

Workplace Relations Update: Stage 4 Restrictions take effect across Metropolitan Melbourne, Stage 3 Restrictions to follow across the rest of Victoria

From 6pm on Sunday the 2nd of August, stage 4 restrictions apply to Metropolitan Melbourne. From 11.59pm on Wednesday the 5th of August, stage 3 restrictions will apply throughout the rest of Victoria.

Equally important to note is that from 11.59pm on the 2nd of August, the use of face coverings is mandatory throughout Victoria.

It has been confirmed that veterinary practices in Metropolitan Melbourne will be allowed to remain open, provided they have a COVID Safe plan in place by this Friday, the 7th of August.

All businesses across Victoria should continue to be vigilant in observing the following advice to minimise transmission of the novel coronavirus:

- Employees must work from home unless it is not reasonably practicable for them to do so
- Employers must consider how they can minimise risk as far as practicable for employees travelling to/from work (where employees cannot work from home)
- Everyone in the workplace must continue to observe physical (social) distancing protocols, ensuring they are keeping at least 1.5 metres between themselves and others (and allowing 4sqm per person)
- Strict hygiene protocols **must** be observed including (but not limited to):
 - Regular handwashing
 - Regular hand sanitising
 - Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or one's elbow
 - Disposing immediately of any used tissues into a closed bin
 - Regular cleaning of all surfaces/areas
- Employers should encourage employees to monitor their health, stay at home if they
 feel at all unwell (providing access to paid leave entitlements where applicable),
 request the employee be tested for COVID-19 and advise them to follow the advice
 of the Government to self-isolate until they receive the results of their test (may vary
 depending on the advice they receive from the official)

AND

- Everyone in Victoria **must** now wear a face mask/covering **at all times** when outside their home unless they have a lawful excuse not to do so
 - One of the lawful excuses not to wear a face covering includes where doing so would pose an occupational health and safety risk to a worker performing their duties – if you believe this is the case for your workers, then you may not require

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these workers to wear masks whilst performing their duties. However, once the immediate OHS risk has passed, workers should put their masks back on.

- Workers should be trained on the proper use and maintenance of face coverings. The Chief Medical Officer in Victoria provides a simple tutorial on the use of masks in this <u>video</u> (with further information available from the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria <u>here</u>)
- Employers should continuously consult with their workers (as per standard OHS legal obligations) to identify and manage risks
- In Victoria, amendments have been made to OHS legislation requiring employers to immediately notify WorkSafe on becoming aware that an employee or an independent contractor or a contractor's employee has received a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis and has attended the workplace during the infectious period.

Self-employed persons are also required to immediately inform WorkSafe on receiving a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 where they have attended the workplace during the infectious period.

According to WorkSafe, the infectious period begins on the date 14 days before the onset of symptoms or a confirmed diagnosis (whichever comes first), until the day on which the person receives a clearance from the Department of Health and Human Services to stop isolating.

To notify WorkSafe of a positive coronavirus diagnosis, employers or self-employed persons should call the WorkSafe advisory service on 13 23 60.

Further information about the restrictions is available from the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria here.

If you have any further questions about the workplace relations and/or OHS implications of this decision, please don't hesitate to contact the friendly team at the AVA HR Advisory Service on 1300 788 977 or by email at hrhotline@ava.com.au.

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