Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

How to prepare your COVID Safe plan

This document outlines the minimum requirements of a Victorian workplace COVID-Safe Plan. You must have a COVID-Safe Plan in place if you require or approve work to be performed at your workplace. Depending on the size and complexity of your business, you may wish to tailor your plan accordingly. If your organisation already has a COVID Safe Plan, it is your responsibility to ensure that it addresses all the guidance and requirements outlined in this template.

You are not required to use a Victorian Government template in order to comply with the relevant public health directions. If you wish to use it, a blank template is available here.

Please note that although it is best practice and recommended, if your organisation has fewer than five employees you are not required to have a COVID-Safe Plan.

Instructions

1. Understand your responsibilities

Information on public health directions applying to employers is available at https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/creating-a-covid-safe-workplace.

You can also refer to the following guidance:

> WorkSafe: Managing COVID-19 risks – face coverings in workplaces
> DHHS: Preventing infection in the workplace
> DHHS: Preparing for a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace
> DHHS: Planning and responding to cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)
> DHHS: Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce COVID-19 transmission
> WorkSafe: Other relevant industry specific guidance

2. Prepare your plan

Your COVID Safe plan must set out, at a minimum:

> the process you have in place to keep records of all staff or visitors who attend your workplace;
> your actions to mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 in your workplace;
> the level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required; and
> how you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace.

3. Keep your plan up to date and ready

> Your COVID safe plan should be reviewed and updated routinely and when restrictions or public health advice changes.
> Organisations with multiple premises should complete a COVID safe plan for each workplace.
> You do not have to lodge your COVID plan with the Victorian Government. However, you may be required to provide the COVID safe plan to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or Worksafe Victoria upon request or in the event of a positive case at your workplace.

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4. Share your plan

> Once you have completed the plan, share it with your staff.

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant employer obligations
Hygiene		
Provide and promote hand sanitiser stations for use on entering the building and other locations at the worksite and ensure adequate supplies of hand soap and paper towels are available.	• *Location of hand sanitiser stations throughout the worksite.* • *Ensuring rubbish bins are available to dispose of paper towels.*	
Where possible: enhance airflow by opening windows and/or adjusting air conditioning.	• *Making sure that windows and air conditioning are set for optimum air flow at the start of each workday or shift.*	
In all areas of workplaces, ensure all staff wear a face covering and/or required PPE, unless a lawful exception applies. Ensure adequate face coverings and PPE are available to staff that do not have their own.	• *Identifying face coverings and PPE required for the workplace and train employees on when and how they need to be worn.* • *Monitoring use of face coverings by all employees, contractors and visitors unless a lawful exception applies.*	
Provide training to staff on the correct use and disposal of face coverings and PPE, and on good hygiene practices and slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).	• *Educating staff on hand and cough hygiene.* • *Reinforcing the importance of not attending work if unwell.* • *Ensuring appropriate use of face coverings and PPE.*	
Replace high-touch communal items with alternatives.	• *Swapping shared coffee and condiments for single serve sachets.* • *Installing no touch amenities such as contactless taps, rubbish bins and soap dispensers.* • *Avoid sharing of equipment such as phones, desks, headsets, offices, tools or other equipment.*	

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Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant employer obligations
Cleaning		
Increase environmental cleaning (including between changes of staff) and ensure high touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly (at least twice daily or twice each shift).	• *Identify high touch surfaces (lift buttons, door and cupboard handles, kitchen counters, touch screens, shared work equipment).* • *Providing information about the cleaning schedule.*	*Shared staff spaces must be cleaned at regular intervals e.g. after each break..*
Ensure adequate supplies of cleaning products, including detergent and disinfectant.	• *Identifying which products are required for thorough cleaning.* • *Monitoring supplies of cleaning products and regularly restock.*	

