

Critical COVID-19 Response Information for Queensland Employers

Current as at Tuesday 25 August 2020

The following information is intended to assist businesses to navigate the unprecedented changes arising out of enhanced responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about Government Response measures were current at the time of publication however, given the rapidly evolving situation, businesses should monitor reliable Government sources for updated information.

What is the current Stage Response?

Queensland is currently in **Stage 3** of the response to easing the COVID-19 restrictions. Stage 1 took effect from 11.59pm on 15 May 2020 followed by Stage 2 which commenced on 1 June 2020 from 12 noon.

which enabled the following:

- Queenslanders can travel anywhere in Queensland for any purpose at any time, except for restricted areas.
- Gatherings of up to 30 people are allowed in non-restricted, private, non-commercial areas.
- Gatherings of up to 10 people are allowed in restricted, private, non-commercial areas.
- Under Stage 3, all businesses can open.
- Maximum number of customers for a business at any one time is determined by the 4 square metre rule.
- Venues below 200 square meters can have one person per 2 square metres up to 50 persons at a time.
- The following businesses and areas may re-open with a COVID Safe Plan:
 - Casinos, gaming and gambling venues (including electronic gaming machines);
 - Non-therapeutic massage;
 - Saunas and bathhouses;
 - Nightclubs; and
 - Food courts.

As of 16 June 2020, further restrictions have eased permitting the following up to 100 people at weddings and funerals.

Further, the following businesses and operations can reconvene:

- Retail shopping;
- Tourist accommodation;
- The following venues with a maximum 20 people at any one time:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indoor cinemas; ○ Open homes and auctions; ○ Outdoor amusement parks, tourism experiences, zoos and arcades; ○ Concert venues, theatres, arenas, auditoriums and stadiums; and ○ Beauty therapy, nail salons, tanning, tattoo parlours and spas (with a COVID SAFE Checklist). <p>The restrictions on the headcount can vary, where there is a COVID SAFE Plan approved by health authorities.</p> <p>Businesses and employees returning to work must adhere to the social distancing requirements “4sqm rule”.</p> <p>Subject to the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction, the following spaces and businesses continue to be prohibited from operating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nightclubs; and ● Strip clubs, brothels, sex on premises venues and sole operator sex workers.
<p>For how long will the current Stage Response be in place?</p>	<p>The Queensland Government will continue to monitor the progress following the first stage of easing restrictions.</p>
<p>What if I am not one of the employers that is included in the types of businesses included in the current Stage Response?</p>	<p>Businesses are permitted to open and operate but must adhere to the “4sqm rule”, maintain social distancing and follow other measures to mitigate against potential infection exposure.</p> <p>Employees may work from home where possible.</p>
<p>Are the borders closed?</p>	<p>The Border Restrictions Direction (No.12) provides that any traveller will not be allowed to enter Queensland if they have been in a Covid hotspot 14 days prior to entering Queensland, unless the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ordinarily resides in Queensland or is moving to Queensland to permanently reside in Queensland, or the person is a border zone resident who is a Queensland resident,; ● National and state security and government employees; ● Health services employees; ● Agribusiness and commercial fishing employees; ● Freight; ● Emergency vehicles;

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- Emergency workers;
- Those travelling to and from work;
- To comply with court orders including family court;
- Those seeking to enter on compassionate grounds; and
- Those required to obtain essential medical treatment.

Further, any person entering Queensland from any other State or Territory must:

- provide a valid Queensland Border Declaration Pass; and
- provide an undertaking that the person will present for a COVID-19 test if the person develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 within 14 days of entering Queensland; and
- comply with the undertaking while present in Queensland.

The [Self-quarantine for persons arriving in Queensland from Overseas Direction \(No. 5\)](#) also remains in effect. It provides that persons who arrive in Queensland from overseas are required to self-quarantine in “nominated premises”. Certain individuals who are exempt from the requirement to self-quarantine in nominated premises include:

- airline and maritime crew;
- unaccompanied minors;
- consular employees; or
- those who are unable to live independently and without support.

Earlier in March, directions were made under s 191A of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994* for all ships entering Queensland preventing them from docking until 14 days has elapsed since it left the foreign port or since picking up crew members from a foreign country, the later of the two.

What should I be thinking about in implementing working from home arrangements?

Kingston Reid has developed a [Working from Home Checklist](#), to which employers may refer in preparing employees to work from home.

This [Checklist](#) is not exhaustive, and employers should have regard to any particular safety, information security and other considerations that may be unique to the work undertaken by particular employees.

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What are other safety measures that I should be considering right now?

The nature of the Response measures, effect of isolation and the gradual easing of restrictions will invariably have an impact upon the mental health of all workers. Check in regularly with employees at home and ensure that all are reminded of Employee Assistance Programs.

Employers should remain mindful that, if employees are directed to return to work, and they become infected, there will foreseeably arise exposure to workers' compensation and potentially negligence claims under the workers' compensation scheme.

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