Health and safety in the workplace during coronavirus

Returning to the workplace - a new interactive tool for employers

We've launched our Returning to the workplace – interactive employer tool (www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/returning-to-work-the-workplace/returning-to-the-workplace-interactive-employer-tool) to help employers get their businesses back up and running during coronavirus.

The tool gives tailored information to employers on returning to the workplace, scaling up operations and adapting to workplace changes. It can help to find the information you need when:

- transitioning employees back to the workplace, including lifting a stand down
- changing employees' hours, duties or work location
- introducing alternative working options for staff
- keeping up to date with changes to workplace laws.

Use the Returning to the workplace - interactive employer tool (www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/returning-to-work-the-workplace/returning-to-the-workplace-interactive-employer-tool) now.

We all need to do our part to prevent the spread of coronavirus. To do this, employers and workers need to follow the rules about health and safety in the workplace.

On this page:

- Workplace health and safety resources
- Safe Work Australia online toolkit
- COVIDSafe app
- Beyond Blue - Mental health support

In this section:

- Going to work during coronavirus (www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/health-and-safety-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus/going-to-work-during-coronavirus/going-to-work-during-coronavirus)
- Protecting employees and customers during coronavirus (www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/health-and-safety-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus/protecting-employees-customers-during-coronavirus/protecting-employees-and-customers-during-coronavirus)
- Work-related travel during coronavirus (www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/health-and-safety-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus/work-related-travel-during-coronavirus/work-related-travel-during-coronavirus)

Workplace health and safety resources

There are many organisations that can help you with information and resources about workplace health and safety. We've included some helpful links below.

National

- Department of Health ☐ (https://www.health.gov.au/) :
    - Information for employers on who is most at risk in the workplace and how to stop the spread
    - Information about restrictions on entry into aged care facilities.

- Safe Work Australia ☐ (https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces) – Information on how to stop the spread of coronavirus in the workplace.
- Comcare (Commonwealth) ☐ (https://www.comcare.gov.au/home) – Information for Government employees and organisations that self-insure under the scheme.
- Smart Traveller ☐ (https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/news-and-updates/coronavirus-covid-19) – Travel advice during the pandemic.
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) ☐ (https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/guidance-and-advice/coronavirus-covid-19-understanding-your-privacy-obligations-to-your-staff/) – Information on privacy obligations for private sector employers relating to coronavirus.
- Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) ☐ (https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm) – Consistent advice and guidance to public health units on coronavirus.

States and territories

- List of all State and Territory Public Health Units ☐ (https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments) – Contact details and websites of all the state and territory public health units.
- List of all State and Territory workplace health and safety bodies (https://www.fairwork.gov.au/website-information/related-sites#workplace-health-and-safety) – Information on who can assist with workers' compensation (https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/workers-compensation) enquiries.
- WorkSafe Victoria – Report a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis ☐ (https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/report-confirmed-covid-19-diagnosis) – To report a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the workplace in Victoria.

Safe Work Australia - online toolkit

Safe Work Australia has launched an online toolkit for businesses and workers on how to stay safe from coronavirus. The website provides a detailed guide on work health and safety for many industries. Go to the Safe Work Australia website: COVID-19 Information for workplaces ☐ (http://www.swa.gov.au/coronavirus) .

COVIDSafe app

The COVIDSafe app helps state and territory health officials to quickly contact people who may have been exposed to coronavirus.

Downloading and using the COVIDSafe app is completely voluntary. Employers can't:

- make current or future employees download or use the app
- make downloading or using the app a condition of employment, or
- make downloading or using the app a condition of the employee entering the workplace or doing their work.

Employers can't refuse to provide or receive goods or services to or from a person because they're not using the app.

Employees have workplace rights that protect them from adverse action in these circumstances. For example, employers can't fire an employee or change their job, because an employee refuses to download or use the app, or refuses to upload data from the app to the National Data Store.

Read more about adverse action on our Protections at work page (https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work) . Criminal offences could also apply.

More information:

- Australian Government Department of Health COVIDSafe app ☐ (https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-safe-app)
- Privacy Amendment (Public Health Contact Information) Act 2020 ☐ (https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020N00059)

Beyond Blue - Mental health support

Beyond Blue has a dedicated coronavirus website ⬏ (https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/) and a 24-hour phone counselling service to help Australians during coronavirus.

The website includes a range of helpful advice, including:

- coping with isolation
- managing your mental health if you have coronavirus
- ways to deal with job loss and financial worries
- coping as a healthcare worker
- support for essential service workers and small businesses.

The 24-hour counselling hotline has trained mental health professionals who provide free, one-on-one confidential sessions. You can call the hotline on 1800 512 348.

Beyond Blue also has information to help small business owners and managers support their employees, and manage their own mental health during this time. Find out:

- How business owners and managers can manage their mental health during coronavirus ⬏ (https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/impacts-on-my-work/managers-and-business-owners/how-managers-and-business-owners-can-manage-their-mental-health.html)
- How business owners and managers can support employees during coronavirus ⬏ (https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/i-am-supporting-others/employees/how-to-support-employees-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic.html) .

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