Managing a Positive COVID-19 Case Procedure

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# 1. Purpose

As Australia moves into a “living with COVID-19” phase, there is an increased possibility of a positive COVID-19 case amongst workers. The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process for ORGANISATION NAME to take when dealing with a worker who tests positive for COVID-19.

Each state and territory has different requirements and this procedure has focussed on Victoria and New South Wales. However links to each state and territory guidelines have been include in the references section (section 3) below.

***Please note:*** this is a highly dynamic situation with sometimes daily changes in how businesses should and can operate with COVID-19 risks. It is important to regularly check with relevant state-based public health authorities for the latest COVID-19 management requirements and update this procedure regularly.

# 2. Scope

This procedure covers the management of a positive COVID-19 case by all workers and in all workplaces of ORGANISATION NAME.

# 3. References

* + - * 1. Model Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations
        2. Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and Regulations 2017 (Victoria)
        3. NSW - [Guidance for businesses with a worker who tests positive for COVID-19 | NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/linked-with-positive-worker-case)
        4. VIC - [Confirmed case in the workplace | Coronavirus Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace)
        5. Qld – <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/resources/campaigns/coronavirus/keeping-your-workplace-safe-clean-and-healthy-during-covid-19/incident-notification>
        6. ACT – <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/health-and-safety-portal/covid-19>
        7. WA –[TTIQ (Test, Trace, Isolate and Quarantine) Plan (health.wa.gov.au)](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-information-for-business-and-industry/TTIQ-Plan)
        8. NT – <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/business-and-work>
        9. TAS - <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/business-and-employees/covid-19-case-and-outbreak-management>
        10. SA - <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/notify/workplace-incident-notifications>

# 4. Definitions

**COVID-19:** is caused by SARS-CoV2, a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been identified in humans. It was first identified in Wuhan, China in 2019 and has been declared a global pandemic.

**PCR Test:** is a polymerase chain reaction test and is the most common way to be diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection.

**Rapid Antigen Tests** involve taking either a saliva sample or nasal swab and placing it into a chemical solution. The result displays within 10 to 15 minutes. Rapid Antigen Tests are not as accurate as PCR tests.

# 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The employer is required to:

* + - * 1. ensure this procedure is maintained and accurate for the jurisdictions of operation
        2. ensure any workers presenting to work with cold and/or flu symptoms are sent home and to COVID-19 testing
        3. ensure any workers reporting positive COVID-19 cases isolate at home until cleared
        4. follow all requirements to manage a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace, including notification to other workers and, where relevant, customers/the public

Workers are required to:

* + - * 1. inform the workplace that they have tested positive for COVID-19 as soon as they receive the result
        2. follow all public health authority advice

# 6. Procedure

## 6.1 Notification of a positive COVID-19 case

There are three main ways ORGANISATION NAME will be informed of a positive COVID-19 case:

1. public health authorities
2. a worker or other person, notifying that they have been confirmed positive
3. an employer of a worker who visits the workplace

Regardless of where the information originates, the privacy and confidentiality of the person who tested positive for COVID-19 must always be maintained.

## 6.2 Health authority involvement

Public health authorities are responsible for providing relevant advice to all contacts identified by the public health investigation, including information on self-isolation and testing. Public health authorities set guidance on the definition and management of COVID-19 contacts (this may include isolation for close contacts and ongoing COVID-19 testing until a negative result is produced).

## 6.3 What to do if a worker who has been in the workplace tests positive

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at your workplace, you must:

1. Direct the worker to return home (if they are on site) and to isolate immediately (symptomatic and asymptomatic), and to follow all directions they receive from the public health authority.
2. Ensure the safety of the workplace and workers, by isolating any exposure sites and cleaning and disinfecting all areas used by the person who tested positive for COVID-19. See further information in the Cleaning guidance section 6.4.
3. Assess how much contact other workers had with the person who tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was infectious in the workplace. Your assessment of workplace risk may indicate workers who could be close contacts or casual contacts.

