Victoria’s roadmap: Warehousing and Wholesaling

On 6 September, the Victorian Government announced Victoria’s roadmap for reopening which outlines considered and gradual steps to ensure that businesses can open safely and effectively.

As many Victorian businesses reopen, the priority will be the health and safety of workers and customers.

The industry roadmap includes four steps to easing restrictions and reopening businesses. These steps will be subject to ‘trigger points’, which are a point for review by our public health team to consider any potential changes to the restrictions based on case numbers, testing numbers and other factors. The trigger points mean that metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria may take steps (and move to associated restriction levels) at different times. Each industry will also have a different restriction level depending on which step we are in.

The below Warehousing and Wholesaling Roadmap is intended to assist warehousing and wholesaling businesses to prepare to safely operate in accordance with the easing of restrictions, while also ensuring the public feels confident that their health and safety is being protected. This sector includes warehousing and wholesaling workplaces such as facilities used for bulk sales, storage, breakdown, sorting, picking, packing, e-commerce pick/pack and bulk non-chilled distribution.

The current restriction levels for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria are highlighted in the below roadmap.

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Status as at 11.59pm on 27 October

**Victoria’s roadmap: Postal and non-chilled Distribution**

On 6 September, the Victorian Government announced Victoria’s roadmap for reopening which outlines considered and gradual steps to ensure that businesses can open safely and effectively.

The industry roadmap includes four steps to easing restrictions and reopening businesses. These steps will be subject to ‘trigger points’, which are points for review for our public health team to consider any potential changes to the restrictions based on case numbers, testing numbers and other factors. The trigger points mean that metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria may take steps (and move to associated restriction levels) at different times. Each industry will also have a different restriction level depending on which step we are in.

The below [Postal and Non-Chilled Distribution Roadmap](https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-roadmaps) is intended to assist postal and non-chilled distribution businesses to prepare to safely operate in accordance with the easing of restrictions, while also ensuring the public feels confident that their health and safety is being protected. This sector includes postal and non-chilled distribution workplaces such as facilities used for sorting of mail and parcels, cross-docking, loading for non-chilled distribution and vehicle fleet for last mile delivery.

The current restriction levels for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria are highlighted in the below roadmap.

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Current restrictions on warehousing and wholesaling

All businesses need to know their obligations and ensure they have an understanding of the current restrictions in place throughout Victoria.

Under directions issued under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, all warehousing and wholesaling businesses must abide by the following restrictions in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria respectively, effective from 11.59pm 27 October.

These restrictions apply to all warehousing and wholesaling workplaces such as facilities used for bulk sales, storage, breakdown, sorting, picking, packing, e-commerce pick/pack and bulk distribution. These restrictions do not apply to supermarket and chilled distribution centres.

Open with a COVIDSafe Plan (metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria): These guidelines outline the requirements for operating with a COVIDSafe Plan for warehousing and wholesaling businesses in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

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**COVIDSafe Plan**

**Metropolitan Melbourne:** If your warehousing or wholesaling business is located in metropolitan Melbourne, you must have a High Risk COVIDSafe Plan.

**Regional Victoria:** If your warehousing or wholesaling business is located in regional Victoria, you must have a COVIDSafe Plan.

**Cleaning requirements**

- Work Premises must be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis including:
  - Ensuring that shared spaces and spaces open to members of the public at any Work Premises are cleaned on a regular basis, including twice a day for frequently touched surfaces
  - Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of toilets and bathrooms.

**Metropolitan Melbourne:** Employers must ensure all areas where workers are working are cleaned at least daily.

**Communal facilities**

- Density quotient (one person per four square metres) applies to shared spaces (e.g. lunchrooms).

**Customer areas**

- Density quotient (one person per four square metres) applies to any publicly accessible areas at the work premises.

**Face mask requirements**

- Workers must wear face masks (exemptions apply).
- Employers must provide adequate face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) to workers that do not have their own.

**Metropolitan Melbourne:** Employers must have a personal protective equipment training plan in place.

**Record keeping requirements**

- Businesses must keep records of worker and visitor details for contact tracing where a person attends work premises for longer than 15 minutes, (this includes contractors and delivery workers). Venue operators must collect the following information: first name, contact phone number, time and date in which they visited, and the areas of the premises that they attended.

**Metropolitan Melbourne:**

- Employers must have a cleaning log on display in all shared workplaces and publicly accessible areas which sets out the dates, times and frequency with which the relevant area has been cleaned, including (but not limited to) frequently touched surfaces, toilets and handrails; and shifts or other relevant worker group changes (where applicable) to show that relevant areas have been cleaned in between shift changes.
- Workers to declare in writing at the start of each shift but before entering a Work Premises that the worker is free of coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, has not been in contact with a confirmed case and is not currently required to self-isolate or self-quarantine.

