

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update #32

1. COVID-19 'Circuit-breaker' action restrictions

As per the Premier Daniel Andrews' media conference yesterday (Friday 12 February), new COVID-19 'circuit-breaker' restrictions will apply to all Victorians – in Melbourne and regional Victoria - until 11.59pm Wednesday 17 February. These restrictions apply to contain the Holiday Inn outbreak. As of Saturday 13 February, there were 20 active cases in Victoria. Thirteen cases were known to be related to the Holiday Inn outbreak. It is not known if the latest case is connected to the Holiday Inn outbreak.

- **Read the Premier's statement about why the action is needed** via bit.ly/3jlqFjk [PDF]
- Download the table of restrictions (12 Feb 21) via bit.ly/3rPHbKA [PDF]
- Current exposure sites via bit.ly/3pibYoa
- The latest updates can be found on the Victorian Government's coronavirus website via coronavirus.vic.gov.au

Circuit-breaker action restrictions are as follows:

Social gatherings, leaving home and visitors

Stay at home unless:

- Shopping for necessary goods and services (one person per household, once per day, a support person can accompany if required)
- Caregiving or compassionate reasons
- Essential work or permitted education
- Exercise (can leave for two hours of exercise)
- Other specified reasons (specific exemptions apply)

Intrastate travel: travel limit of 5km from place of primary residence

Face coverings: Must be carried at all times

Must be worn indoors and outdoors except if at home, or if an exemption applies

Private gatherings: Not permitted. Intimate partner visits are allowed.

Work: If you can work from home, you must work from home

Education and childcare

Early learning centres, childcare, family day care: Open

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School: Schools closed but open for vulnerable children and the children of essential workers

Higher education and training: Closed, remote learning only

Ceremonies and religious gatherings

Religious gatherings: No in-person gatherings. Broadcast permitted

Funerals: indoor and outdoor: Involves no more than 10 people (and those necessary to conduct the funeral)








Weddings (indoor and outdoor): Not permitted unless end of life or other exceptional reasons. Involves only 5 persons (including the two persons being married, celebrant, two witnesses)

Indoor physical recreation and sport: closed

2. Revised PPE requirements and other protections

From 11.59pm 12 February 2021 the following PPE and other protections are required for healthcare workers across Victoria:

- All workers are to wear surgical masks AND eye protection (face-shields preferred, goggles where face-shields are not practical) at all times (Tier 1). Tier 2 PPE is required as per standard precautions for COVID negative patients or residents. Tier 3 PPE (including N95 masks) is required for staff for all exposure / care or contact with SCOVID patients or residents (low or high risk), symptomatic, suspected or confirmed COVID patients or residents.

TIER	For use	 Hand hygiene	 Disposable gloves	 Level 1 gown and plastic apron	 Disposable gown	 Surgical mask	 P2 / N95 respirator	 Eye protection (Goggles or face shield)
Tier 0 – Standard precautions	Currently not applicable based on public health advice.	✓	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	✗	As per standard precautions
Enhanced measures 12 Feb – 17 Feb 2021								
Tier 1 – COVID-19 standard precautions	Care of and exposure to all COVID-19 negative patients / residents	✓	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	✓ Minimum Level 1	✗	✓ Face shield where practical
Tier 2 – Droplet and contact precautions	As per standard precautions for COVID negative patients / residents	✓	✓	✓ or	✓ Level 2, 3 or 4	✓ Level 2 or 3	✗	✓ Face shield where practical
Tier 3 – Airborne and contact precautions and aerosol generating procedures	All exposure / care / contact with low or high risk SCOVID, and positive COVID patients / residents	✓	✓	✗	✓ Level 2, 3 or 4	✗	✓	✓ Face shield where practical

In addition:

- Routine pre-operative and pre-delivery testing for all patients / women should occur.
- Daily attestations and temperature checks with enhanced declaration processes (i.e. lived in or travelled through 'high risk areas' as per Department of Health exposure site notifications, or whether have worked or volunteered at a hotel quarantine site in the last 14 days)
- Healthcare workers who work in hotel quarantine are restricted from working at any other health service or organisation, unless they have obtained prior permission.
- Enhanced visitor screening and declaration requirements. Further advice from the chief health officer will be provided on this matter – most likely on 13 February.
- Emergency departments should implement COVID-19 service plans
- Essential workers – permitted travel – healthcare workers are permitted to travel beyond the 5km restriction when required to provide essential care services but must carry a form of employee identification to show the need to travel to their place of work and be prepared to provide details of employment, should this be required
- Where practical, health care workers should limit mobility to one campus / facility.

If you have any health and safety issues, raise them with your manager and health and safety rep (HSR) in the first instance and complete an incident report. If you continue to have issues, contact us via our member assistance form: anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance

The WorkSafe 'Controlling heat stress in healthcare and social assistance webinar' scheduled for Monday 15 February has been postponed. We will advise when the webinar will be rescheduled.