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| **NSW** | **VIC** |
| * + - * 1. [Information for people exposed to COVID-19 | NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/people-exposed-to-covid)         2. [Guidance for businesses with a worker who tests positive for COVID-19 | NSW Govt](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/linked-with-positive-worker-case)   Notify all workplace contacts and, if necessary, direct them to be tested straight away and to isolate while waiting for a result.   * + - * 1. High risk contacts – must isolate for 7 days from the last time they were in contact with the person with COVID-19.         2. Moderate risk contacts – recommended to have a rapid antigen test as soon as possible, and 6 days after exposure. If they display no symptoms and return a negative test, no isolation is required.         3. Low risk contacts – can continue to work but must monitor for symptoms. | * + - * 1. [Contact assessment and management guidance: workplaces, business and industry](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-01/190122-Contact-assessment-and-management-guidance-workplaces-business-industry.pdf)         2. [Confirmed case in the workplace | Coronavirus Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace) |         3. Workplace contacts who had symptoms can return to work if they return a negative result from a rapid antigen or PCR test. They are recommended to stay home until their symptoms have resolved.         4. Workplace contacts without symptoms can continue to work but are recommended to do a rapid antigen test each day for 5 days. If they develop symptoms and are unable to access rapid antigen tests, they should get a PCR test.         5. Workers who are close contacts (4 or more hours together in the same enclosed space) must isolate for 7 days.   Workplaces are not required to provide the list of contacts to the Department of Health, unless specifically asked (e.g. in the case of an emerging outbreak).  Notify the Department of Health or Local Public Health Unit if 5 or more staff members are diagnosed with COVID-19 within 7 days. Email the Department of Health at: [covidemployernotifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:covidemployernotifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au). |

1. Advise workers of a positive COVID-19 case, ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Information provided should include:

symptoms of COVID-19 that workers should monitor themselves for

where to seek advice and help

reminders to not enter the premises if they are unwell

advice on physical distancing and personal hygiene measures (e.g. hand hygiene and cough etiquette)

what infection control measures ORGANISATION NAME has put in place, including cleaning

any other specific advice provided by public health authorities

1. Consult with workers about the identification and management of any remaining health and safety risks. Consider rapid antigen testing for workers prior to entering the workplace in the days after a negative COVID-19 test.
2. Contact the public health authorities for any further assistance:

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| --- | --- |
| **NSW** | **VIC** |
| Public Health Unit: 1300 066 055 | Department of Health: 1300 650 172 |

## 6.4 Cleaning guidance

All areas used by any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 should be isolated immediately and cleaned and disinfected. It is not a requirement to engage a certified cleaner.

**For hard surfaces, either:**

* + - * 1. use detergent and water for cleaning followed by a disinfectant
        2. use a combined detergent and disinfectant solution.

**For soft surfaces and fabrics, either:**

* + - * 1. clean and disinfect according to manufacturer’s instructions
        2. steam clean if possible

**For paper, either:**

* + - * 1. dispose
        2. leave undisturbed for 72 hours

For detailed information on cleaning, visit [Safe Work Australia](https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning) or [Australian Government - routine cleaning and disinfection in the workplace](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/11/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community.pdf).

## 6.5 Potential closure of business

ORGANISATION NAME may not necessarily have to close if a worker has tested positive for COVID-19. The requirement to close will depend on:

* + - * 1. ***Risk of ongoing transmission.*** Evidence of an ongoing spread of infection (transmission) from person to person in the workplace might mean the workplace has to close temporarily to stop transmission between workers.
        2. ***Cleaning requirements.*** The workplace must be appropriately cleaned following a confirmed case. This can be done overnight so as not to disrupt normal business hours. However if ORGANISATION NAME is advised of a positive case during business hours, closure to undertake cleaning may be required.

## 6.6 Workers returning to work

Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 can only return to work after they have completed the required isolation period (as directed by public health authorities) and are medically cleared.

Workers who are contacts can return to work once they have completed any testing and isolation period as directed by the public health authorities, and don’t have any symptoms.

## 6.7 Provision of information to workers and other persons

ORGANISATION NAME shall ensure that information is provided to workers, visitors, customers and other persons on COVID-19 safety information, including:

[Symptoms](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/symptoms) of COVID-19 that staff, visitors, contractors and customers should self-monitor for:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NSW** | **VIC** |
| [COVID-19 symptoms and how it spreads | NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/symptoms#toc-symptoms-of-covid-19) | [Symptoms and risks | Coronavirus Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/symptoms-and-risks) |

Where to seek advice and help:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NSW** | **VIC** |
| [COVID-19 (Coronavirus) (nsw.gov.au)](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx) | [Coronavirus Victoria](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) |

Reminders to staff, visitors and customers not to enter the premises if they are unwell

Advice on [physical distancing and personal hygiene measures](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe) (e.g. hand hygiene and cough etiquette)

What infection control measures the business operator has put in place, including cleaning

Any other specific advice provided by public health authorities.

# 7. Document Control

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