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Physical distancing and limiting workplace attendance		
Ensure that all staff that can work from home, do work from home.	• *Identifying the roles that can be performed from home or adapted to be performed from home.* • *Adapting working arrangements to enable working from home.* • *Regularly assessing staff in attendance at the workplace to determine whether they are required to be there or can work from home.*	
Establish a system that ensures staff members are not working across multiple settings/work sites.	• *Communicating the requirement for employees not to work across multiple sites.* • *Adjusting rosters and developing procedures to ensure employees do not work across multiple sites.* • *Developing a form for employees to declare that they have not worked across multiple worksites.*	*Employers must ensure that staff members are not working across other settings.* *Employees are required to declare to employers when they are working across multiple sites.*
Establish a system to screen employees and visitors before accessing the workplace. Employers cannot require employees to work when unwell.	• *Consider implementing temperature checking.*	*Employers cannot require employees to work when unwell. Employees must not attend their workplace if they are being tested for coronavirus and must notify employers if the test positive for the virus. Employees who test positive must not work.*

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Configure communal work areas so that there is no more than one worker per four square meters of enclosed workspace, and employees are spaced at least 1.5m apart. Also, consider installing screens or barriers.	*• Rearranging, removing or cordoning off furniture in common areas to ensure physical distancing, stagger seating so staff are not facing one another while on a break.* *• Consider implementing a density quotient or cap in each area (i.e. one person per 4sqm) and put up signage or posters to reflect the new limit.*	*The number of people allowed in shared staff spaces is limited to one person per four square meters.*
Use floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides between workstations or areas that are likely to create congregation of staff.	*• Identifying areas that require floor marking, such as lifts, kitchen areas and, printer collection areas*	
Modify the alignment of workstations so that employees do not face one another.	*• Identifying which workstations need to be modified.* *• Reconfiguring workstations so that employees do not face one another.*	
Minimise the build-up of employees waiting to enter and exit the workplace.	*• Allocating different doors for entry and exit.* *• Using an entry and exit system to the site that is as contactless as possible and quick to enter and exit.* *• Using floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides at entrances and exits.*	
Provide training to staff on physical distancing expectations while working and socialising (e.g. during lunchbreaks).	*• Developing and educating staff on strategies and work practice changes to maintain physical distancing.* *• Reinforcing messaging to staff that physical distancing needs to be maintained both during work and during social interactions*	
Review delivery protocols to limit contact between delivery drivers and staff.	*• Establishing contactless delivery or invoicing.* *• Displaying signage for delivery drivers.* *• Identifying designated drop off areas.*	
Review and update work rosters and timetables where possible to ensure temporal as well as physical distancing.	*• Staggering start and finish times shifts and break, to reduce usage of common areas at the same time.* *• Encouraging staff to minimise time on breaks in shared facilities with others.* *• Consider using cohorts of staff (during shift work). Ensure there is no contamination (mixing) of staff across different shifts.*	

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Where relevant, ensure clear and visible signage in areas that are open to the general public that specifies maximum occupancy of that space, as determined by the *'four square metre' rule.*	• *Outlining the maximum occupancy of areas that are open to the general public and providing information about signage.*	

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Record keeping		
Establish a process to record the attendance of customers, clients, visitors and workplace inspectors, delivery drivers. This information will assist employers to identify close contacts.	• *Establishing a process to record attendance (including labour hire, external contractors, cleaners, delivery drivers and clients), include the areas of the workplace accessed during each shift or visit.* • *Reviewing processes to maintain up-to-date contact details for all staff.* • *Providing information on protocols for collecting and storing information..*	*Workplaces are to establish and maintain a register of attendance for all workers, subcontractors, customers, clients and visitors (including workplace inspectors) to the worksite, who are present for 15 minutes or longer. Exceptions apply to customers entering retail businesses.* *Records are only to be used for tracing COVID-19 infection, and must be stored confidentially and securely.*
Provide guidance to staff on the effective use of the workplace OHS reporting system (where available).	• *Educating staff on how to meet OHS requirements, including recording information about any incidents*	

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Preparing your response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case		
Prepare or update your business continuity plan to consider the impacts of an outbreak and potential closure of the workplace.	• *Identifying the roles and responsibilities of employer and employees.* • *Preparing for absenteeism of staff members required to quarantine.* • *Describing key dependencies (e.g. third-party providers).* • *Describing how you will continue deliver essential services.* • *Planning to communicate with customers, suppliers, stakeholders in the event of a positive case.* • *Establishing processes for managing perishable stock.*	