Vulnerable workers

Vulnerable workers who meet the higher risk worker definition should request redeployment where possible. The ANMF has sought advice from the Victorian Department of Health regarding access to 'special leave' payments should they be required.

3. New restrictions apply in residential aged care

Enhanced restrictions in all residential aged care facilities (both public and private RACFs) are in place from **11:59pm 12 February 2021 until 11:59pm 17 February 2021** across all of Victoria.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – surgical masks and eye protection (face-shields preferred) are required for all staff and workers during the enhanced restriction period. (See PPE information above).
- Visitor restrictions: Visitation is restricted with exceptions to these restrictions consistent with previous Stage 4 lockdown levels. See Enhanced visitor restrictions section via bit.ly/2OxW9NI [PDF]
- Non-essential workers cannot operate within RACFs, this includes hairdressers
- Non-essential contractors are restricted from entering a RACF
- Leaving the facility – residents must not leave the RACF unless they are leaving for one of the exception reasons (e.g. exercise, compassionate grounds and medical appointments). See Enhanced Restrictions for residents leaving RACFs section via bit.ly/2OxW9NI [PDF]
- Daily screening and declarations – reference to the exposure sites via bit.ly/3pibYoa is necessary to ensure any one that should be isolating or quarantining is captured. See Declarations for staff and visitors
- Student clinical placements in health services and residential care facilities, with exception of medical students, are on hold and an update will be provided by Wednesday 17 February.
- Resident transfers to and from hospital, see Enhanced **requirements for transfers** to and from RACFs and hospital section via bit.ly/2OxW9NI [PDF]

View the Circuit Breaker Lockdown - Residential Aged Care Restrictions (12 Feb 21) via bit.ly/2OxW9NI [PDF]

4. Reintroduction of aged care cohorting

Limiting the mobility of staff in the aged care sector is a key priority in reducing coronavirus (COVID-19) infection risks.

The ANMF (Vic Branch) anticipates a proposed re-introduction of 'cohorting' of aged care employees in accordance with the updated *Guiding Principles for residential aged care- keeping Victorian residents and workers safe* (the '**Guiding Principles**'). It is expected these arrangements will be in place for a 2 week period, commencing Saturday 13 February. Please note that single site employment arrangements are still in place for public aged care facilities until the end of June 2021.

As per our newsflash of 9 February, the Victorian Government continues to fund single site employment in public sector aged care until 30 June 2021. otr.anmfvic.asn.au/articles/public-sector-extension-to-30-june-2021

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What is cohorting and who is affected?

Cohorting is a system where each aged care employee works at only one site for an agreed period of single site leave. This time period may be extended. This arrangement would only apply to Commonwealth defined hotspots in Victoria and to employees who work at multiple residential aged care facilities. At this stage ANMF has been informed this will apply to the whole Greater Melbourne area.

Employees who work at only one aged care facility and those who work outside the Greater Melbourne area are not affected.

The geographic location is subject to change but we anticipate the Greater Melbourne area will be considered a hotspot for the purpose of the Federal Government grant funding for aged care workers. ANMF will notify members if there are hotspot updates.

Can ANMF assist me?

ANMF members will be provided representation to ensure this process works as intended.

Please ensure your membership details are up to date, particularly the number of hours you work per week, by going to the ANMF member portal via our website: <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberportal>

To be entitled to representation you must be paying the correct category of membership, which is at two levels depending on the number of hours you work per week.

ANMF will work closely with the Federal Government 'Support Hubs' to work through any implementation issues.

Do you have a general question about 'cohorting'?

If you have a general question in relation to COVID-19 matters or the 'cohorting' arrangements, please contact ANMF via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance>

Do you believe you are being disadvantaged and require assistance?

If you require individual assistance because you believe you are being disadvantaged, please contact ANMF via anmfvic.asn.au/dualemployment

ANMF encourages members to raise any concerns they have with management in the first instance as quickly as possible in addition to seeking assistance from ANMF.

What if I don't elect to nominate a primary work site?

ANMF strongly encourages members to make this nomination as soon as possible, noting again that you are not to be financially disadvantaged through this process.

Members will be aware that in normal circumstances, a direction by an employer that you only work for them, or at only one site, is neither lawful nor reasonable. However, as our members have unfortunately experienced here in Victoria, these are not normal times. This process seeks to ensure the health and safety of the entire aged care workforce, it's residents and the wider community in the event we have another spike in COVID-19 cases.

What if I have symptoms?

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. fever, chills, runny nose, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath or a change in sense of smell), you are urged to get tested and then isolate until you receive a negative result or longer depending on the medical advice provided to you. The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services will direct you to self-isolate or quarantine in the following circumstances:

1. You have COVID-19
2. You have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19
3. You are caring for a child (16 years or under) who has COVID-19
4. You are caring for a child (16 years or under) who is considered a close contact of a person with COVID-19.

If you cannot attend work due to COVID-19 symptoms, awaiting test results or you are in isolation, and have no available personal (sick) leave you may be entitled to the **Australian Governments' Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment of up to \$1500**. You can make a claim by calling 180 22 66 or print and complete the following form: <http://bit.ly/3nuQmUN>

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What will happen?

