

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update 40

Metropolitan Melbourne health services move to amber alert following community transmission cases

Branch operational changes

As a result of new COVID-19 restrictions ANMF (Vic Branch) staff will be unable to attend face-to-face workplace meetings. Member meetings will take place online or rescheduled where appropriate.

COVID-19 changes for health care workers in Metropolitan Melbourne

In response to new community transmission COVID-19 cases, metropolitan Melbourne has moved to a **COVID ALERT (amber) rating or moderate risk**. Read the 25 May 2021 update sent to health services via <https://bit.ly/3wtMWGQ>

All health services in this area should follow the **Victorian Health Service Guidance and Response to COVID-19 Risks – COVID Alert** <https://bit.ly/3bU6xZ0>

The following changes will come into effect in Greater Melbourne health services from 6pm, 25 May 2021:

- facemasks are a mandatory minimum for all healthcare workers in metropolitan Melbourne
- increased testing of asymptomatic staff who are exposed and/ or provide care to high-risk SCOVID and confirmed COVID-19 patients
- enhanced screening as part of daily workforce attestations, including if the health care worker was a resident in hotel quarantine in the last seven days, confirmation that they have had a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine
- patients are restricted to two visitors at one time, with no more than five visitors per day. There are no limits on the number of visits per day for end-of-life reasons, but the two visitors at one time rule applies. Visitors must undergo a pre-attendance risk assessment which includes presence of symptoms, primary or

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secondary close contact or has visited a listed exposure site. New criteria includes if they been a resident in hotel quarantine in the last seven days, they must have had a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine. More details on hospital visitors via <https://bit.ly/2TffqG2>

- specialist outpatient consulting is encouraged to return to telehealth consultations. In person outpatient appointments risk assessments include the new hotel quarantine criteria – if you have been a resident of hotel quarantine in the last seven days you must confirm a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine.
- emergency departments should consider their COVID service plans
- where possible, health services should consider redeploying high-risk employees.

More information

Victorian health service guidance and response to risk (green, amber, red) <https://bit.ly/2SrFflz>

COVID-19 changes for health care workers in regional Victoria

Regional Victorian health services remain on a **COVID READY (green) rating or low risk** with some changes. Read the 25 May 2021 update sent to regional health services via <https://bit.ly/3fGboxX>

All regional Victorian health services should follow the **Victorian Health Service Guidance and Response to COVID-19 Risks – COVID READY (green)** via <https://bit.ly/3fGVT8U> . Changes include:

- facemasks as a minimum, are mandatory for all healthcare workers
- daily attestations will include if a health care worker has been a resident in hotel quarantine in the last seven days, they must confirm they have had a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine
- patients are restricted to two visitors at one time, with no more than five visitors per day. There are no limits on the number of visits per day for end-of-life reasons, but the two visitors at one time rule applies. Visitors must undergo a pre-attendance risk assessment which includes presence of symptoms, primary or secondary close contact or has visited a listed exposure site. New criteria includes if they been a resident in hotel quarantine in the last seven days, they must have had a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine. More details on hospital visitors via <https://bit.ly/2TffqG2>
- specialist outpatient consulting continues face-to-face or telehealth as per normal arrangements. New risk assessment for in-person appointments must now include residents of hotel quarantine in the last seven days must confirm a negative test seven days post leaving hotel quarantine.

More information

Victorian health service guidance and response to risk (green, amber, red) <https://bit.ly/2SrFflz>

New restrictions for Greater Melbourne from 6pm, 25 May 2021

The Victorian Government has announced new coronavirus social distancing restrictions for Greater Melbourne in response to the City of Whittlesea outbreak of COVID-19.

The outbreak consists of five cases who are family members across three households living in the City of Whittlesea in Melbourne's outer north. The fifth case was announced this morning. Ten exposure sites associated with the cases have been identified. <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites>

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Anyone who has visited a Tier 1 site during the times listed must immediately isolate, get a coronavirus test and quarantine for 14 days from the date of exposure. You should also contact the Department of Health at 1300 651 160.

Anyone who has visited a Tier 2 exposure site during times listed should urgently get a test and isolate until they receive a negative result. You should also contact the Department of Health at 1300 651 160.

Find out where you can be tested and wait times at testing centres, using the interactive map.