**Signage requirements**

- Display signage at entrance to each enclosed space and outdoor service areas indicating maximum capacity.

**Workforce bubbles**

- Workers who can work from home should work from home.
- Employer must not require a staff member to work at more than one work site (of the employer, unless it is not practical. The system to minimise this must be demonstrated (e.g. rosters).
- Where a staff member is working for different employers across multiple premises, they must provide a written declaration to employers, and employers must record this.

**COVID Marshals**

- Wholesale trade and warehousing businesses in metropolitan Melbourne are recommended to implement a COVID Marshal for each worksite.

Last updated: 30 October 2020
Current restrictions on postal and non-chilled distribution

All businesses need to know their obligations and ensure they have an understanding of the current restrictions in place throughout Victoria.

Under directions issued under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act, all postal and non-chilled distribution businesses must abide by the following restrictions in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria respectively, effective from 11.59pm 27 October.

These restrictions apply to all postal and non-chilled distribution workplaces such as facilities used for sorting of mail and parcels, cross-docking, loading for distribution and vehicle fleet for last mile delivery.

Open with a COVIDSafe Plan (metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria): These guidelines outline the requirements for operating with a COVIDSafe Plan for postal and non-chilled distribution businesses in Victoria.

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Last updated: 30 October 2020
Six COVIDSafe Principles

All work premises must have a COVIDSafe Plan. A COVIDSafe Plan applies the six COVIDSafe Principles and sets out actions to help prevent the introduction of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace. Display COVIDSafe signage in appropriate, high visibility locations.

1. Ensure physical distancing
All people in the workplace should be at least 1.5 metres apart and there should be no overcrowded areas. This means:
• Staff should work from home if possible
• Ensure staff and customers are at least 1.5 metres apart at all times. Where this is not possible, the duration of the close contact should be minimised
• Ensure the workplace abides by the four square metre rule density quotient
• Limit the total number of staff and customers in an enclosed area
• No carpooling between staff unless there is no alternative mode of transport to work

2. Wear a face mask
Staff and customers must always wear a face mask except where health or other exemptions apply. This means:
• Provide face masks to employees throughout the shift
• Ensure all staff wear face masks while working
• Do not take face masks off when talking on the phone or with others
• Use appropriate level of PPE for high-risk settings

3. Practise good hygiene
Operators must regularly clean high touch-surfaces and encourage good hygiene practices by staff and customers. This means:
• Schedule regular cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (including all surfaces and handrails) and make gloves available for this purpose
• Encourage regular handwashing by staff and customers and make soap and hand sanitiser available for all staff and customers throughout the workplace

4. Keep records and act quickly if staff become unwell
Have a strict policy that any staff who feel unwell must stay at home. This means:
• Support staff to stay home and get tested even if they only have mild symptoms
• Have a plan to immediately close down for cleaning and contact tracing if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
• Keep records of staff and customer details for contact tracing

5. Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces
All activities are to be held in outside areas where practical, which don’t have a roof or ceiling. This includes:
• Staff meetings
• Lunchbreaks
• Customer registration

6. Create workforce bubbles
Limit the number of people staff have prolonged close contact with. This means:
• Keep pools of staff rostered on the same shifts
• Avoid overlap in shift changes
• Reduce staff working across multiple sites
Creating a COVIDSafe workplace: warehousing and wholesaling, postal and non-chilled distribution

All postal, non-chilled distribution, warehousing and wholesaling facilities must ensure they apply the six COVIDSafe Principles to help prevent the introduction of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace.

Workplaces included: sorting facilities, warehouses, non-chilled distribution centres, wholesalers, delivery drivers, post offices, loading docks and depots, logistics facilities and import/export terminals.

Density quotient of one worker per four square metres applies for workers in common areas (e.g. lunchrooms)

Air conditioner set to optimum air flow at the start of each workday

Separate entrances and exits

Workers must wear a face mask

Hand sanitiser made available in all spaces

Cleaning and disinfecting schedule

Implement and display a cleaning schedule so it is easily accessible to staff

Record keeping at entrance for visitors to complete

Visitors to the facility need to complete a wellness declaration and provide contact details

Floor markings spaced at least 1.5 metres apart to minimise contact

Encourage opening of windows or roller doors to circulate fresh air

Create ‘workforce bubbles’

Reduce the number of workers interacting with each other by creating ‘pools’ of staff and reducing rotations

Administration and support services

Back of house functions like admin must be done from home unless it is not reasonably practical or possible to do so

Delivery docking

Drivers should stay in their vehicle where possible
1. Ensure physical distancing

Physical distancing remains one of the most effective ways of minimising the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and is a vital part of creating a safe working environment.

