

What to do if a worker has COVID-19

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Preparing workplaces for COVID-19



Preparing workers for COVID-19

▶ **What to do if a worker has COVID-19**

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Australia is continuing to closely monitor the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Cases of the COVID-19 virus are increasing in Australia and the situation is changing rapidly. You can access the latest information from australia.gov.au.

What should an employer do if a worker has COVID-19?

If your worker is confirmed to have COVID-19 you need to follow the health advice from the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 or your state or territory helpline.

What needs to be done to meet your work health and safety duty will depend on your circumstances. You should contact your [state or territory WHS regulator](#) for specific advice on your situation.

However, if you know a worker is confirmed to have the COVID-19 virus, you must make sure the worker does not return to work while they are infectious.

If you notice a worker showing other signs they may be unwell (e.g. frequent coughing) and you think they should not be at work, you should follow your usual workplace policies and procedures. This may include directing the worker to go home.

If you decide to require workers to stay away from work, you may still be obliged to pay them. You should contact the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) for further information on 13 13 94.

Generally, you must:

- **Identify the hazards.** For example: Is the worker still at work? Were they at the workplace while they may have been infectious or have they been identified by a public health authority as a 'close contact'?
 - A 'close contact' is someone who has been face-to-face for at least 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when that person was infectious.
- **Assess the risks.** For example: how much contact did the worker have with others or the workplace while possibly infectious?
- **Control the risks.** For example: If the infected worker had limited contact you may be able to evacuate that area, ensure it is deep cleaned, and send home workers who had contact with them in accordance with any health advice. If the worker had contact with several others or large parts of the workplace you may also need to direct all workers to self-isolate for 14 days.
- **Review the control measures.** You need to regularly review control measures to make sure they are working. For example, if other workers get sick this may mean your current control measures are not working as intended.

- **Consult with workers and other duty holders.** It is important to consult with your workers at all stages of this process and keep in touch with workers who may be isolated away from the workplace. You must also consult with other duty holders (For example, other businesses you share communal spaces with).

You may be asked to help health authorities trace close contacts, in which case, the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#) has published [guidance](#) on when disclosing personal information may be permitted.

What are the state and territory helplines an employer should contact if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

New South Wales - Healthdirect – 1800 022 222

Queensland - 13 Health – 13 43 25 84

Victoria - Coronavirus Hotline – 1800 675 398

South Australia - SA COVID-19 Information Line – 1800 253 787

Tasmania - Tasmanian Public Health Hotline – 1800 671 738

Western Australia - Use the National Coronavirus Information Helpline - 1800 020 080

Australian Capital Territory - Healthdirect – 1800 022 222

Northern Territory - Use the National Coronavirus Information Helpline - 1800 020 080

Related information

Workplace checklist - COVID-19

How to keep workers safe - COVID-19

What to do if a worker has COVID-19 - Infographic

5 things to do in your workplace: COVID-19 - Infographic

Workers: WHS advice for COVID-19

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Last modified on Thursday 2 April 2020 [11060]94695]



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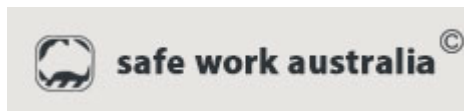
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