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/where-get-tested-covid-19>

The restrictions that apply from 6pm, 25 May 2021 until at least 4 June 2021 are as follows:

- private gatherings in homes will be limited to five visitors per day and public gatherings will be limited to 30 people
- face masks will have to be worn indoors including at all workplaces in Greater Melbourne. Exemptions apply for people aged under 12 years old
- restrictions around sporting and other major events are under consideration. Please check the Department of Health coronavirus website regularly for updated restrictions and exposure sites
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus/updates>
- for people living in Greater Melbourne travelling to regional Victoria, the restrictions will 'follow' them, e.g. if you live in Melbourne and travel to regional Victoria, you must wear a mask indoors and any households you visit must not have more than five visitors that day
- workplaces and schools will remain open. Students aged 12 and over must wear a mask.

More information

Detailed information about the new restrictions <https://bit.ly/3gNFIOG>

Victorian Government media release (25 May 2021) <https://bit.ly/3fJWK8J>

Vaccination rollout update

As of 25 May 2021, Victoria's vaccination centres had administered 369,504 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, with 8,269 in the last 24 hours. The Victorian Government's vaccination data dashboard can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/319HzPq>

As of 24 May 2021, a total 3,690,622 vaccines have been administered, with 77,569 in the last 24 hours. The Federal Government's national and aged care vaccination data can be viewed <https://bit.ly/3vTkJcR>

Vaccination response and special paid leave

Public sector nurses and midwives who experience an expected adverse event following the COVID-19 vaccination that impacts your ability to work are eligible for up to two days special paid leave following each dose.

A medical certificate stating the reason you are unable to work is due to an adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) that does not require you to isolate.

The special paid leave is retrospective and ANMF advises members, who took personal leave following an AEFI and were not required to isolate, to contact their human resources department to ensure their personal leave is re-credited.

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The Victorian Department of Health new leave entitlement advice is issued in the latest 'Guidance note on employment matters' (10 May 2021) to public sector employers and follows ANMF advocacy on behalf of members in our consultations with the Andrews Government.

While specifically for public sector employers, ANMF encourages employers —private, local government and not-for-profit— are encouraged to also follow the advice.

The advice explains how the 'overlap' between an expected adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) following the COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19's presenting symptoms can cause uncertainty about whether testing and isolation is required.

Because of this overlap the department issued testing and isolation recommendations for phase 1a workers, including nurses and midwives, in relation to the **onset of symptoms in the 48 hours following vaccination**. The following advice on symptoms, returning to work and eligibility for special leave is from page 1 and 2 of the department's 'Recommendations for testing and isolation after COVID-19 vaccination' (10 May 2021):

"For any person vaccinated in Victoria in Phase 1a of the COVID-19 vaccination program, in the 48 hours following vaccination:

1. The onset of ANY **respiratory symptoms** (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of sense of smell or taste), irrespective of the presence or otherwise of accompanying symptoms, should be assumed to be unrelated to vaccination. Isolation, assessment and testing for COVID-19 as per usual guidelines should be undertaken.
2. The presence of **fever with temperature above 37.5°C** should not be assumed to be an AEFI in these high-risk populations. Isolation, assessment and testing for COVID-19 as per usual guidelines should be undertaken.
3. Reporting of **fever or chills in the absence of temperature above 37.5°C** within 48 hours of vaccination may be considered a possible AEFI. This should prompt isolation and, if the symptoms persist greater than 24 hours, testing for COVID-19.
 - If an individual experiences fever or chills and is unable to take their temperature, they should present for testing for COVID-19.
 - If fever (in the absence of temperature above 37.5°C) or chills resolve completely within 24 hours of onset and no other symptoms are present, isolation may be ceased and the individual may return to normal activities.
4. **Headache and/or muscle pain** within 48 hours of vaccination may be considered a possible AEFI. If mild and there are no respiratory symptoms, fever or chills, and the individual feels well enough and is willing to work, this should be discussed with their manager, especially if working in a high-risk environment such as hotel quarantine, port of entry or COVID/SCOVID unit, and decide whether to continue working or isolate at home as follows:
 - If continuing working, any development of fever, chills or respiratory symptoms should prompt immediate testing for COVID-19 (with throat-nasal swab) and isolation until results are available.
 - If continuing working, continuing asymptomatic surveillance testing (if in a context where this is recommended) with a throat-nasal swab test (not salivary test) on the first occasion of work

following onset of symptoms is required, even if a throat-nasal swab had been collected in the previous week.

- If symptoms persist for greater than 48 hours following onset, even in the absence of other symptoms of COVID-19, further assessment and consideration of isolation and testing for COVID-19 should be undertaken.

If working in a high-risk environment such as hotel quarantine, port of entry or COVID/SCOVID unit, then additional caution should be exercised in relation to any COVID-like symptoms.

If an individual who has been vaccinated has been tested for COVID-19 (other than through routine asymptomatic surveillance testing) they must continue to isolate until they receive a negative test result and their symptoms have resolved.”