Employers should implement physical distancing measures to create a COVIDSafe workplace. This means keeping a minimum distance of 1.5m between workers, visitors and customers.

The density quotient (four square metres of space per worker) applies within each work zone.

Employers must implement physical distancing measures within postal, non-chilled distribution, warehousing and wholesaling facilities to create a COVIDSafe workplace.

Ensuring physical distancing in your workplace

**Staff breaks**

Spread out staff break times to reduce the number of people using communal facilities at the same time. Encourage staff to take breaks outdoors.

**Minimise contact**

Removing excess chairs and tables from communal break areas to encourage staff to stay a minimum 1.5 metres from one another.

**Communal facilities**

Apply density quotients to shared spaces (e.g. tearooms) to limit staff gatherings in condensed areas.

**Floor markings**

Use floor markings to provide workers and visitors with physical distancing guides in areas that are likely to create a congregation of staff (e.g. facilities entrances, break areas, etc).

**Maintain physical distancing**

Provide physical barriers to ensure physical distancing is maintained; consider installation of sneeze guards between operational areas or desk spaces between staff; and separate entry and exit points if practicable.

**Work zones**

Limit the movement of staff around the facility by establishing designated work areas for certain activities and limit workers to their respective zones where practical.

**Staff training**

Provide all workers with training and guidance on physical distancing expectations while undertaking work tasks and socialising during breaks.

**Work from home arrangements**

Develop and provide staff members with IT related guidance to enable remote working arrangements, including connecting to the internet, use of VPN services, accessing relevant software and utilising platforms to facilitate virtual collaboration.

**Implement virtual meetings**

Staff pre-shift meetings and training should be held virtually or in areas that allow for appropriate physical distancing between staff, preferably outdoors. Food and beverages should not be shared.

**Minimising rotation between functions**

To the extent possible under OHS obligations, limit rotation of staff between functions/activities to ensure ease of tracing. Movements between sites should be strictly limited to critical requirements such as responding to safety incidents or provision of emergency maintenance.

**Discourage carpooling**

Employers should discourage their workers from carpooling, unless it is not otherwise reasonable and practical for either person to get to work (e.g. they don’t have a licence or access to a car).

**Install screens or barriers**

Where 1.5 metre distancing between employees is not possible, install screens or plastic strip curtains where practicable to minimise the risk of droplet transmission from one employee to another. Screens need to be high enough to prevent potential droplets from coughing or sneezing directly reaching other employees.
1. Ensure physical distancing (continued)

Physical distancing remains one of the most effective ways of minimising the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and is a vital part of creating a safe working environment.

Configuring communal work areas
Where possible, work activities should be divided into separate work zones based on the size of the facility, distribution of shifts and tasks, etc. Each zone must have a dedicated break area in order to avoid workers from different zones mingling. It is important to ensure that social distancing requirements at each work zone/break area are met (e.g. no more than one worker per four square metres of enclosed workspace, and employees are at least 1.5m apart at all times).

Separate entrances and exits
Where possible, each shift should enter and exit through different entrances to avoid co-mingling across shifts and minimise the build-up of workers waiting to enter/exit the workplace.

Employers can minimise the build-up of employees waiting to enter and exit the workplace and various parts of the workplace by:
- allocating different doors for entry and exit throughout the workplace where possible
- using an entry and exit system to the workplace 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

Contactless delivery
Minimise contacts between delivery drivers and staff through implementation of contactless delivery. Where possible, the requirement to obtain signatures on delivery should be removed.

Interactions with visitors
Before entry onto work sites, all visitors should complete a questionnaire declaring that they are free of symptoms, have not been in contact with a confirmed case and have not been directed to isolate or quarantine. Visitors to facilities, such as delivery drivers, should not mingle with facility staff and should minimise time spent in/on the grounds. Only essential visitors are permitted on-site such as emergency maintenance providers.

Minimising rotation between functions
To the extent possible under OHS obligations, limit rotation of staff between functions/activities to ensure ease of tracing. Movements between sites should be strictly limited to critical requirements such as responding to safety incidents or provision of emergency maintenance.
2. Wear a face mask

You and your staff must wear a face mask at work, and to and from work, unless you have a lawful reason for not doing so.

Employers must ensure employees wear a face mask while at work, unless an exemption applies.

A face mask is a fitted face mask that covers the nose and mouth to provide the wearer protection against infection. Face shields on their own do not meet these requirements. Please refer to the Department of Health and Human Services’ guidelines for further information.

Employers should encourage their workers to bring their own face mask where possible, however there is an obligation for employers to provide a face mask if a worker does not have one. Where the work or task requires the use of specific types of face masks in the workplace, these must be provided by the employer. Where a worker seeks to provide and use their own face mask at work, an employer must ensure that it is meeting its obligations under the current Public Health Directions and the OHS legislative framework.