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Prepare to assist DHHS with contact tracing and providing staff and visitor records to support contact tracing.	• *Establishing a process and ensuring readiness to provide records to DHHS and contact relevant staff members. This will include rosters and employee details.* • *Outlining key responsibilities and process for engaging with DHHS and undertaking employer-led contact tracing.*	*The employer/manager will prepare records from the period of 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms in the suspected case that includes all rosters and employee details along with customers, clients, visitors and workplace inspectors.* *This will assist in contact tracing should an employee test positive.*
Prepare to undertake cleaning and disinfection at your business premises. Assess whether the workplace or part of the workplace must be closed.	• *Implementing a process for the cleaning and disinfection of the employee's workspace and high touch surfaces, including the use of service providers.* • *Establish a process for determining whether closure or part closure of the business and/or implementation of other control measures are required to manage risk.*	*Where a case is confirmed to have been in the workplace, cleaning must be undertaken in accordance with DHHS guidance. Employers must undertake a risk assessment to determine whether the worksite (or part of the worksite) should be closed.* *Where a suspected case is present at the workplace in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or while symptomatic, employers must take all practicable steps to manage the risks posed by the suspected case, including cleaning the affected employee's workspace, areas where they attended and high-touch surfaces.*
Prepare for how you will manage a suspected or confirmed case in an employee during work hours.	• *Identifying an appropriate area to isolate staff members.* • *Communicating with the employee about the requirement to self-isolate and be tested.* • *Describing arrangements to isolate and transfer an unwell staff member from the premises to go home or get tested.* • *Outlining responsibility and process for entering details into the relevant OHS Management System.*	*An employee suspected to have COVID-19 is to be supported to travel home immediately OR to isolate at work if unable to travel home immediately. If isolating at work, the employee must wear a mask and be physically distancing from all other employees. An employer must request that an employee undergo a COVID-19 test and self-isolate.*
Prepare to notify workforce and site visitors of a confirmed or suspected case.	• *Regularly updating and managing a list with the contact details and date of attendance of visitors to the workplace, including staff and customers.* • *Establishing an effective way of quickly communicating with visitors to a workplace where there is or has been a suspected or confirmed case.*	*For a confirmed case, employers must inform staff, customers, clients, visitors and workplace inspectors who are or have been close contacts and direct them to stay in self-isolation.* *For a suspected case, employers must inform all staff at the workplace to be vigilant about the onset of COVID-19 symptoms, to self-isolate at symptom onset and be tested as soon as reasonably practicable.*

Guidance	Actions to consider	Relevant obligations
Prepare to immediately notify WorkSafe Victoria on 13 23 60 if you have a confirmed COVID-19 case at your workplace.	• *Establishing a process and responsibility for notifying WorkSafe Victoria.*	*Employers must immediately notify WorkSafe of a confirmed case by calling the mandatory incident notification hotline and then providing formal written notification within 48 hours.*
Confirm that your workplace can safely re-open and workers can return to work.	• *Establishing a process for confirming that a workplace is safe to reopen.* • *Establishing a process for confirming a worker (with a suspected or confirmed case) does not have COVID-19 before returning to physical worksite.* • *Establishing a process for notifying DHHS and Worksafe that the site is reopening.*	*Employers may reopen the worksite once they have assessed that all required measures within the directions have been completed (unless in a high-risk workplace setting).* *DHHS and WorkSafe must be notified that the workplace is reopening.*

Contacting the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Victorian Chamber's team of experienced health, safety and wellbeing and workplace relations advisors can assist members with a range of health, safety, wellbeing, employment, human resources and industrial relations issues.

Our experienced health, safety and wellbeing and workplace relations consultants can also provide assistance to both members and non-members on a range of more complex matters for a fee-for-service. The consultants can, among other things, provide health, safety and wellbeing consulting and training to employees, conduct investigations and provide representation at proceedings at the Fair Work Commission.

For assistance or more information, please contact the Advice Line on (03) 8662 5222.

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