

Thursday 27 May 2021

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update 42

All Victorian metro, regional and rural healthcare services move to COVID ACTIVE (red) alert

Branch operational changes

As a result of the Chief Health Officer's health advice and the new COVID-19 restrictions, the ANMF (Vic Branch) office will be closed and staff will work from home for the duration of the circuit breaker lock down.

Member meetings will take place online or rescheduled where appropriate.

Education Centre courses and Job Rep, HSR and occupational health and training courses will be held online, cancelled, or rescheduled. Participants will be notified directly.

Latest COVID-19 statistics

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

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

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

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

New state-wide restrictions from 11.59pm, 27 May 2021

The Victorian Government has announced a circuit-breaker lockdown to take effect from 11.59pm Thursday 27 May until 11.59pm, Thursday 3 June.

There will be five reasons to leave home during the lockdown period:

1. caregiving, compassionate, urgent medical care
2. to exercise within five kilometres of your home, for a maximum 2-hour period; you can exercise with one other person

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3. shopping for essentials within five kilometres of your home (one person per household once per day)
4. for authorised work or education (including construction and emergency dental work).
5. to get vaccinated.

Masks must be worn indoors and outdoors.

No visitors are allowed to your home apart from intimate partners, but single people can form a bubble with one other person.

Childcare centres and kindergartens will remain open, but schools will close for all children except those of authorised workers (which includes nurses, midwives and personal care workers) and special needs children. For all other students, including tertiary students, learning will be online until the end of the lockdown period.

No visitors, in health settings except for permitted reasons including end-of-life reasons, as a support partner for birth, or a parent to accompany a child. Non-essential contractors are restricted from entry.

No visitors are permitted into aged care or other residential facility settings, except for end-of-life reasons.

For the full list of restrictions, visit <http://bit.ly/CVrestrictions>

Read the Statement from the Acting Premier (27 May 2021) <https://bit.ly/3yGS1xg>

Effective immediately: health and aged care services to follow COVID ACTIVE (red) or high-risk rating guidance

The Victorian Government has moved all private and public healthcare services to **COVID ACTIVE (red) rating or high risk** - effective immediately.

Read the **COVID ACTIVE (red)** response guidance (updated 27 May 2021) sent to health services via <https://bit.ly/3yAdw2O>

The guidance includes the PPE requirements, elective surgery changes and other protections for all healthcare workers across Victoria. Tier 3 PPE is required for any suspected COVID-19 patient, resident or client.

The guidance includes the following table (yellow highlights indicate changes from the previous COVID ALERT (amber)). See below for PPE Tier definitions and negative, and low risk and high risk suspected COVID patients.

Policy/Program Area	All Victorian health services
Face masks	Face masks as a minimum, are mandatory for all health care workers.
PPE Tier 1	Surgical masks and eye protection (face shields where practical) are required for all exposure/care/contact with COVID negative patients.
PPE Tier 2	As per standard precautions for COVID negative patients/residents
PPE Tier 3	All exposure/care/contact with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low- risk SCOVID

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high-risk SCOVID confirmed COVID patients <p>For staff undertaking testing at port of entry/hotel quarantine and community COVID testing locations.</p>
Patient Screening and Testing	<p>Testing patients/residents with compatible clinical and/or epidemiological risk factors</p> <p>Asymptomatic testing (including preoperative testing) based on local risk assessment.</p>
Health Care Worker (HCW) surveillance testing	<p>For health services with no active outbreaks, increased testing of asymptomatic staff who are exposed and/or provide care to high-risk SCOVID and confirmed COVID-19 patients should occur.</p> <p>For health services with an active outbreak, health services to follow outbreak-based testing program as per directions from the Public Health unit, Department of Health.</p>
Workforce Attestations	<p>Daily work force attestations and enhanced screening, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of compatible clinical symptoms Whether the HCW is a primary or secondary close contact of a COVID case OR has visited listed exposure sites in Victoria or interstate) whether the HCW has worked in or volunteered at a hotel quarantine site and/or other port of entry in the last 14 days If the HCW was a resident in hotel quarantine in the last 7 days, confirmation that they have had a negative test 7 days post leaving hotel quarantine. <p>Health care workers who fail the attestation are prohibited from working at the health service.</p> <p><i>Please refer to the current Workplace (Additional Industry Obligations) Directions for more information, available at https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19</i></p>
Elective surgery	<p>Category 1, 2A elective surgeries only, however all categories of pre-planned elective surgery (procedures already arranged before this announcement) may occur prior to 5:00pm on Friday 28 May 2021, where it is not safe and/or logistically possible to postpone</p> <p>Post 5:00pm Friday 28 May 2021, only category 1 and 2A surgeries permitted.</p> <p>All patients</p> <p>Patients who have visited a listed exposure site and/or are considered a close contact and are instructed by the Department of Health to quarantine for 14 days, should avoid</p>