Impacted employees who work at more than one facility in Greater Melbourne, will be invited to nominate a single aged facility (one of the sites you currently work at) to be your primary workplace.

Your 'elected primary workplace' is the single site at which you elect to work all your shifts, including those previously worked at other sites. The expectation is that you would work at the site where you can work the greatest number of hours. Importantly, aged care workers are not to be disadvantaged in any way. By electing to work at one site, you are exercising a workplace right and must be afforded all the usual protections in your workplace.

When will this commence?

Residential aged care employers are expected to commence the process of cohorting from 13 February 2021 (today) and implementation of the changes will take place as soon as practicable.

What happens with my other jobs in residential aged care?

Your other employer/s must:

1. grant you unpaid single site leave for the duration of the period.
2. preserve your accrued annual leave and personal leave
3. keep your job open for you to return to at the conclusion of the period
4. ensure that the period unpaid single site leave is treated as service for long service leave purposes.

Will I be financially worse off?

An impacted employee will not be worse off financially.

In the first instance your primary employer must pay you for all your usual hours, including those you usually work at your other residential aged care sites.

Your primary employer may offer you those same shifts, if practicable. If they cannot, or do not, you must be paid your usual hours regardless. You can agree to work different shift patterns than you would usually work, but you are not obliged to.

The Victorian Government also offers a \$450 payment for eligible workers who have to isolate while waiting for test results. For details visit <http://bit.ly/38wXonN> or call 1800 675 398 and select option 8.

5. Private acute sector

The ANMF has sought clarification from the Victorian Department of Health, on behalf of our private acute members, as to the status of the contract between the state government and those private acute providers which has provided income security for members over the past 11 months. This may be necessary in the event members' hours of employment are negatively impacted by postponement of elective surgery announced by the Premier on Friday 12 February.

6. Maternal and child health nurses and early parenting restrictions advice

All face-to-face appointments should be screened for coronavirus (COVID-19) prior to attending appointment.

Essential universal MCH services

Delivery of booked face to face consultations or assessments/interventions including home visits for all infants 0-8 weeks and priority groups (Aboriginal infants, children and parents; and those with additional needs or complexity

including those on the Enhanced MCH program) including physical assessments/interventions, weight checks, immunisation and breastfeeding support

All appointments for infants and children up to 8 weeks to proceed either face to face or via telehealth followed by short face to face to attend to physical assessments/interventions, weight checks and breastfeeding support.

Universal clinics or groups including new parent groups and immunisation clinics

Cease all face to face groups – support via telehealth if possible

Reschedule all stand-alone immunisation appointments or clinics

Enhanced MCH and immunisation clinics

As per universal MCH guidance

Early parenting centres

- Delivery of day stay and residential programs for priority groups – e.g. Aboriginal infants, children, and parents and those with additional needs or complexity.
- All tele/web-based health appointments to be conducted as arranged.
- All face to face consultations/appointments conducted in conjunction with your updated COVID safe plan.

PPE Tier 1 minimum requirement – surgical mask and eye protection (goggles or face shield) – for all clinical care.

View the MCH and Early Parenting restrictions advice (12 Feb 21) via bit.ly/3rPWgTa [PDF]

7. Regional Job Rep and HSR seminars

Face to face seminars scheduled for the week beginning 15 February for Traralgon, Wangaratta, Shepparton, and Warrnambool will now be held online. This change was communicated to registered participants on Friday 12 February after the Premier's announcement. At this stage seminars scheduled for the following week in Mildura, Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat are proceeding face to face.

8. Student clinical placements

With the exception of medical students, all existing and future student clinical placements have been postponed until further notice. ANMF will be seeking advice from the Department of Health and advocating for nursing and midwifery placements to recommence the moment it is safe to do so.

9. ANMF (Vic Branch) staff

As per the Chief Health Officer's 'Circuit-breaker' action directive, ANMF (Vic Branch) staff are working from home, in Melbourne and regional Victoria. We are available to assist you and can be contacted via our Member Assistance form: anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance

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Healthcare Infection Prevention and Wellbeing Taskforce documents

1. COVID-19 Best practice approaches for safe staff amenities for health services <https://bit.ly/3lhKIEZ>
2. Victoria's respiratory protection program <https://bit.ly/2G3yr84>
3. Victoria's respiratory protection program guidelines <https://bit.ly/2G35gSs>
4. Daily attestations: frequently asked questions <https://bit.ly/2RXVjbC>
5. Protecting our healthcare workers action plan <https://bit.ly/3p99aer>

Victorian Department of Health infection prevent and control resources

<http://bit.ly/DHHSinfectioncontrol>

Don't bring it home: guide to minimise the risk of infection

A reminder that ANMF (Vic Branch) has developed a guide to assist you in relation to returning home from work after a shift.

Job Reps and HSRs are encouraged to print the poster which is part of this PDF newsflash. You can also download the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' A4 poster via bit.ly/COVID19-DBIH

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