

Critical COVID-19 Response Information for Victorian Employers

Current as at Monday 23 November 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?

Victoria entered the Last Step of the Victorian Government's reopening roadmap at **11:59pm on 22 November 2020**.

Currently, the use of face masks remain mandatory in some settings. The following rules apply in relation to face masks:

- face masks are no longer mandatory outdoors, if you are able to remain 1.5 metres away from non-household members;
- face masks outdoors are required if you are unable to remain 1.5 metres away from people you do not live with (e.g. at public transport stations, outdoor markets, walkways and thoroughfares);
- face masks remain mandatory indoors (e.g. at the supermarket or on public transport); and
- you must continue to carry a face mask with you at all times.

Victorians are no longer subject to Stay at Home restrictions and can leave home for any reason.

There are no limitations on how many times a day you can leave your home, or the distance you can travel.

The following restrictions continue to apply throughout Victoria:

Work and study

- small workplaces with less than 40 workers (which have not previously been able to open for onsite work) may have up to 10 workers return to the workplace **from 30 November 2020**;
- medium and large workplaces (which have not previously been able to open for onsite work) may have up to 25% of their workers returning to the office with staggered arrival and departure times recommended **from 30 November 2020**;
- workers who must attend onsite due to the nature of work can do so and there is no limit on the number of people who can attend; and
- all Victorian school students, university, TAFE and adult education students and teachers may return to on-site learning.

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Gatherings

- Public outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people from any number of households;
- Households can welcome up to 15 visitors per day. Infants under 12 months and intimate partners are not included in this cap, however, dependents over 12 months of age are included in the 15 person limit;
- Weddings are limited to 150 people (including the couple and not including individuals such as the celebrant, photographer and catering staff);
- Funerals are limited to 150 people whether held indoors or outdoors (not including babies under 12 months of age or the people required to conduct the funeral);
- Outdoor religious gatherings can be held near a place of worship with up to 300 people plus faith leaders;
- Indoor religious gatherings can be held with up to 150 people per facility (there are no group limits).

Sport and exercise

- Outdoor exercise and recreation is allowed with no limits on duration or frequency of outdoor exercise and recreation;
- Indoor exercise venues, including gyms, are open with limits on the number of people in spaces. Classes can resume with up to 20 people. Individuals must wear a face mask when exercising indoors (except where the physical activity leaves the individual short of breath);
- Contact and non-contact sport can resume for adults and children. Outdoor groups are limited to 50 people (with an overall cap of 500 patrons). Up to 20 people can participate per group exercise or activity indoors (or as many people as are required to play an indoor sport with an overall cap of 150 patrons);
- Individual sporting events, such as running or track and field events outside can resume with up to 50 participants (not including those needed for the event such as coaches);
- Outdoor skateparks, playgrounds, communal gym equipment and outdoor swimming pools are open;
- Indoor skateparks, swimming pools, play centres and trampolining centres can open for up to 150 people;
- Outdoor swimming pools and chlorinated spas can open with up to 300 people;

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- Communal change rooms, showers and toilets can open.

Hospitality and accommodation

- Venues are limited to 300 people seated indoors and outdoors. The maximum number of people that can be seated indoors in a venue is 150;
- There are no limits on the size of the group you can dine with;
- Live music is allowed in bars, restaurants and cafes;
- Accommodation may be booked with those you live with, your intimate partner and up to 15 friends or family who do not live with you (babies under 12 months are excluded);
- Tourism groups and transport are allowed with groups of up to 20 indoors or 50 outdoors.

Hospital and care facility visitors

- There are no limits on the purpose of visits, the number of visitors or the length of the visit; and
- Visitors need to follow visiting rules set by the hospital or facility.

Entertainment and culture

- Indoor entertainment venues, including cinemas and theatres can open with up to 150 people per space;
- Creative studios, including for art and music, can open with up to 150 people per venue (up to 20 people per group);
- Indoor music lessons, classes or practice are allowed with up to 20 people. Outdoor lessons are allowed with up to 50 people (excluding the teacher);
- Live music can resume (in well ventilated indoor and outdoor venues). Patrons are limited based on the restriction applying to the setting;
- Casinos can open with up to 1000 patrons. Every second gaming machine must be disabled;
- Arcades, bingo centres and escape rooms can open for up to 150 people (with a group limit of 20 people);
- Permanent amusement parks can open with patron limits depending on the size and subject to the 4m2 rule (group activities are limited to 50 people);
- Temporary outdoor amusement parks can open with up to 300 patrons (with a limit of 50 people for group activities).

Community services

- Libraries and toy libraries can open for up to 150 people indoors (no more than 20 people can gather in an indoor space). Activities in an outdoor area are allowed for up to 300 people (no more than 50 people can gather in a group); and
- Community facilities (e.g. food banks, community centres and halls, community clubs and RSL clubs) can open for up to 150 people indoors and up to 300 people outdoors (no more than 20 people can gather in a group in an indoor space and 50 people in an outdoor space).

Business, travel, retail and personal services

- shops are open however limits apply to the number of customers who can be in a store at the one time;
- hairdressers, barbers, beauty therapy, tanning, waxing, nail salons, spas, tattoo studios and massage parlours can open with limits on the number of customers who can attend. If undergoing treatment that cannot be performed with a face mask on, the face mask may be removed during the procedure;
- brothels, sex on premises and adult entertainment venues can resume with patron limits;
- karaoke bars can open with a limit of 150 patrons and private groups of up to 20;
- auction houses are open with limits on the number of customers who can attend;
- market stalls are open with limits on the number of customers who can attend;
- real estate auctions can occur outdoors with up to 50 people plus the people required to conduct the auction and owners of the property;
- real estate inspections are allowed for up to 20 people plus the agent (subject to the 4 square metre rule).

For how long will the current Stage Response be in place?

The State of Disaster expired on **8 November 2020 and has not been renewed**. The State of Emergency will remain in place until at least 6 December 2020.

Victoria is expected to move to COVID Safe Summer in December 2020.

Are the borders closed?

Victoria's borders are currently open, meaning it is possible to enter Victoria (except for South Australian residents). If you have travelled from any Australian state or territory other than South Australia, and you have not travelled to South Australia in the last 14 days, you can travel to Victoria without a permit and you do not have to quarantine.

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	<p>Individuals travelling from New Zealand who have passed all relevant immigration and biosecurity requirements as established by the Federal Government, New South Wales Government and Northern Territory Government can travel to Victoria and there is no need to quarantine on arrival.</p> <p>All people arriving in Victoria from overseas must go into immediate compulsory quarantine for 14 days.</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> <p>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.</p>
<p>What are other safety measures that I should be considering right now?</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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