	<p>surgery within those 14 days, where safe to do. Individual risk assessment of the patient should be undertaken to inform the decision to undertake surgery.</p> <p>For any patient who requires an urgent procedure, COVID-19 testing should not delay necessary medical care. Appropriate risk mitigation strategies should be implemented to ensure the safety of both health care workers and the patient.</p> <p>Hotel quarantine and other port of entry workers</p> <p>For patients who have worked and/or volunteered at a hotel quarantine and/or other port of entry site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • these patients should not have their elective surgery postponed on the proviso that the patient has undergone ongoing asymptomatic workplace surveillance testing and has been vaccinated • Where a hotel quarantine and/or ports of entry worker presents with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, COVID-19 infection should be ruled out before proceeding with surgery • Hotel quarantine and/or ports of entry workers who are free of symptoms consistent with COVID-19, should not have their surgery delayed while waiting for testing results. • Hotel quarantine and/or ports of entry workers do not need to self-quarantine prior to their elective surgery unless specifically advised by the department (e.g., because they have been deemed a close contact etc).
<p>Visitors</p>	<p>People seeking healthcare are not considered visitors and should not be denied access to healthcare for any reason. Hotel quarantine and port of entry workers should not be excluded from visiting hospitals purely on the basis of being a hotel quarantine or port of entry worker.</p> <p>Patients/residents restricted to two visitors at one time, with no more than two visitors per day, including dependents, for permitted purposes only (unless for end of life reasons, where there is no limit on number of visits per day, but two visitors at one time rule applies).</p> <p>For all visitors, a pre-attendance risk assessment must be undertaken, based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presence of compatible clinical symptoms • whether the visitor is a primary or secondary close contact of a COVID case OR has visited listed exposure sites in Victoria or interstate • If the visitor was a resident in hotel quarantine in the last 7 days, confirmation that they have had a negative test 7 days post leaving hotel quarantine <p>Visitors who fail the pre-attendance risk assessment should be prohibited from entering the health service, unless an exemption applies.</p>

	<p>Masks should be worn by all visitors at all times. Valid exemptions may apply.</p> <p><i>Please refer to the current Hospital Visitor Directions for more information, available at https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19</i></p>
Specialist outpatient consulting	<p>Telehealth consultations recommended.</p> <p>Where telehealth is not possible, for in person face-to-face outpatient appointments, appropriate risk assessment should be undertaken based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presence of compatible clinical symptoms • whether the visitor is a primary or secondary close contact of a COVID case OR has visited listed exposure sites in Victoria or interstate • If the patient was a resident in hotel quarantine in the last 7 days, confirmation that they have had a negative test 7 days post leaving hotel quarantine. <p>For patients who fit into one of the above three categories, telehealth is strongly recommended. Exemptions may apply on a case-by-case basis.</p>
Emergency Department	Implement Emergency Department COVID service plans
Vulnerable Workforce (Higher Risk Workers)	<p>Health services should re-deploy high-risk employees, based on risk assessment.</p> <p>Where not possible, health services should consider whether it is appropriate for these employees to attend work.</p>
Workforce Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where practical, consider restricting all care facility workers and healthcare worker's mobility to one campus/facility. • High-risk hospital work premises workers (as per definition) must disclose to each of their employers the additional workplaces which they work. • All other health care workers should be asked to disclose to each of their employers the additional workplaces which they work at. • Health services are reminded to keep a record of the additional health services of which their employees work at.
Student clinical placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All student clinical placements permitted in all clinical areas. • Students should be restricted from providing care/being exposed to high-risk SCOVID and confirmed COVID patients. • Students not permitted to move between campuses/facilities during each individual placement. • For the purposes of this guidance, all students are considered "health care workers" and all the above obligations apply.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are restricted from undertaking a clinical placement at a health service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If in the last 14 days they have worked/volunteered and/or undertaken a clinical placement at a hotel quarantine site and/or ports of entry site - If in the last 7 days been released from hotel quarantine as a resident, confirmation that they have had a negative test 7 days post leaving hotel quarantine.
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The above is an extract from the **COVID ACTIVE (red)** response guidance (updated 27 May 2021) sent to health services. It can be read in full via <https://bit.ly/3yAdw2O>