All nurses, midwives and personal care workers are entitled to special leave, for the required duration, if they are required to test and isolate. If you have COVID-19 you must use your personal leave.

More information

‘Guidance note on employment matters’ (10 May 2021) via <http://bit.ly/2UhDSU2>

‘Recommendations for testing and isolation after COVID-19 vaccination’ (10 May 2021) via <https://bit.ly/3fa0dNI>

Getting vaccinated

All nurses, midwives and personal care workers (including private aged care) can make a vaccination booking at a state vaccination clinic.

The state clinics will have Pfizer vaccine supplies for priority 1a and 1b staff aged under 50 years. However, you must book in advance to ensure supply is available at your closest clinic.

Staff aged 50 and over should receive the AstraZeneca vaccine.

From 22 May 2021 people aged 16 years or older with a disability and with a specified underlying medical condition (including severe mental health conditions) will be eligible to attend a state vaccination clinic.

From 31 May 2021 state vaccination centres will provide vaccination for people with a disability including all NDIS participants, clients as advised by TAC or WorkSafe Victoria (they will have a letter of eligibility) and residential disability clients not requiring in-reach.

Clinic locations

Melbourne: Carlton (Royal Exhibition Building), Heidelberg (Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital), Ringwood (Ringwood East Community Clinic), South Wharf (Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre), Sunshine (Sunshine Hospital), Box Hill (Box Hill Hospital), Dandenong (Dandenong Hospital), Frankston (Frankston Hospital) Cheltenham (Kingston Centre), Clayton (Monash Medical Centre, Bentleigh (Moorabbin Hospital), Heidelberg (Olivia Newton John Centre), Berwick (St John of God – Berwick Hospital), Rosebud (Rosebud Hospital) and various sites across south-east and wider metropolitan Melbourne.

Regional: Geelong (Former Ford Factory), Ballarat (Mercure Hotel and Convention Centre), Wodonga (Wodonga Community vaccination clinic), Shepparton (Shepparton Showgrounds), Traralgon (Traralgon Racecourse), Bendigo (Bendigo Hospital), Warrnambool (Southwest Healthcare Vaccination Centre), Mansfield (Buckland Community Centre), Castlemaine (Castlemaine Health), Cobram (Nathalia, Cobram and Numurkah Health).

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Booking appointments - recommended

To book an appointment, call the Victorian Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398. Please let your colleagues know a translator is available if required by pressing option 0.

For more details about appointments and additional locations, visit bit.ly/3aJLGHk

Be Well. Be Safe

The Victorian Department of Health's new 'Be well. Be safe' section of its website is for healthcare and aged care workers.

This initiative features the latest guidance, information, advice and tools on mental health and wellbeing, infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE). View the website bit.ly/3nM6PG5. Information from this hub is being sent to employers to pass on to healthcare workers.

Member inquiries

ANMF members with COVID-19-related employment questions can ask Member Assistance via the online inquiry form <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> (scroll to the bottom of the page). You may find the answer to your question in the frequently asked questions on the same page.

Moving all inquiries online via has enabled the Member Assistance team to quickly prioritise members' issues. This triaging system enables Member Assistance to quickly respond to urgent matters, such as a formal AHPRA notification, disciplinary letter or a violent incident, and escalate to the relevant ANMF Organiser or other appropriate staff without members waiting on the phone for extended periods.

The provision of written responses also ensures consistently high-quality advice to all members.

Urgent and semi-urgent inquiries are responded to within one business day and all other inquiries receive a response within three business days.

Resources and helpful links to information

Victorian Government

- Getting vaccinated bit.ly/3gKwXzq
- High-volume vaccination centres bit.ly/3aJLGHk
- Book your vaccine appointment bit.ly/3dZjuC6
- Potential side effects of COVID-19 vaccination bit.ly/2QAk2Fy
- Training for vaccine providers bit.ly/3u2OKG6
- Translated information about COVID-19 bit.ly/3tXIEGY
- COVID-19 Special Bulletin – information for COVID-19 vaccine providers (12 May 2021)

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Australian Government

- The Australian Government's response to ATAGI's latest advice on vaccines bit.ly/3uNmh7A
- Vaccine phases and priority groups bit.ly/3vCZs6D
- About the AstraZeneca vaccine bit.ly/3eAGztR
- About the Pfizer vaccine bit.ly/32VryOw
- How to get vaccinated bit.ly/3sWsgVJ
- Advice for vaccine providers bit.ly/3gJx8uN
- Translated information about COVID-19 vaccines bit.ly/3qRfEyc

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

Don't bring it home!

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

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.

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ANMF Job Reps and Health and Safety Reps are encouraged to display this newsflash on their workplace noticeboard.

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