Employers have a responsibility to identify whether there is a risk to the health of employees from exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) at their workplace.

Employers and workers have legal duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. See WorkSafe Victoria for information about minimising health risks in your workplace.

Wearing a face mask

Responsibility for wearing a face mask

Responsibility for wearing a face mask rests with the individual. Employers must take reasonable steps to ensure their employees wear a face mask at all times when working at the employer’s premises, unless a lawful exception applies.

When can workers remove their face mask?

Workers must wear their face mask at all times unless they are eating or drinking (or if a lawful exemption applies). However, if the worker enters a communal space or takes a break from the meal (for example to use the facilities or to step outside to take a call), then the face mask must be worn.

How should individuals change their face mask?

It is recommended that individuals carry a spare face mask in a plastic zip pocket and to change their face mask when required. A workplace could also consider displaying signage that highlights the importance of washing hands before and after changing a face mask.

Provide training/guidance on how to use personal protective equipment (PPE)

Provide all workers with trainings/guidance on how to use personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. masks, face shields, gloves, etc) while undertaking work tasks and socialising during breaks.

Where personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face masks or face shields is relied on as a control measure:

- employers must ensure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available on site and within easy access
- appropriate training on the wearing, removal and maintenance of the personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be provided, along with supervision to ensure it is appropriately used
- disposable face masks should be disposed of after every break
- non-disposable face masks need to be appropriately cleaned and stored when not in use
- face shields or protective eyewear that is reusable must be appropriately cleaned after each use
3. Practise good hygiene

Additional hygiene measures are a priority. Business managers should review these guidelines to maintain good hygiene in their premises, and document hygiene practises in their COVIDSafe plan.

Health and hygiene go hand in hand. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your staff, business owners are encouraged to refer to WorkSafe Victoria, ‘How employers can use occupational health and safety (OHS) practice to plan for a pandemic’.

The Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 set out the requirements for businesses registered under the Act. Proprietors and staff should be familiar with the Australian Standards as they relate to their premises and businesses.

Workplace cleaning and disinfecting

Undertake initial pre-opening deep cleaning and implement an environmental cleaning schedule to ensure frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces and bathrooms.

Further advice about cleaning can be found at DHHS cleaning and disinfecting information.

Cleaning and disinfecting schedule

Ensure surfaces are cleaned regularly, and high-touch surfaces cleaned at least twice on each given day.

For facilities in metropolitan Melbourne, employers must ensure all areas where workers are working are cleaned at least daily and must have a cleaning log on display in all shared workspaces and publicly accessible areas which sets out the dates, times and frequency with which the relevant area has been cleaned, including (but not limited to) frequently touched surfaces, toilets and handrails; and shifts or other relevant worker group changes (where applicable) to show that relevant areas have been cleaned in between shift changes.

Accessible cleaning products and disinfectants

Make cleaning products available near commonly used surfaces where possible (for example, placing hand sanitiser near the register, on tables and chairs, and in bathrooms).

Reduce high-touch points

To minimise the risk of high-touch communal items, businesses can install touchless appliances wherever possible (e.g. contactless payments). When it is unavoidable (e.g. microwaves, light switches, etc.) cleaning products should be available for workers to use before and after use.

Cleaning inside of vehicles between shifts

As work vehicles could be shared by number of workers, employers must ensure they are thoroughly cleaned after each shift. Exceptions could apply to vehicles used by single workers (e.g. trucks).

Educate customers and staff

Display posters on good hygiene and handwashing practises in prominent places and establish hygiene stations (with hand sanitiser) at entrances and throughout the workplace to encourage hand hygiene of staff and customers.

Free infection control training

Free, short, accredited training is available to help staff identify and manage the ongoing risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in the workplace. Free infection control training will help businesses prepare to safely reopen and ensure their customers and workforce are protected.

Promotion of hygiene tips for workers

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash or disinfect hands after making or receiving deliveries.
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve.
- Wash hands after making deliveries.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid high-touch areas, where possible,
- If you are required to wear gloves do not touch your face with gloved hands.
- Take care when removing gloves. Ensure you wash your hands after removing them.
- Wash your clothes as soon as you get home.

Workplaces should regularly check that they are complying with current directions and advice provided by health authorities.
4. Keep records and act quickly if staff or customers become unwell

All businesses must keep records of every person who attends the workplace and should have a response plan, as part of their COVIDSafe plan, ready for the possibility of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19) at their premises.

Keeping records

Workplace attendance register

Under current public health advice, all Victorian workplaces are required to establish and maintain a ‘workplace attendance register’ of every person who attends the workplace for a period of more than 15 minutes. This includes all workers (including sub-contractors) and any customers, delivery drivers or visitors permitted in the workplace (including workplace inspectors).

