



Workplace Health and Safety

Electrical Safety Office

Workers' Compensation Regulator

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QUEENSLAND

Coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace risk management

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A novel (new) strain of coronavirus is causing a respiratory disease called COVID-19.

It doesn't matter if you're a worker or someone who is responsible for workers, you must identify and manage work health and safety risks including the exposure to COVID-19. Businesses should also plan to respond to cases of COVID-19 at work in line with advice provided by [Queensland Health](#) .

COVID-19 spreads from person to person in a similar way to the flu:

- from close contact with an infected person

- from touching objects or surfaces contaminated by the sneeze or cough of an infected person and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

COVID-19 can cause symptoms similar to the flu, including fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath.

Most people who are infected experience mild illness from which they fully recover. However, some people may develop more serious illness with pneumonia. People at increased risk include the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions or a weakened immune system.

It is important to remember that most people who become ill with respiratory symptoms at work are likely suffering from a cold, the flu or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19.

Self-quarantine

Workers and others must self-quarantine if they have:

- travelled overseas in the past 14 days

- been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

Workers who need to self-quarantine should notify their employer and stay away from work. They should seek immediate medical attention if they become ill during the quarantine period and call ahead of arriving and mention their travel or contact history.

Employers should make appropriate arrangements so that workers who need to self-quarantine stay away from work. Where possible, the worker should be provided with flexible work arrangements such as working from home.

Visit the [Queensland Health](#) website for self-quarantine requirements.

Preventing the spread of infection at work

Simple hygiene practices, similar to those used to protect against the flu, can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.

For workers:

- Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues immediately after use and wash your hands or apply hand sanitiser.

- Avoid touching your face, nose and mouth and shaking hands.

- Avoid close contact with anyone who is unwell. Try to stay 1.5 metres away from anyone coughing or sneezing.

Stay home if you are unwell.

For employers:

Provide hand washing facilities and make sure these are kept clean, properly stocked and in good working order.

Provide alcohol-based hand sanitiser, tissues and cleaning supplies.

Promote good hygiene practices, e.g. display hand hygiene [posters](#) [↗](#)

Keep the workplace clean and hygienic. Regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces such as door handles and workstations helps prevent contamination.

Visit the [Smartraveller](#) [↗](#) website for advice about overseas business travel.

Encourage workers who are sick with respiratory illness to stay home until they are recovered.

If someone becomes ill with respiratory symptoms at work, isolate them by placing them in a room or an area away from others.

Arrange for the person to be sent home or access medical assistance.

If a worker is confirmed to have COVID-19, call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for advice. Inform co-workers about possible exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19 but maintain confidentiality. Advise workers to seek immediate medical advice if they develop symptoms or are concerned about their health.

Follow advice from health authorities on social distancing and public gatherings.

For businesses where workers are at increased risk from contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 (e.g. healthcare industry), additional infection prevention and control practices are required. Guidance for specific industries is available at [www.health.gov.au](#) [↗](#) .

Personal protective equipment

PPE should be worn by:

people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 as advised by their doctor or Queensland Health.

people with close contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 (e.g. healthcare workers). PPE guidance for specific industries is available at [www.health.gov.au](#) [↗](#) .

Surgical masks are helpful in preventing people with COVID-19 from spreading infection to others but are not currently recommended for healthy members of the public.

Workers' compensation

WorkCover Queensland has produced [FAQs for workers, employers, medical providers and legal professionals](#) on workers' compensation and COVID-19.

Health and safety for telecommuters

Issues to consider and address when implementing a [telecommuting \(also called working from home, e-work and telework\) arrangement](#).

More information

Queensland Health: 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

National Coronavirus Health Information Line: 1800 020 080

[Queensland Health: COVID-19 information](#) [↗](#)

[Australian Government, Department of Health: COVID-19 information](#) [↗](#)

[Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws](#) [↗](#)

[Code of Practice: Managing the work environment and facilities](#) [↗](#)

[Smartraveller website](#) [↗](#)

[World Health Organisation: \[Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19\]\(#\)](#) [↗](#)

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