discuss any supplies or equipment needed ▶ Display your cleaning schedule in the workplace. Ensure staff sign them off each time they clean the area/items. <p>Hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ You should direct your workers and attendees to practice good hygiene at your workplace, including avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose or mouth ▶ Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry them with clean paper towel. Use alcohol-based hand rub if unable to wash hands. This should occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - before and after eating - after coughing or sneezing (into elbow/tissue) - after going to the toilet - when changing tasks - when changing operators of machinery - after touching potentially contaminated surfaces - before and after smoking cigarettes ▶ Ensure signs on correct hand washing are available in toilets and staff break rooms. <p>Supplies and Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure cleaning products are available. Instruct workers in their safe use and make sure Safety Data Sheets are available ▶ Establish/document procedures for the safe disposal of contaminated waste ▶ Select and use appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products.

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Cleaning and hygiene cont.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Refer to the guidance from Safe Work Australia and Public Health ▶ Wear gloves and eye protection when handling and preparing disinfecting solutions <p>Tools and mobile plant and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Minimise the use of shared tools and mobile plant and equipment. If sharing is unavoidable, the use of gloves and any other appropriate personal protective equipment is encouraged ▶ Shared tools and mobile plant and equipment controls should be disinfected daily, before and after each use and where there is a change in operator. <p>Display homes and showrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide hand-wash facilities, hand-sanitising or gloves upon entry and exit ▶ Clean all high-touch areas including door handles, taps, counters, benches and amenities with an anti-bacterial cleaner before and after viewings ▶ Use digital sales and communication platforms as far as reasonably practicable to reduce the need for physical contact and supplement the sales process ▶ Promote healthy air flow within the home or showroom by opening windows, using air conditioning or other ventilation options.
3. Restrictions on entry to the workplace	<p>The employer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a worker does not enter or attend the workplace if the worker is required to isolate, or quarantine, under a direction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Director of Public health, under the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i>, or • the State Controller under the <i>Emergency Management Act 2006</i> <p>A worker must not enter a workplace if the worker is required to isolate, or quarantine, under a direction made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Director of Public Health, under the <i>Public Health Act 1997</i>, or • the State Controller under the <i>Emergency Management Act 2006</i> <p>However, a worker is able to be at a workplace for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to obtain medical treatment or testing in relation to COVID-19, and the workplace is the appropriate place to receive such treatment or testing, or 2. the worker is required or permitted, under a direction made in relation to COVID-19, to enter or be at the workplace, and does so in accordance with that direction, or 3. there is an emergency and the worker is entering or at the workplace to protect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the safety of the worker, or - the safety of another person, or - the worker's property or the property of another person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Display signs at the front of your workplace telling people not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, cold/flu symptoms or have been in close contact with confirmed cases ▶ Ask people to leave your premises if they display symptoms associated with COVID-19 or cold and flu like symptoms ▶ Ensure all persons, prior to entering a work site, complete a site-specific induction ▶ Update your induction procedures to ensure all contractors are aware of your COVID-19 controls ▶ As far as reasonably practicable site induction should be contactless, and if paper-based then persons should use their own pen to fill in any forms ▶ Ensure contractors, suppliers, and site visitors confirm they are well when 'signing in' ▶ As far as reasonably practicable facilitate contactless deliveries of materials and supplies to work sites, unless there are valid reasons to not do so (eg legal or regulatory compliance obligations associated with dangerous goods). Physical distancing should apply to any interactions that do occur ▶ If employees are working in an occupied home or premises, confirm that there is nobody at the premises that is either COVID-19 positive, in quarantine, or recovering from COVID-19. Further information should be requested from the occupier if anyone is displaying symptoms and are intending to be tested in the near future. <p>To assist with contact tracing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ You should put in place a process to enable workers, and other visitors to your workplace to sign in and out when they attend the workplace ▶ Keep a record of where all staff have worked in the last 21 days. This will assist with tracing if there is a COVID-19 exposure in a client's workplace.

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<p>4. Physical distancing at the workplace</p>	<p>An employer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable that the current physical distancing requirements are complied with. The current requirements are detailed on the WorkSafe Tasmania website.</p> <p>If it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the physical distancing requirements described above, then the employer should ensure that control measures are implemented in keeping with the requirements to manage the risks to health and safety relevant to COVID-19 as described in the "Managing Risks to Health and Safety" section of this document.</p> <p>A person at, entering or leaving a workplace must ensure that s/he complies with physical distancing requirements of that workplace, if it is reasonable to do so.</p> <p><i>Note: some premises may be exempt from the maximum density limits under the current Public Health Directions. Please refer to coronavirus.tas.gov.au for the latest advice and Directions.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As far as reasonably practicable all work practices on work sites are to be conducted using the appropriate density and physical distancing requirements. This may include measuring the area of a room/space and calculating its capacity against the current physical distancing requirements. ▶ It may not always be possible for workers and others to keep 1.5 metres apart at all times on a work site. In this instance, consider reducing the length of time workers spend in close proximity, and consider whether these tasks are essential, or can be staggered or rescheduled to a later date ▶ If a task must be completed and workers will be in close contact for prolonged periods, PPE equipment such as masks and gloves are recommended, where available ▶ Display signs at entrance of workplace and inside advising of physical distancing requirements ▶ Physical distancing requirements should apply to onsite amenities such as break rooms ▶ Stagger start, finish and break times where appropriate and consider adding additional spaces for breaks ▶ Vary tasks to reduce the number of people required in indoor areas ▶ Minimise the number of people within an area at any time by limiting access to the workplace or parts of the workplace to essential workers only ▶ Move work tasks to different areas of the workplace or off-site as far as reasonably practicable ▶ Consider separating workers into dedicated teams and have them work the same shift or work in a particular area and consider whether these dedicated teams can have access to their own meal areas or break facilities ▶ Minimise the use of shared equipment and tools. If sharing is unavoidable, the use of gloves is encouraged and the tools need to be disinfected regularly. Each worker/contractor must have their own gloves ▶ If appropriate for the work site and as far as reasonably practicable, create specific but safe walkways, preferably one way, throughout a site to maintain physical separation ▶ Reduce the number of workers in a vehicle travelling to work sites as far as reasonably practicable. Ensure physical distancing requirements are observed. ▶ If workers are required to travel together for work purposes and the trip is longer than 15 minutes, air conditioning must be set to external airflow rather than to recirculation or windows should be opened for the duration of the trip ▶ Require workers to interact using methods such as mobile phone or radio to communicate rather than face to face interaction, including for handovers ▶ If entering a private property to complete work, request clients or residents stay away from the area where workers are performing the work. Interactions that are required should be conducted at a distance or via other communication methods ▶ For work sites with personnel lifts, consider scheduling times for use of the hoist, promote the use of stairs, monitor overuse and discourage large congregations of workers waiting at hoist/lift entry points ▶ For display homes and showrooms, ensure physical distancing requirements are applied at all times with the total number of people gathering in such spaces to comply with any current Public Health direction. ▶ Practice physical distancing at all staff briefings.