If a staff member or customer tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), a current and accurate workplace attendance register will allow the employer to immediately identify anyone who has been in close contact with that person within the 48 hours prior to the onset of their symptoms.

For more information regarding the definition of a close-contact, visit DHHS.

If a customer or employee who is a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) has attended your business while they are infectious, you must:

- **Undertake a risk assessment**
  
  You must undertake a risk assessment to help determine what actions are required. This may include closing part or all of the work premises to allow a comprehensive clean, as well as the identification and notification of close contacts.
  
  For more information see the Workplace guidance for managing suspected and confirmed cases (including risk assessment template).

- **Contact DHHS and WorkSafe**
  
  - Notify DHHS of the case as per the Employer obligations in the Workplace Directions.
  
  - Consult with DHHS on whether the business is required to stay closed for a short period to facilitate cleaning and enable contact tracing.
  

- **Determine hot spots**
  
  - Determine what areas of the business were visited, used, or impacted by the person with coronavirus (COVID-19).

- **Clean the premises**
  
  - Close the affected area to prevent access prior to and during cleaning and disinfection.
  
  - Consider engaging suitably qualified personnel to clean and disinfect the area.
  
  - Open doors and windows to increase air circulation.
  
  - The workplace should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before it can be re-opened and workers can return to work.


Workplace attendance register

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4. Keep records and act quickly if staff or customers become unwell (continued)

All businesses must keep records of every person who attends the workplace and should have a response plan, as part of their COVIDSafe Plan, ready for the possibility of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19) at their premises.

Next steps: Slowing the spread

**DHHS actions**

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will liaise with operators where someone has been at the business while infectious with coronavirus (COVID-19). DHHS may request information from the operator to assist with contact tracing. DHHS may also request the operator to assist with contact tracing. DHHS will contact anyone who is identified as a close contact of the case.

**Business actions**

Work with DHHS to ensure that all appropriate preventative measures have been taken prior to reopening the business. Provide DHHS with a list of the customers, staff, and other visitors (for example, contractors, delivery workers) who may be close or casual contacts. Employers must keep a record of all workers and visitors who attend the workplace for longer than 15 minutes over the past 28 days. Any staff member who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) should remain in home quarantine until they have been notified by DHHS that they are no longer required to quarantine and have met its criteria for release. The staff member should follow DHHS guidance and their employer’s policy.

**Contingency plans**

If multiple staff are directed to be quarantined and this affects operational capacity, the business will need to consider its own contingency plans for disposing of raw materials (especially fresh ingredients), any work in progress, or short shelf-life stock to ensure food safety is maintained.

**A note on privacy**

Please respect the privacy of people with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) and treat their condition with understanding and compassion. If a staff member is quarantining, check in on their wellbeing regularly and monitor their mental health.

**Additional resources**

Staff who have been required to self quarantine after a coronavirus (COVID-19) test may be eligible to receive a one-off payment of $450 from the Victorian Government. Staff who are confirmed as coronavirus (COVID-19) positive may be eligible to receive a one-off $1500 payment from Commonwealth Government’s Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment for Victoria. Further information on coronavirus-related pay and leave entitlements can be found through the Fair Work Ombudsman at:

- Pay and Leave During Coronavirus
- Health and Safety in the Workplace During Coronavirus
5. Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces

In Victoria, employers have OHS duties and obligations to do what is reasonably practicable to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees.

As part of creating a safe working environment that addresses risks associated with potential exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19), businesses should have a plan in place to minimise the amount of interactions conducted in enclosed spaces and maximise ventilation, air quality and use of outdoor spaces.

This means, wherever possible, moving activities outside or to well-ventilated areas and keeping doors and windows open as practicable to ensure maximum ventilation.

Actions your business can take

**Air quality and ventilation**
Maximise airflow by opening windows and outside doors where possible to increase ventilation. Use air conditioning to enhance the flow of air, however ensure that you are not using the ‘recirculate’ mode.

**Air quality when cleaning**
Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation before commencing cleaning and disinfection. Keep doors and windows open after cleaning and disinfection to allow the cleaning agents to disperse in the airflow.

**Do not use recirculated air**
Avoid recirculating air by avoiding the use of fans, air-conditioning or climate control in an enclosed space.

**Move meetings and functions outside**
Where possible, move internal meetings and activities to an outdoor area. Encourage staff to take their lunch breaks and any other breaks outdoors as well. A pergola may be useful for shade or rain protection, and to maximise airflow.

**Work vehicle limit**
Consider limits on workers per work vehicle e.g. one worker per row of seats, seated diagonally opposite.

