

Quarantine & self-isolation: pay & leave options

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Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment

The Australian Government has introduced a Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment for some workers during coronavirus. It is available to eligible workers in all six Australian states. The payment is available to workers who:

- don't have paid sick leave and can't earn an income because they have to self-isolate or quarantine due to a positive coronavirus case, or
- are caring for someone with coronavirus.

For more information about the payment, eligibility requirements and how to claim it, visit [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment) [↗] on Services Australia's website.

Victorian Coronavirus Test Isolation Payment

Some Victorian workers may also be eligible for a Victorian Coronavirus Test Isolation Payment from the Victorian Government. Learn more at [Victoria – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Test Isolation Payment \(https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-worker-support-payment\)](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-worker-support-payment) [↗].

Find out what pay and leave options are available to employees who need to quarantine or self-isolate because of coronavirus.

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Employees who can't go to work because of coronavirus

Employees can't go to work if they need to quarantine or self-isolate because they:

- have been diagnosed with coronavirus
- have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus
- need to get tested or are waiting for a coronavirus test result
- are prohibited from leaving their home because of an [enforceable government direction \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus)

- have arrived from overseas or interstate and need to self-isolate because of an [enforceable government direction \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus) .

If an employee can't work because they have to quarantine or self-isolate, they should contact their employer immediately to discuss [leave \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/default) or [flexible working options \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/alternative-working-arrangements-during-coronavirus/default\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/alternative-working-arrangements-during-coronavirus/default)

Employees have a responsibility, under workplace health and safety laws, to take reasonable care not to adversely affect the health and safety of others at work. This means that an employee can't be dismissed or injured in their employment if they need to quarantine or self-isolate to avoid the risk of spreading the virus in the workplace. Find out more about [protections at work \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work) .

Employees can also request not to go to work because of a health condition that puts them at higher risk of getting coronavirus. See [Employees who want to stay home as a precaution \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/health-and-safety-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus/going-to-work-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/health-and-safety-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus/going-to-work-during-coronavirus) .

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Paid pandemic leave

Paid pandemic leave is available to some residential aged care employees.

The leave entitles eligible employees to up to 2 weeks' paid leave on each occasion they need to take it. Certain conditions and criteria apply to access the leave.

See [Paid pandemic leave in some awards \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/paid-pandemic-leave-in-some-awards/paid-pandemic-leave-in-some-awards\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/paid-pandemic-leave-in-some-awards/paid-pandemic-leave-in-some-awards) for more information.

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Unpaid pandemic leave during quarantine and self-isolation

Some employees have access to unpaid pandemic leave.

Employees who are employed under one of the [affected awards \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards) can access up to 2 weeks of unpaid pandemic leave (or more by agreement with their employer) if they can't work:

- because they need to self-isolate in line with government or medical authorities, or on the advice of a medical practitioner, or
- because of measures taken by government or medical authorities in response to the pandemic (for example, an [enforceable government direction \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus) closing non-essential businesses).

The leave is available to full-time, part-time and casual employees in full immediately. They don't have to accrue it.

Employees don't have to use all their paid leave before accessing unpaid pandemic leave.

All eligible employees can take the 2 weeks' leave. It is not pro-rated for employees who don't work full-time.

Go to [Unpaid pandemic leave and annual leave changes to awards \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards) to find out which awards have unpaid pandemic leave, and the rules about when and how it can be taken.

Interaction with other entitlements

Unpaid pandemic leave doesn't affect other paid or unpaid leave entitlements and counts as service for entitlements under:

- awards
- the National Employment Standards.

Notice and evidence

An employee has to tell their employer, as soon as possible after the unpaid pandemic leave starts:

- that they're taking unpaid pandemic leave
- the reason for taking the leave.

They should also say how long they expect to be off work.

An employer can ask their employee to give evidence that shows why they took the leave.

An employer can't dismiss an employee or take any other adverse action against the employee because the employee is entitled to unpaid pandemic leave. Find out more about [protections at work \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work#adverse-action\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/protections-at-work#adverse-action) .

