



Return to work checklist for small business

Ready to get back to business? COVID-19 (coronavirus) has changed the way we live and work.

Use this checklist to help make sure you understand the rights and obligations of your employees and your business when you return to the workplace.



Check public health directions and workplace laws

- I have checked the [list of enforceable government directions](#) at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au to help confirm that my business can trade
- I have used the [COVID-19 restriction checker](#) to see if any restrictions apply to my business including rules about face masks, physical distancing, or number of people at healthdirect.gov.au/covid19-restriction-checker
- I have looked at the [health and safety rules and advice](#) that applies to my business at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au or the relevant state or territory website



Make a COVID-19 safety plan

- I have a COVID-19 safety plan that complies with coronavirus restrictions and work health and safety requirements

Need help? Use the SafeWork Australia [COVID-19 small business planning tool](#) at covid19.swa.gov.au/doc/small-business-planning-tool-covid-19 or view a list of [workplace health and safety resources](#) at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au



Check the rules about COVID-19 vaccinations

- I have checked the rules, rights and obligations about [COVID-19 vaccinations and the workplace](#) and how they affect my business at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au

Important! The rules about vaccination requirements can change. Make sure you stay up to date and comply with public health orders and COVID-19 vaccination related directions in your state or territory. In some situations, employers may be able to require their employees to be vaccinated.

Visit [COVID-19 vaccinations: workplace rights and obligations](#) and find [help for resolving COVID-19 vaccination issues](#) at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au



Talk with my employees

- I have talked to my employees about returning to work and my workplace's COVID-19 safety plan
- I have talked to my employees about [ending any stand down directions](#) in place and given them the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns. Find out more at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/standdown
- I understand what steps to take to help [resolve workplace issues during coronavirus](#). Need help with a workplace issue? Visit coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au

Communicate! Good communication is vital when returning to the workplace. Times are uncertain and things can change quickly.

Talking with your employees is the best way to manage these changes and to support your staff. It may also be required under an award, agreement, employment contract or workplace policy.

Check out our [Consultation and cooperation best practice guide](#) at fairwork.gov.au/bestpracticeguides



Change working arrangements if needed

- Before changing my employee/s working arrangements, I have:
 - checked the rules in [the applicable award](#) or [agreement](#) at fairwork.gov.au/awards or fairwork.gov.au/agreements and any workplace policies or employment contracts about things like changing hours, duties or locations of work.

Important! Reducing or significantly altering a full-time or part-time employee's ordinary hours or working arrangements usually needs their agreement.

- checked if my [state or territory has rules](#) in place about people working from home at covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces
- checked information on [setting up and managing flexible work options](#) at fairwork.gov.au/flexibility
- talked to my employees about the changes to find the best solution

More information: Visit [Alternative work arrangements](#) and [Changes in working hours and duties](#) at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au and use our [Flexible working arrangements best practice guide](#) and [Workplace flexibility online learning course](#) at fairwork.gov.au to help set up and manage workplace flexibility.



Hire new employees if needed

- I've hired employees before, so I have made sure I'm up to date with the [latest workplace laws](#) at fairwork.gov.au/hiring
- I'm new to hiring staff, so I've used the [business.gov.au – Hiring employees checklist](#) to make sure I get things right from the start at business.gov.au/people/employees/hiring-employees



Check records

- I have checked that my employee records (including [leave accrual and entitlements](#)) for while my business was shut or working arrangements were different are correct at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au
- I have updated employee records to reflect current working arrangements

Need help? Visit our [Managing the return to work and the workplace](#) section for help with records. Take the opportunity to review your [record-keeping and pay slip practices](#) and use [FWO's templates](#) at fairwork.gov.au/recordkeeping and fairwork.gov.au/templates



Stay up to date – things may change quickly

- I will check for changes to government directions and workplace laws as they happen, including every _____ week/s
- I will continue to work with my employees to make sure changes to working arrangements suit both my business and my staff
- I will talk with my employees about any changes in the workplace early and regularly and will follow up in writing

Visit our [subscription centre](#) to sign up for emails and keep up to date with important workplace issues at fairwork.gov.au/emailupdates



Need more help?

Our [Returning to the workplace - interactive employer tool](#) at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/tools helps employers find information about returning to the workplace, scaling up operations and adapting to workplace changes.

Check out our [Top COVID-19 questions](#) page to find answers to some of the top questions about COVID-19 at coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/topquestions

The Fair Work Ombudsman is committed to providing you with advice that you can rely on. The information contained in this checklist 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 a workplace relations professional.