**Staff change rooms**
Increase the number of areas for changing, or allow more time for changing, and consider staggering change times where practicable.
6. Create workforce bubbles

Having ‘workforce bubbles’ can help minimise the risk of infection and support contact tracing initiatives.

A ‘workforce bubble’ is a group of workers who limit their in-person interactions to other members of the group. This strategy focuses on reducing the number of individuals a worker comes into contact with, rather than the number of interactions. Should a worker test positive or have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), it will contain the spread to a minimum number of people within the bubble, rather than requiring the whole business to undergo isolation.

To minimise possible exposure and contact, businesses should:

**Limit**
the number of people that staff have prolonged close contact with

**Modify**
processes to minimise interactions between staff members during breaks or when transitioning into or out of work periods where possible

**Consult**
with staff whose work is not essential to the physical operation of the business to determine if working from home or remotely is reasonably practicable

**Review**
shift arrangements to create smaller teams and avoid mixing staff across shifts

### Actions your business can take

**Have ‘pools’ of rostered staff**
Reviewing shift arrangements to create smaller teams and have each team work independently (known as cohorting) and avoid mixing staff across shifts.

**Stagger shifts**
Stagger or increase the time between shifts to eliminate bottlenecks and avoid intermingling between different teams.

**Define work zones**
Define work zones in order to keep workers spread out and prevent accidental worker congregation.

**Separate communal areas**
Separate communal areas such as change rooms and tea rooms per workforce bubble to minimise intermingling between different teams.

**Record keeping of contacts**
Keep records that will help businesses enforce workforce bubbles, such as knowing which staff are in different pools, start and end times of shifts etc. Employers must keep a record of all workers and visitors who attend the workplace for longer than 15 minutes in the past 28 days.

**Ensure staff members are not working across multiple work sites**
Employers must keep a log of all employees working across multiple sites including date, time and place of attendance. Employees must provide a written declaration to each employer to advice that they are working at more than one work site.
Creating a (High Risk) COVIDSafe Plan

Every business is required to complete a COVIDSafe Plan in order to reopen their workplace.

Warehousing and wholesaling, postal and bib-chilled distribution businesses located in metropolitan Melbourne must have a completed High Risk COVIDSafe Plan for each workplace in metropolitan Melbourne.

Warehousing and wholesaling, postal and non-chilled distribution business located in regional Victoria, are not required to complete the High Risk COVIDSafe Plan and instead must complete a COVIDSafe Plan.

As part of a spot check by Victoria Police or other authorities, businesses must be able to demonstrate that they have an adequate (High Risk) COVIDSafe Plan in place, and that the requirements of their (High Risk) COVIDSafe Plan are being implemented.

If a business has an existing (High Risk) COVIDSafe Plan, you must conduct regular reviews to ensure it meets up-to-date requirements (e.g. on face masks).

Your (High Risk) COVIDSafe Plan must set out:

✓ Your actions to help prevent the introduction of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace
✓ The level of face mask or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce
✓ How you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace
✓ How you will meet all of the requirements set out by the Victorian Government. Some higher-risk industries or workplaces have additional requirements of employers and staff.

Workplaces should regularly check that they are complying with current directions and advice provided by health authorities.

Occupational Health and Safety Act

A COVIDSafe Plan forms part of the development of a safe system of work.

Workplaces should also note that the workplace health and safety obligations remain under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) with respect to identifying hazards and eliminate or, where it is not possible to eliminate, reduce risks as far as reasonably applicable.

Staff must also comply with their obligations under the OHS Act.

For further information on your obligations under the OHS Act, please visit the WorkSafe website.

For more information about creating a COVIDSafe workplace, please visit:

• WorkSafe: Coronavirus (COVID-19)
• WorkSafe: Preparing a pandemic guide
• DHHS: Business and industry - coronavirus (COVID-19)
• DHHS: Preventing infection in the workplace
• DHHS: Workplace obligations
• DHHS: Confirmed case in the workplace

For more information and FAQs, visit: COVIDSafe Plan FAQs
Compliance and enforcement

Venues should regularly check that they are complying with current directions and advice provided by health authorities.

Each business has an obligation to ensure that their workplace is compliant and has been cleaned and disinfected prior to re-opening or re-commencing operations.

Workplaces may consider nominating a staff member to be the COVID-19 Response Officer (or similar) to oversee the implementation of the workplace’s coronavirus (COVID-19) plan, and ensure that correct processes are being followed, any relevant documentation is complete, staff are trained, and procedures are kept up-to-date to comply with current health information.

Evidence of compliance with the directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer may be requested from a relevant compliance/enforcement officer. Victoria Police may conduct spot checks to ensure compliance with the directions of the Chief Health Officer. WorkSafe will continue compliance and enforcement action under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act).

