

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update #30

Heat and working in PPE

ANMF has collated the important links all in one place. Please bookmark and check anmfvic.asn.au/covid-19

Members with COVID-19-related employment questions can ask via the Member Assistance online inquiry form <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> Please read the information on our website before submitting a question. Member Assistance is not taking phone inquiries as the majority of ANMF staff are still working remotely. All online inquiries are triaged to ensure urgent inquiries are prioritised. Members whom ANMF deems have complex inquiries will still have phone contact with staff.

The Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters (bit.ly/2UhDSU2) was last updated **22 December 2020**.

Heat and working in PPE

As members will be aware, ANMF has been advocating for clear guidance to be developed around working in heat, particularly in PPE and in mobile or fixed testing locations, which are often outdoors and exposed to the elements.

The Department of Health and Human Services and Safer Care Victoria has recently released 'Controlling heat stress in health and human services: guidance for employers and staff'. The document provides guidance for employers and workers on steps to take to reduce the risks associated with working in heat, including when wearing PPE.

Importantly, this guidance is **not** limited to only COVID-19 testing sites and is equally applicable to other members who may be exposed to the conditions, including hospital in the home. It assists employers to undertake risk assessments, in advance of the conditions occurring (e.g. based on predicted conditions in the coming days) and provides advice around controls that may be implemented to reduce the risks, including potentially postponing non-urgent work outdoors.

The document 'Controlling heat stress in health and human services: guidance for employers and staff' is available via <https://bit.ly/3bZ4SSD>

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

1. the ANMF (Vic Branch) policy 'Guidelines for working in heat' via <https://bit.ly/2LMFYel>
2. WorkSafe Victoria's 'Working in heat' guidance via <http://bit.ly/2XXmKVK>
3. Worksafe Victoria's 'Prevention and protection from heat illness' guidance, which provides clear explanation of the employer obligations to prevent issues related to heat, via <http://bit.ly/2M40XsQ>

To be clear, employers have an obligation to provide a workplace that is safe and without risk to health, so far as is practicable, and this includes in relation to heat. Employers are required to implement controls to either eliminate, or reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

In advance of the predicted weather conditions over the weekend, ANMF encourages all members working in areas subject to the outdoor conditions to take the following steps:

1. Request the heat management plan from your employer, so that you are able to review it and check whether there are clear, proactive risk assessments being undertaken by your employer.
2. Report using VHIMS/RiskMan/incident reporting systems where inadequate controls have been identified to be put in place, in advance of days of significant heat.
3. When there is a predicted day over 30 degrees or extended sun exposure or humidity (as noted in the DHHS guidance), report using VHIMS/RiskMan/ incident reporting systems if no/inadequate controls have been implemented by your employer.
4. Raise the issue with your HSR. Remember HSRs have the power to issue Provisional Improvement Notices requiring the employer to implement controls, where there is no/an inadequate heat policy in place, which clearly identifies controls to be implemented, and the triggers for these controls.

ANMF strongly recommends that members working in sites with **no** duly elected HSR, consult their designated working group (usually geographical but check with your HR department) and elect a HSR. In areas where we have HSRs we see better OHS outcomes.

5. Where there is a serious and immediate risk to health and safety due to heat, raise this with your HSR and manager. HSRs are able to issue cease works, where there is an imminent risk to health and safety, and inadequate controls in place, if management refuse or fail to implement appropriate controls.
6. Contact the ANMF via our Member Assistance inquiry form via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> so that we can assist.
7. Remember, anyone has the right to contact WorkSafe Victoria to report issues around health and safety in workplaces – this can be done via the Advisory Service on 1800 136 089 or via advisory_service@worksafe.vic.gov.au

Upcoming WorkSafe heat webinar

ANMF understands WorkSafe will be holding a webinar explaining employer obligations and practical controls related to heat in the coming weeks. We will provide details once they are confirmed so members can attend.