Example: Taking unpaid pandemic leave

Gerson is a casual shop assistant employed under the Retail Award. He's received doctor's advice that he needs to self-isolate because he was in close contact with someone who had coronavirus.

He calls his employer to let them know his situation.

Gerson's employer discusses the different kinds of leave options he has while he's away from work. After talking about it, Gerson decides he'll take unpaid pandemic leave. On his employer's request, Gerson emails his employer his medical certificate.

JobKeeper scheme and unpaid pandemic leave

An employee can still take unpaid pandemic leave under their award at the same time as receiving payments under the [JobKeeper scheme - overview \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/pay-and-the-jobkeeper-scheme\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/pay-and-the-jobkeeper-scheme) .

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Other leave during quarantine and self-isolation

There are a number of other leave options available during quarantine and self-isolation.

For employers in the JobKeeper scheme and their eligible employees, see also [Leave and the JobKeeper scheme \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/leave-the-jobkeeper-scheme\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/leave-the-jobkeeper-scheme) .

More information:

- [Annual leave \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/annual-leave\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/annual-leave)
- [Annual leave at half pay \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards/default#annual-leave\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/temporary-changes-to-workplace-laws-during-coronavirus/unpaid-pandemic-leave-annual-leave-changes-in-awards/default#annual-leave)
- [Sick and carer's leave \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/sick-and-carers-leave\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/sick-and-carers-leave)
- [Other leave \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/) .

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Pay during quarantine and self-isolation

Employees working from home during self-isolation or quarantine have to be paid for the work they're doing.

Full-time and part-time employees should also be paid their normal pay if:

- their employer directs them to stay home in line with advice, such as the Australian Government's health and quarantine advice
- they aren't sick with coronavirus
- they are ready, willing and able to work.

Employees aren't entitled to be paid (unless they use paid leave entitlements) if they can't work because:

- an [enforceable government direction \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/other-government-information-assistance/list-of-enforceable-government-directions-during-coronavirus) requires them to self-quarantine
- government-imposed travel restrictions are in place (for example, they're stuck overseas)
- they're sick with coronavirus.

Employers should consider any award, agreement, employment contracts or workplace policies that apply, because they could be more generous.

Some states are also providing payments to employees who don't have access to paid sick leave and can't work for reasons relating

to coronavirus. See below for more information.

For information for employers in the JobKeeper scheme and their eligible employees, see also [Pay and the JobKeeper scheme \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/pay-and-the-jobkeeper-scheme\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/pay-and-leave-during-coronavirus/jobkeeper-wage-subsidy-scheme/pay-and-the-jobkeeper-scheme) .

More information:

- [Alternative working arrangements during coronavirus \(www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/alternative-work-arrangements-during-coronavirus\)](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/alternative-work-arrangements-during-coronavirus) – for information about flexible work arrangements including working from home
- [Pay \(https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay\)](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay) – for information and resources about minimum pay rates and arrangements.

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Federal and state coronavirus payments

The Australian Government has introduced a Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment for some workers during coronavirus. It is available to eligible workers in all six Australian states. The payment is available to workers who:

- don't have paid sick leave and can't earn an income because they have to self-isolate or quarantine due to a positive coronavirus case, or
- are caring for someone with coronavirus.

For more information about the payment, eligibility requirements and how to claim it, visit [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment)  on Services Australia's website.

Some Australian states are also providing hardship payments for certain workers who don't have access to paid sick leave and can't work because they are waiting for coronavirus test results. Go to:

- [SA COVID-19 Cluster Isolation Payment \(https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/school-and-community/financial-support-for-individuals\)](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/school-and-community/financial-support-for-individuals)  – for information and to check eligibility in South Australia
- [Victoria – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Test Isolation Payment \(https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-worker-support-payment\)](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-worker-support-payment)  – for information and to check eligibility in Victoria.

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The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing advice that you can rely on. The information contained on this website is general in nature. If you are unsure about how it applies to your situation you can call our Infoline on 13 13 94 or speak with a union, industry association or workplace relations professional. Visitors are warned that this site may inadvertently contain names or pictures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have recently died.

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