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, its 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-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 that 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.

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 to see if these apply to you.

Check in TAS

Recording people's entry into your workplace enables efficient contact tracing to happen if someone with COVID-19 comes into your workplace. It can help reduce the impact of COVID-19 in your workplace by identifying, assessing, and managing people who have potentially been exposed to COVID-19.

The Check in TAS app helps identifying people who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Many businesses are required (under Public Health Directions) to register for the Check in TAS app to collect contact information about everyone who spends time at their premises.

Check coronavirus.tas.gov.au/business-and-employees/ business-restrictions for the full list of mandated businesses.

Even if you are not required to use the app, it may be something you wish to implement as part of your COVID-19 Safety Plan as it is a simple and effective tool to assist in contact tracing.

Customers, patrons or other visitors can check in using a paper register if they do not have a suitable device. You can find a template for creating a register at worksafe.tas.gov.au/covidframework.

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 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 or transmission in your workplace.

You should:

► state how your workplace will help workers who need to isolate/quarantine

► outline the reporting mechanisms you will have in place so you can respond as soon as possible to a COVID-19 case

► identify who will lead the response and liaise with Public Health and other agencies; and how you will liaise with Public Health to coordinate appropriate communications about the case or outbreak to other people who are associated with your workplace

► outline how you will support Public Health contact tracing by collecting and providing any additional worker and visitor information that has not been collected via the Check in TAS app. This may include work rosters, manual check in/visitor log sheets, appointment books or spreadsheets

► outline how you will advise anyone you identify as a contact to quarantine at home and follow the quarantine instructions (see also contact tracing below)

► state how you will clean and disinfect the workplace.

Testing

Public Health will continue to offer testing to identify people infected with COVID-19.

Contact tracing

Contact tracing will also continue but will focus on identifying close contacts. A close contact is anyone who has had face-to-face contact with a confirmed case in their infectious period.

Whether you are considered to be a close, casual or low risk contact will depend on:

► the amount of time you were exposed to the infectious person

► how close you were to the person

► whether you and the person were wearing masks

► the vaccination status of the person

► your vaccination status

► the setting or location of the exposure.

Public Health will use a risk assessment to identify close, casual and low risk contacts and will undertake contact tracing by:

► interviewing the infectious person to find out who they live, work and socialise with

► using the Check in TAS data to identify people who may have visited a site that was also visited by the infectious person

► working with workplaces and exposure sites to identify people who may have been exposed to the infectious person.

Isolation and quarantine

Where a confirmed COVID-19 case has been identified in a workplace, Public Health will identify those people who will need to go into isolation or quarantine. Public Health will provide information to workplaces, including instructions isolation and quarantine. See coronavirus.tas.gov.au for up-to-date information on isolation and quarantine.

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 and search for 'outbreak'.

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.