Authorised by Lisa Fitzpatrick ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary

Latest COVID-19 statistics

Healthcare Worker COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3jQT5q4>

Victorian COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3j5vJwC>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily update <https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily media release <https://bit.ly/2EDiQLb>

Victorian high-risk locations, public exposure sites, outbreaks, hospital admissions and deaths via <https://bit.ly/33szLKu>

National statistics <https://bit.ly/2RyEXX1>

National residential aged care cases and deaths <https://bit.ly/32FdfwD>

Important 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. Establishing a fit testing program guidelines <https://bit.ly/3aOa2Az>
5. Daily attestations: frequently asked questions <https://bit.ly/2RXVjbC>
6. Protecting our healthcare workers action plan <https://bit.ly/3p99aer>

Important PPE guidance and infection prevention links

1. DHHS infection control guidance page <http://bit.ly/DHHSinfectioncontrol>
this hub includes links to many of the documents listed below
2. DHHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection prevention and control guideline (updated 26 October 2020) <https://bit.ly/3deTBLE>
information about conventional use of PPE, staff attestations, aerosol transmission, eye protection updated, PPE spotters introduced, zoning concept for healthcare, powered air purifying respirators (PAPRs), showering a patient, non-urgent patient transport, respiratory protection program and hierarchy of controls, cleaning and medical records/patient charts.
3. DHHS PPE guidance (**updated 14 December 2020**) <http://bit.ly/3g5d96m>
includes definitions of tiers and when N95 respirator masks should be worn
4. DHHS COVID-19 – a guide to the conventional use of PPE (**updated 11 December 2020**) <https://bit.ly/2yBnmaa>
5. DHHS factsheet – residential aged care restrictions (**31 December 2020**) <https://bit.ly/2JKy5VQ>
6. DHHS Extended P2/N95 respirator and eye protection use – preventing facial injuries during COVID-19 (9 October 2020) <https://bit.ly/31qHjw4>
7. DHHS COVID-19 - Disposing of clinical waste <https://bit.ly/2REJF5b>
8. DHHS Personal protective equipment for the provision of mental health care (1 September 2020) <https://bit.ly/2ALJgch>

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9. DHHS PPE for community service providers for prevention of COVID-19 (15 December 2020) <https://bit.ly/3hIsWt0>
10. DHHS Maternity and neonatal care during COVID-19 (16 October 2020) <https://bit.ly/3aWCnmc>
11. DHHS PPE for maternity and neonatal services (22 October 2020) <https://bit.ly/2Kuy6NU>
12. DHHS Respiratory support for children during the COVID-19 emergency (updated 22 December 2020) <https://bit.ly/39LxqMF>
13. DHHS Assisting patients with hygiene care during coronavirus (COVID-19) – risk minimisation for staff (PDF) (1 October 2020) <https://bit.ly/2H0hknW>
14. WorkSafe Victoria Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) risks: Healthcare and social assistance industry – Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) <https://bit.ly/3ddwqRT>

Do you have a personal protective equipment concern?

ANMF continues to advocate and raise and resolve members' issues at the PPE taskforce union consultation meetings. **Members with concerns about PPE should:**

1. **continue to raise and submit OHS incident reports with your employer** as well as speaking directly with your manager
2. **involve your Health and Safety Rep** if you have one
3. contact ANMF via anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance (include your report and response if applicable) for further support and advice if after you have raised your concerns they are not addressed by your employer.

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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Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection.

-  **1** On entry, remove your shoes and place in a plastic box.
-  **2** Leave your bag, wallet, mobile, keys, etc in a box near the entry.
-  **3** Change out of your clothes immediately and wash them. Use the hottest possible machine wash setting and dryer if you can.
-  **4** Have a shower.
-  **5** Clean items you've brought in and surfaces you've touched.

Remember to wash your hands regularly.

Cleaning tips

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- Hot soapy wash, wipe or disinfectant spray (depending on surface) phone cases, keys, ID, lanyard, glasses, etc.**

Consider changing in and out of your uniform/scrubs at work.