Where can I find further information on safely reopening my workplace?

Business Victoria is ready to support businesses and answer questions about preparing for a safe reopening. Business Victoria can be contacted on 13 22 15 or online by the Contact Us form.

For information on health and safety requirements under the OHS Act, businesses should refer to WorkSafe Victoria’s website or contact its advisory service on 1800 136 089.

How will you enforce compliance? Who will enforce it?

Victoria Police, and other authorities involved in the regulation of businesses may conduct spot checks to ensure compliance with the directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

WorkSafe will continue compliance and enforcement action under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act). For information on health and safety requirements under the OHS Act, businesses should refer to WorkSafe Victoria’s website or contact its advisory service on 1800 136 089.

Fines and penalties

Victoria Police can issue on the spot fines of up to $1,652 for individuals and up to $9,913 for businesses for:

- Refusing or failing to comply with the emergency directions;
- Refusing or failing to comply with a public health power direction; or
- Refusing or failing to comply with a direction by the Victorian Chief Health Officer.

Fines can be extended through the Magistrates’ Court to a maximum of $20,000 for individuals and $100,000 for businesses.

WorkSafe may take a range of compliance and enforcement action against an employer which fails to comply with its duties under the OHS Act.
COVID Marshals

Warehousing, wholesaling, postal and non-chilled distribution businesses in metropolitan Melbourne should implement a COVID Marshal for each worksite. COVID Marshals are responsible for supporting site compliance and providing advice on appropriate physical distancing, hygiene and records requirements detailed in the roadmap.

COVID Marshals are appointed by the respective site managers and are responsible for supporting site compliance and providing advice to employers and workers on the following measures:

- Ensuring workers practise appropriate physical distancing measures
- Ensuring workers practise minimum-level hygiene measures (as per Infection Control Awareness training)
- Ensuring adequate ventilation
- Maintaining accurate and robust record keeping (subject to audit)
- Informing required updates to respective COVIDSafe Plans.

The COVID Marshal is also the lead Point of Contact for contact management.

COVID Marshals should be trained in:

- Infection Control Awareness Training; and
- First Aid (Level 2) (recommended).

Infection control awareness training is available from:

Site managers can appoint multiple COVID Marshals. The role does not need to be a single dedicated appointment, however, the COVID Marshal role must be their primary role when on duty (i.e. an existing HSR or Site Supervisor can also be appointed as COVID Marshal concurrent with their extant duties, however their COVID Marshal duties must account for >50 per cent of their daily work activities).
Cleaning guidelines – building owners and managers

All building owners and managers must ensure their workers follow the below COVIDSafe cleaning guidance to help prevent the introduction of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace.

Documentation
Ensure there is documented cleaning specifications, schedule or scope of works in place that define required cleaning activities and standards.

Storage
Ensure your buildings' cleaners room and laundry supplies rooms are clean and staff can come in and out easily.

Clean and safe environment
Is the responsibility of the owner occupiers or business owners to ensure cleaning is performed to the expected standard. This can be achieved by either an in-house or contracted cleaning services. Ensure equipment, cleaning products and personal protective equipment is provided to enable best practice cleaning to be performed.

Communication
Clear line of communication need to be set up between all parties i.e. building occupier/manager and its occupants (staff, tenants, visitors, customers) the cleaning service provider and the cleaning staff.

Risk-based cleaning
Target high use communal areas like chilled areas, kitchens and toilets that may require higher frequency cleaning with appropriate cleaning product. Have ability to scale cleaning services in the event of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case.

Roles and responsibilities
Define the responsibility for each role that has a cleaning duty. Agree who will be responsible for monitoring cleaning quality and that it meets the expected standard. Provide workplace cleaning training for staff who have site specific cleaning duties and to support any changes in cleaning schedules.

For the latest information on cleaning guidance, visit DHHS: coronavirus.vic.gov.au
Please note that the checklists below outline the restrictions and requirements that apply from 11.59pm 27 October 2020.

Checklist for business owners/managers

❑ **Prepare your COVIDSafe Plan**
  - Every business is required to have a COVIDSafe Plan that is regularly updated in order to reopen their workplace. Please note, if you are a wholesale trade or warehouse business located in metropolitan Melbourne, you must have a High Risk COVIDSafe Plan.

❑ **Ensure workplace is set up to adhere to the density quotient**
  - A density quotient of 1 person per 4 square metres of the area accessible to workers.
  - All seating is spaced so that workers are 1.5 metres apart when seated.

❑ **Prepare a cleaning schedule**
  - Businesses should conduct a deep clean of the premise.
  - Establish new processes and schedules for cleaning and sanitising to maintain good hygiene, including frequent cleaning of high touch points (see our Cleaning and Sanitising Fact Sheet).

