

COVIDSafe Plan



About the COVIDSafe Plan

A COVIDSafe Plan is a list of health and safety actions. It is an important part of the occupational health and safety obligations of every workplace and describes how you will keep your workers, members, customers and the community safe. It also helps you prepare for a case of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Whilst COVIDSafe Plans are no longer required under Victorian Pandemic Orders, they are recommended by the Department of Health.

The Department of Health recommends that all workplaces maintain either a COVIDSafe Plan, or similar policies, for managing the risks associated with COVID-19.

Your workplace's COVIDSafe Plan, or similar policy, should address how health and safety issues arising from COVID-19 will be managed in your workplace, including:

- actions you will take to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 being introduced into the workplace, including recommendations such as ventilation, mask wearing or physical distancing.
- your processes to manage when workers have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 (which can include when staff are expected to test themselves, whether staff need to report if they are a positive case and how you will respond to positive cases in the workplace).
- Most COVID-19 vaccination and booster mandates ceased at 11:59PM on 12 October 2022 and were only retained for workers in specific healthcare settings under Secretary Directions issued on 13 October 2022.
- Although vaccination and booster mandates are no longer in place for workers who are not captured under the Secretary Directions, the Department of Health recommends that all Victorians remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, particularly those who work in sensitive settings.

Businesses and industry not captured under the Secretary Directions may continue to implement their own vaccination requirements which exceed government requirements, within a COVIDSafe Plan or equivalent workplace policy. Further information about keeping workplaces COVIDSafe is available at: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/business-and-work>.

Your COVIDSafe Plan

Business name: Whitehorse City Council

Plan completed by:

Nathan Moorcroft (Coordinator Health Safety & Wellbeing) and the Health Safety & Wellbeing team


Last reviewed: 19th September 2022

Date reviewed: 1st December 2022

For the latest information on restrictions in Victoria, visit [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)



Practise physical distancing

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p> Configure shared work areas and publicly accessible spaces to promote Health and Safety.</p>	<p>Occupancy limit recommendations remain across sites in shared areas such as toilets, kitchens, meeting rooms and the lunch rooms.</p> <p>Flexi glass screening installed at customer service counters and to separate work areas where social distancing may be comprised or partitions are too low.</p> <p>Physical distancing – floor markings have been installed to keep workers and visitors at least 1.5m apart from each other. Signs have been placed around public access areas. Signs available here</p>
<p>Where possible within the workplace, aim for workers and visitors to maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres.</p> <p>You may also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimising the build-up of people waiting to enter and exit the workplace. • Using floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides. • Reviewing delivery protocols to limit contact between delivery drivers and workers. 	<p>Measurement of workplace seating arrangements has been carried out to ensure occupied workstations, where possible, are a minimum of 1.5m.</p> <p>Signage has been installed in shared areas identifying recommended occupancy limits. Signs available here</p> <p>Flexi glass screening has been installed at customer service counters and to separate work areas where social distancing may be comprised or partitions are too low. Online/phone booking and payment services are used where appropriate.</p> <p>Staff have limited contact with delivery drivers, paperwork is completed electronically where possible.</p>
<p>You should provide training to workers on physical distancing expectations while working and socialising. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing workers to follow current public health directions when carpooling. This can be found at coronavirus.vic.gov.au 	<p>Intranet – Covid-19 working on site section provides a suite of documents available for staff. Including a personal Hazard checklist to ensure staff adhere to the requirements.</p> <p>Whenever two people are in a vehicle, they are recommended to open windows or use the fresh air function on vehicle air conditioning and the occupants recommended to wear masks where 1.5m cannot be maintained.</p>



