

Critical COVID-19 Response Information for Tasmanian Employers

Current as at Wednesday 12 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?

The Tasmanian Government has released a [Roadmap to Recovery](#), to be implemented based on public health advice. The timeframe started on **Monday 11 May 2020**.

Stage Three commenced on 26 June 2020 at 12pm. Currently, the following is allowed:

- Most parks and reserves are open with no 30 km travel limit applying
- household visitors of 20 people at any one time (indoor or outdoor), in addition to residents of the household;
- gatherings of business and activity (other than households) will to a maximum of 250 people for an undivided space in an indoor premises and 500 people for an undivided space outdoors, subject to the 1 person per 2 sqm rule. The limits do not apply to:
 - Airports and commercial transport
 - Medical facilities (including vets)
 - Disability or aged care facilities
 - Prisons, youth justice centres
 - Courts and tribunals
 - Parliament
 - Schools and education institutions
 - Community services
 - Transit centres
 - Emergency services

Patrons in venues where alcohol is sold must remain seated. Non seated activities (like pool, dancing, karaoke and darts) are not permitted. Maximum number limits include staff.

The State Government also announced [Government services closures](#), including specified services provided by:

- Communities Tasmania
- Health
- Justice
- Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
- State Growth
- Treasury and Finance
- Government House

For how long will the current stage be in place?

The stages of easing of restrictions will continue to be based on public health advice.

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<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 that are not on the list of businesses specified in the Stage Response are permitted to continue to open and operate but must adhere to the “2sqm rule”, maintain social distancing and follow other measures to mitigate against potential infection exposure. Staff are to be included in the calculation of maximum capacity limits.</p>
<p>Are the borders closed?</p>	<p>Border restrictions in Tasmania depend on the location the person is travelling from.</p> <p>Persons who have spent time in an affected region (currently Victoria):</p> <p>Returning Tasmanian residents who are not essential travellers must quarantine in Government designated accommodation for 14 days.</p> <p>Non residents who are not essential travellers are not permitted to enter and will be sent back at their own expense.</p> <p>Essential travellers are not required to quarantine but are required to take a COVID-19 test on arrival, wear a face mask and limit movement outside the workplace.</p> <p>Persons who have not spent time in an affected region (currently Victoria):</p> <p>Returning Tasmanian residents who are not essential travellers must quarantine in their primary residence for 14 days.</p> <p>Non residents who are not essential travellers must quarantine in Government designated accommodation for 14 days.</p> <p>Essential travellers are not required to quarantine but are required to undertake health screening on arrival, and comply with other restrictions.</p>
<p>Do I need to keep paying workers?</p>	<p>If your workers can work safely from home (discussed below), then they may do so.</p> <p>In the circumstances that impacted businesses experience a stoppage of work and all paid leave has been exhausted, there may arise the basis to implement a stand down without pay, however legal advice should be sought first.</p> <p>In all cases, where an eligible business has experienced a drop in turnover of 30% or more (or 50% for a business with an annual turnover of \$1billion or more), full time, part time and casual employees (provided the casual employee has at least 12 months service) who were employed at 1 March 2020 may be eligible to receive a flat \$1,500 per fortnight JobKeeper Payment.</p> <p>The \$1,500 JobKeeper payment is payable irrespective of whether the employee is continuing to perform some paid work or whether they have been stood down without pay.</p> <p>Eligible employers can enrol for JobKeeper here.</p>
<p>What should I be thinking about in implementing working from home arrangements?</p>	<p>Kingston Reid has developed a Working from Home Checklist, to which employers may refer in preparing employees to work from home.</p>

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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.

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

As part of the Tasmanian Government's plan to 'Rebuild a Stronger Tasmania', all workplaces will be required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan that complies with minimum COVID-19 safety standards. The [Direction for COVID-19 Workplace Plans](#) sets the minimum standards for workplaces to be COVID Safe.

The nature of the Response measures and the effect of isolation 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 undertake non-essential 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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