❑ **Signage requirements**
  - Display signage for staff and customers in appropriate, high visibility locations (e.g. workplace entrance) to include:
    - Information on maximum number of customers allowed into the space.
    - Information about the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the need to stay home when unwell.
    - Hygiene and physical distancing practices.
  - Display a poster at the workplace confirming staff have reviewed the guidelines and evidence that at least one staff member has completed the recommended training.
  - Promote physical distancing, including between staff and customers, with floor/wall markings or signs. Use physical barriers where possible (e.g. installation of sneeze guards).

❑ **Establish your record keeping**
  - Record the contact details of any customer who attends your workplace for longer than 15 minutes (this includes contractors and delivery workers), to include: first name and a contact phone number to support contact tracing. Retain for at least 28 days following the visit.
  - Maintain Staff Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Questionnaires to be completed at the start of each shift.
  - Where practicable, set up a roster to ensure staff do not work across multiple sites, and for multiple employers unless an exemption applies. Where not practicable, employer must demonstrate systems to minimise workers across multiple sites. If a worker is working across multiple sites for different employers, they must provide a written declaration to each employer that they are working at more than one site and provide details of each site to each employer. A record of such declarations must be maintained by employers.
Reopening my business

Checklist for business owners/managers (continued).

- **Consult with staff**
  Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult with staff and HSRs (if any), on matters related to health or safety that directly affect, or are likely to directly affect them.

- **Staff and management policies, practices and training**
  - Ensure that you, as the operator or manager, understand your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and have reviewed the coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance from WorkSafe Victoria available at [here](#).
  - Encourage staff to complete [free infection control training](#) and download the COVIDSafe App. It is the Government’s expectation that:
    - at least one staff member at every workplace will have completed the training
    - staff should make themselves familiar with these guidelines
  - Consider appointing a staff member to be your coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Officer to ensure policies and practices are being followed, staff are trained, and records are kept.

**Additional resources**

For additional information about creating a COVIDSafe workplace, please refer to the following guidance:

- WorkSafe: [Industry obligations](#)
- 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: [Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce COVID-19 transmission](#)
- WorkSafe: [Other relevant industry specific guidance](#)
Returning to work

Please note that the checklists below outline the restrictions and requirements that apply from 11.59pm 27 September 2020.

Checklist for staff

❑ Complete free infection control training
  All current staff are encouraged to complete free infection control training. Any new staff being engaged also need to complete this training.

❑ Do not carpool with other colleagues, unless they are from the same household

❑ Wear a face mask at work, and to and from work unless you have a lawful reason not to doing so

❑ Practise good hygiene
  ❑ Be rigorous in maintaining the new cleaning and sanitising schedule (for example, touch points such as tables and counters need to be cleaned and sanitised before and after use by customers).

❑ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at the very minimum:
  ❑ On arrival at work
  ❑ Before preparing or delivering food and/or beverages to tables
  ❑ After collecting/clearing used food and beverage items
  ❑ Before returning to food or beverage preparation areas
  ❑ At the start and end of each meal break
  ❑ Before and after touching a customer or their belongings
  ❑ After handling money
  ❑ Before leaving work
  ❑ After blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or using the toilet.

❑ Stay home if unwell
  ❑ If you have symptoms, get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19). Stay in isolation at home until you get the result and it is negative for coronavirus (COVID-19).
  ❑ Do not come to work if you have a fever (a temperature of 37.5°C or greater), or if you have any symptoms.
STAFF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

We encourage each staff member to complete this questionnaire before starting any shift and give your completed questionnaire to the shift manager for record keeping purposes.

Staff name: ________________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________         Time of shift ___________________________

Are you currently required to be in quarantine because you have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19)?

□ YES □ NO

Have you been directed to a period of 14-day quarantine by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as a result of being a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19)?

□ YES □ NO

If you answered YES to either of the above questions you should not attend work until advised by the Department of Health and Human Services that you are released from quarantine or until your 14-day quarantine period is complete.

If you answered NO to the above questions, proceed to the symptom checklist below.

Are you experiencing any of these symptoms?

Fever (If you have a thermometer, take your own temperature. You are considered to have a fever if above 37.5°C) □ YES □ NO

Chills □ YES □ NO  Cough □ YES □ NO

Sore throat □ YES □ NO  Shortness of breath □ YES □ NO

Runny nose □ YES □ NO  Loss of sense of smell □ YES □ NO

If you answered YES to any of the above questions you should not enter your workplace (or you should leave your workplace, if already there). Tell your employer, go home, and get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you answered NO to all the above questions, you can enter your workplace.

If you develop symptoms, stay at home and seek further advice from the 24-hour coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398 or your general practitioner.