Wear a face mask

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p>Wearing a high-quality, well-fitted face mask lowers a person's chance of catching and spreading COVID-19.</p> <p>Face masks are strongly recommended for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff and visitors attending sensitive settings • people who have COVID-19, for at least 7 days after receiving a positive COVID-19 test result, if they need to leave their home, if indoors, or if unable to physically distance • people who are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 7 days, if they need to leave their home, if indoors, or if unable to physically distance • people who have symptoms of COVID-19 • people who are at a higher risk of adverse outcomes to COVID-19, or in the company of someone who may be at a higher risk of adverse outcomes to COVID-19. <p>Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks for further information.</p>	<p>Face masks to be worn in line with current recommendations, refer to coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks.</p> <p>Where required staff are updated with any changes to the recommendation for face masks, areas of high face to face contact are provided with the relevant PPE as per the advice from Department of Health, Chief Medical Officer, Municipal Health Officer, the relevant advisory sources and/or where identified as an appropriate control.</p> <p>Additional layers of protection with face shields (in addition to masks), gowns and gloves are used for activities where there is an increased risk of exposure due to proximity to others.</p> <p>In addition to work-specific PPE training, guidance material and videos have been produced for P2, N95, Surgical and reusable masks. They have been circulated throughout the organisation and available on the intranet here.</p> <p>COVID-19 Health and Safety FAQ has been developed for staff - available here.</p> <p>Area-specific induction and operation manuals have been developed.</p>

If your industry is subject to additional industry obligations, you may also be required to:

<p>Adhere to additional face mask requirements.</p>	<p>Surgical face masks continue to be used in in WHACS in client services. Maternal and Child Health and Immunisation currently provided with fit test recommend N95 or Surgical masks dependent on availability via Department of Health and commercial sources.</p>
---	---



Practise good hygiene

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p>You must take all reasonable steps to frequently and regularly clean and disinfect shared spaces, including high-touch communal items such as door knobs and telephones.</p> <p>You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean high-touch surfaces with appropriate cleaning products, including detergent and disinfectant. • Replace high-touch communal items with hygienic alternatives, for example single-use or contactless options, where possible to do so. • Clean between shifts. • Soap and hand sanitiser available for all workers and customers throughout the worksite and encourage regular handwashing. 	<p>Hygiene and Infection Control Procedures have been developed and adopted including cleaning frequency and materials used.</p> <p>Cleaning and Hygiene of Council Vehicles procedure has also been developed and adopted.</p> <p>Alcohol-based hand sanitiser stations have been provided to all work locations and are available on building entry (out of reach of children).</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 secs where possible as an alternative to hand sanitiser. A staff hand hygiene video has been produced and circulated to staff on the intranet - here.</p> <p>Frequently touched surfaces including counters, handrails, doors, phones, desks, IT equipment and EFTPOS facilities are cleaned regularly.</p> <p>Sanitation stations and kits in each work area where the public can access (e.g. front foyers). Kits are replenished by designated staff and reviewed within the hazard inspection program.</p> <p>Posters on hand washing are prominent and hand washing facilities are available in staff and public bathrooms.</p> <p>Employees who indicate they have a history of dermatitis or allergy to alcohol have been provided with alternatives in line with the Hygiene and infection Control Procedures.</p>

If your industry is subject to additional industry obligations, you may also be required to:

<p>Ensure all areas where workers are working are cleaned regularly</p>	<p>Hygiene and Infection Control Procedures have been developed and adopted including cleaning frequency and materials used.</p> <p>Cleaning and Hygiene of Council Vehicles procedure has also been developed and adopted.</p> <p>Frequently touched surfaces such as counters, handrails, doors, phones, desks, keyboards etc. are cleaned regularly.</p>
---	---



