

What do I need to do to keep my workers safe and limit the spread of COVID-19?

1. Working from home

Where workers can work from home, they should.

On 29 March, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, advised that all Australians should stay at home, except for a limited number of reasons. All Australians are able to leave the home to go to work, however, employers should allow workers to work from home wherever and whenever they can.

All employers are also encouraged to consider alternative ways of delivering their business practices and services, such as switching to online ordering, payment and delivery.

If it is not possible to work from home or redesign practices, it is vital that no worker comes to work if they have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath.

2. Physical distancing

[Physical distancing](#) is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread through close contact with a person who has a confirmed infection. Physical distancing means keeping people apart.

Currently, this means keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people.

The likelihood of interactions causing the spread of COVID-19 is low if physical distancing advice and good hygiene are followed as the virus is unlikely to be spread if face-to-face interactions are limited to less than 15 minutes and close proximity interactions are limited to 2 hours.

Practical physical distancing examples:

- > Queuing strategies – eg marking out spacing on the floor with tape
- > Limiting the amount of people who can enter a store
- > Implement contactless deliveries
- > Have a responsible person on the work floor for ensuring everyone is keeping the required distance from each other
- > Move work stations, desks and tables in staffrooms further apart
- > Bring in shift arrangements so less staff are in the workplace at once

For further information on physical distancing see the [Australian Government Department of Health](#).

For industry specific examples, see our industry fact sheets in the [business resource kit](#).

3. Handwashing and hygiene

COVID-19 is most likely spread from person to person through:

- > Direct contact with a person while they are infectious
- > Contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes, and
- > Touching objects or surfaces that are contaminated by droplets coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed diagnosis.

Good hygiene is necessary to stop the spread. This means:

- > frequent [hand washing](#) with soap or [hand sanitising](#), including before and after you eat and after going to the bathroom
- > limiting contact with others, including through shaking hands
- > stop touching your eyes, nose and face
- > covering your mouths while coughing or sneezing with a clean tissue or your elbow, and
- > putting used tissues straight into the bin.

Alcohol based hand sanitisers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol is the recommended form of hand hygiene.

If hand sanitiser is unavailable, workers should be regularly given the opportunity to wash their hands with soap. The [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) advises that [hand washing](#) should take 20-30 seconds. Workers should ensure the entirety of their hands (palms, fingers and back of their hands) are covered with soap prior to washing them with warm water.

This should occur after a worker has had contact with a customer, as well as after cash transactions. It is particularly important workers sanitise or wash their hands before or after touching their face.

Practical good hygiene examples:

- > have automatic alerts set up on computer systems to remind workers about washing hands and not touching eyes, nose and face
- > have hand sanitiser stations on entry and exit points and around the workplace generally
- > cashless transactions
- > increase access to closed bins

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For more information on good hygiene see the [Australian Government Department of Health](#).

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4. Signage and posters

It is important that you have signs and posters around the workplace to remind workers and others of the risks of COVID-19 and the measures that are necessary to stop its spread. This includes posters on what is COVID-19 and how we can stop it spreading, how to wash your hands and the physical distancing requirements.

Signs and posters for you to use in your workplace are available:

- > [How to hand wash poster](#)
- > [How to hand rub poster](#)
- > [Australian Government Department of Health Simple steps to help stop the spread poster](#)
- > [Australian Government Department of Health keeping your distance poster](#)
- > [Keeping mentally healthy](#)

5. Cleaning

Make sure your workplace is regularly [cleaned and disinfected](#).

You should already have in place regular, scheduled cleaning of your workplace. Ensure any areas frequented by workers or others (e.g. visitors to your premises) are cleaned at least daily. After the business closes at night a thorough clean with detergent or disinfectant should occur to ready the business for the following day.

Frequently touched areas and surfaces should be cleaned several times a day. This includes Eftpos equipment, elevator buttons, handrails, tables, counter tops, door knobs, sinks and keyboards. Clean with a detergent or disinfectant solution or wipe regularly.

Workers should also be encouraged to clean personal property that comes to work, such as, sunglasses, mobile phones and ipads with disinfectant, such as disinfectant wipes.

When cleaning, workers should minimise the risk of being infected with COVID-19 by wearing gloves and washing their hands thoroughly or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.

For further information on cleaning, see the [Australian Government Department of Health](#).

For industry specific examples, see our industry fact sheets in the [business resource kit](#).

6. Self isolation

All Australians must [self-isolate](#) if they have COVID-19, have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or arrived in Australia after midnight on 15 March 2020.

Self-isolation means the worker must stay at home for 14 days.

If a worker suspects they have COVID-19, they must isolate themselves (self-quarantine) and advise their manager immediately.

They should inform their manager and call a doctor or hospital and tell them their recent travel or close contact history.

If they have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers of the recent travel or close contact history.

National Cabinet also advises Australians:

- > over 70 years of age
- > over 60 years of age who have existing health conditions or comorbidities, and
- > indigenous Australians over the age of 50 who have existing health conditions or comorbidities,

should self-isolate to the maximum extent practicable, limiting contact with others as much as possible when they travel outside.

Where vulnerable workers undertake essential work, a risk assessment must be undertaken. Where risk cannot be appropriately mitigated, employers and employees should consider alternate arrangements to accommodate a workplace absence.

You should allow all workers, including vulnerable workers to work from home, wherever you can.

Further information on self-isolation is available from the [Australian Government Department of Health](#).