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<p>5. Providing instruction, training and supervision in respect to COVID-19</p>	<p>The employer must provide each worker at the workplace (including contractors and volunteers) with information, training and instruction on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the risks in relation to COVID-19, and • the control measures implemented in the workplace to mitigate those risks, in relation to COVID-19. <p>The employer must provide adequate supervision to ensure that the control measures are implemented in the workplace in relation to COVID-19.</p> <p>The employer must also ensure that information and instruction is provided to other persons entering the workplace about the control measures in place to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and the requirements of those persons to apply the control measures.</p> <p>The information and instructions are to be in a format that is reasonable to the circumstances.</p> <p>A worker or other person, at the workplace or entering or leaving the workplace, must comply, so far as the person is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the employer to allow the employer to manage the risks to health and safety within the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure everyone is aware of their responsibility to protect themselves, other workers, and the public ▶ Provide workers with written advice on how to manage COVID-19 risks ▶ Provide information and support, including the contact details of industry specific mental health support agencies such as Beyond Blue and Lifeline, to workers for stress and mental health issues arising from COVID-19 ▶ Display signs around the workplace advising of risk control requirements. For example, covering coughs, maximum number of people in a room, not to enter workplace if unwell ▶ Provide workers with training in COVID-19 controls (conduct training using physical distancing) ▶ Brief workers on the symptoms of COVID-19. Tell workers to stay home if they aren't feeling well; even if they consider their symptoms minor ▶ If workers need personal protective equipment (PPE), train workers to use it correctly ▶ Ensure workers know what to do if someone at the workplace becomes infected with COVID-19 ▶ Give supervisors guidelines for ensuring COVID-19 controls are applied/enforced at all times ▶ Document/record COVID-19 procedures; provide training to workers in these ▶ Ensure appropriate signage at the entrance to a work site to ensure visitors are aware of the COVID-19 controls in place for that work site ▶ Keep notes of issues raised and discuss at staff meetings or toolbox talks.

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<p>6. Responding to an incident of COVID-19 in the workplace</p>	<p>The employer at a workplace must ensure that an emergency plan is prepared for the workplace that provides for emergency procedures, testing of the procedures and the provision of information, training and instruction to relevant workers in implementing the emergency procedures.</p>	<p>An emergency plan is a document that sets out instructions for workers and others in the case of an emergency.</p> <p>A COVID-19 emergency response plan should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How the business will respond in the event of contamination by a worker or customer ▶ Who has responsibilities in this event. <p>Immediately notify Public Health by phoning 1800 671 738 and follow their advice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Help the affected person receive medical treatment ▶ Identify who has been in close contact with the ill person ▶ Isolate the affected areas: keep workers, contractors, suppliers, visitors and clients away. You may need to shut down the work site until advised it is safe to reopen. <p>Organise cleaning of the area as directed by Public Health.</p> <p>For cleaning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review the Safe Work Australia guidance on cleaning and disinfecting workplaces ▶ Wear PPE: face mask, protective eyewear and gloves ▶ Remove soiled or contaminated items and dispose of them in a safe way ▶ Clean and disinfect all surfaces, tools, plant and equipment or items that may have been in contact with the ill person. <p>In some cases, you must notify WorkSafe Tasmania. Check the WorkSafe Tasmania website for requirements.</p> <p>You may need to include in your plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact details for people who have specific roles or responsibilities under the emergency plan. For example, managers, security, cleaners, or first aid officers ▶ Contact details for COVID-19 notification to Public Health ▶ A description of the method to alert people to an emergency or possible emergency – this may be affected by remote working ▶ Any changes to evacuation procedures or assembly points ▶ The post-incident follow-up process, including who must be notified. (This may include the process for notifying the business if a worker experiences an emergency while working from home.) ▶ If you share facilities, include a process for advising other businesses about a diagnosis of COVID-19 ▶ Procedures for testing the emergency plan, including the frequency of testing must be included ▶ Arrange training to ensure all staff are aware of, and understand the plan ▶ Usual obligations under relevant privacy legislation should be adhered to in responding to an incident of COVID-19 in the workplace/on a work site.

Acknowledgement

Information based on material from Safe Work Australia and WorkSafe New Zealand

Disclaimer

To ensure this information is easy to understand, we refer to 'employers' and their responsibilities. However, under the work health and safety laws, duties apply to a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) which includes employers and also others who engage workers. See [information about PCBUs](#) for more detail.