Document how you will manage a COVID-19 case at your workplace

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p>Supporting workers to get tested and not attend if they have symptoms.</p>	<p>Signage has been placed at the entrances of all Council facilities requesting that anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should not enter the facility.</p> <p>In face-to-face services, clients and visitors are requested to advise if they have been unwell or are experiencing symptoms.</p> <p>Staff communications (including CEO updates and in the event of changes to restrictions) are sent to all staff to advise that any staff experiencing symptoms must not attend the workplace.</p>
<p>Develop a business contingency plan to manage any outbreaks. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a plan to respond to a worker being notified they are a positive case or a close contact while at work. 	<p>The Crisis Management Plan, Disaster Recovery Plan and Departmental Business Recovery plans, which are reviewed at least annually, have been actioned.</p> <p>Council has a Pandemic Emergency Management Plan for the community.</p> <p>A detailed and generic Pandemic Action Plan developed based on experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Council has established an Organisation wide Pandemic Recovery Group and specific operation/function Pandemic Recovery Groups to ensure best practice, consultation and communication across department and work groups.</p> <p>Departments annually review their Departmental Business Recovery plans and as needed and Council seeks guidance from the Victorian Chief Medical Officer, DHHS, Council's medical Officer of Health and Municipal Association of Victoria as required.</p> <p>Areas dealing with a positive case are directed to Checklist for COVID cases Coronavirus Victoria. RATs are also provided in line with industry requirements and/or recommendations to assist in the delivery of service.</p> <p>Staff are required to notify their supervisor if they or a household member returns a positive result.</p> <p>Hygiene and Infection Control Procedures have been developed and adopted and includes cleaning frequency and materials to be used based on DHHS guidance.</p>



Improve indoor air quality

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p>Improving indoor air quality can reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.</p> <p>This can be improved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening windows • leaving doors open in hallways and corridors • adjust the settings on heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems or air conditioning units to increase the proportion of outdoor air. <p>Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/ventilation for information on how to improve ventilation systems in the workplace</p>	<p>Where appropriate, doors remain open to encourage air flow and minimise points of contact.</p> <p>Air conditioning systems are regularly serviced and adjusted to maximise airflow in line with hygiene and safety requirements.</p> <p>Whenever two people are in a vehicle, they are encouraged to open windows or use the fresh air function on vehicle air conditioning.</p> <p>The COVID-19: Ventilation principles and strategies to reduce aerosol transmission in community and workplace settings is reviewed to ensure where possible relevant principles and strategies are in place.</p>



Create workforce bubbles

Requirements and recommendations	Action
<p>You should consider keeping groups of workers rostered on the same shifts at a single worksite and avoid any overlap of workers during shift changes where it is practical to do so.</p>	<p>Workers are encouraged to discuss flexibility and Business Continuity Plans with their supervisor.</p>
<p>If your industry is subject to additional industry obligations, you may also be required to:</p>	
<p>Limit or cease the number of workers working across multiple work sites where reasonably practical.</p>	
<p>Maintain records of all workers who have disclosed that they are working for different employers across more than one work premises.</p>	<p>WHACS maintains records of Support Workers with alternate employment in aged care (community and/or residential) for risk management purposes if there is a need to re-introduce single-site work arrangements in the event of an outbreak.</p>



Vaccination in the Workplace

Requirement	Action
<p>Limited vaccination and booster mandates have been retained under Secretary Directions issued on 13 October 2022.</p> <p>These mandates only apply to workers in the following limited healthcare settings – hospitals, public health services, residential aged care services operated by public health services, day procedure centres, ambulance services and patient transport services. Visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au/worker-vaccination-requirements for the latest information and advice.</p> <p>Recommendations Consider whether having a vaccination policy can continue to keep your workers safe from serious illness.</p> <p>It is recommended that all Victorians remain up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, particularly those who work in an essential service industry or sensitive setting.</p>	<p>Vaccination requirements are regularly reviewed and implemented as required at Council facilities and services in accordance with the COVID-19 Vaccination Management Policy. Where an exemption is identified, consideration is given to meeting service requirements and providing a COVIDSafe environment prior to approval.</p> <p>Specific vaccination requirements have been communicated to workers. A centralized Staff vaccination register is in operation and an approval process adopted to ensure staff compliance with the relevant vaccination requirements.</p>