PPE tiers and definitions

PPE tiers are explained in the **COVID ACTIVE (red)** response guidance (updated 27 May 2021) sent to health services. An extract is below, it can be read in full via <https://bit.ly/3yAdw2O>

PPE Tier 1: COVID-19 standard precautions. Surgical mask

PPE Tier 2: Droplet and contact precautions.

- Disposable gloves
- Level 1 Gown with Plastic Apron **OR** Disposable gown (Level 2,3 or 4)
- Surgical Masks (Level 2 or 3)
- Eye Protection (Face Shield preferred)

PPE Tier 3: Airborne and contact precautions and aerosol generating procedures.

- Disposable gloves
- Disposable gown (Level 2,3 or 4)
- P2/N95 Respirator
- Eye Protection (Face Shield preferred)

COVID Negative:

- A person who tests negative to a validated SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test.
- A person who is a cleared case.
- A person who screens negative and/or has no clinical or epidemiological risk factors for COVID-19.

Low risk SCOVID case:

- A person with symptoms that could be consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19) (for example, cough, sore throat, fever, shortness of breath or runny nose) but no epidemiological risk factors as listed in the high-risk definition.

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*Where a patient's history cannot be obtained, they should be considered as a Low-risk suspected case until further screening information can be obtained, at which point a revised diagnosis of the patient's condition can be made and appropriate changes to PPE implemented.

High risk SCOVID case:

- A person in quarantine for any reason (including; being a close contact of a confirmed case or coronavirus (COVID-19) or a returned traveler from overseas, or a relevant interstate area with outbreaks as defined by public health, in the last 14 days) with or without a compatible clinical illness. This group of people is also referred to as "at-risk".
- A person with a compatible clinical illness and meets one or more of the following epidemiological risk factors:

In the 14 days prior to illness onset:

- Contact with a confirmed case or an exposure site as defined by public health
- Was employed in an area where there is an increased risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission for example,
 - hotel quarantine workers or any workers at ports of entry,
 - aged care workers/ healthcare workers working in a location where there are active outbreaks
 - other high-risk industries (such as abattoirs) where there are known cases /or high levels of community transmission,
- Lived in or visited a geographically localised area at high risk as determined by public health

Confirmed COVID case: A person who tests positive to a validated SARS-CoV-2 test.

Clinical risk factors: Clinical compatible symptoms with COVID-19, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of smell or taste.

Epidemiological risk factors:

- A person in quarantine for any reason (including; being a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) and/or a returned traveller from overseas, and/or a relevant interstate area with outbreaks as defined by public health, in the last 14 days).
- Primary or secondary close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 and/or an exposure site as defined by public health.
- Lived in or visited a geographically localized area at higher risk, as determined by public health.

Increased healthcare worker testing:

Increased testing of asymptomatic staff who are exposed and/or provide care to high-risk SCOVID and confirmed COVID-19 patients (4 saliva samples over 14 days, 1 nasal throat swab every 7 days).

Enhanced screening

Additional screening over and above the Department of Health guidance, which could include local hospital-specific requirements such as temperature checks, previous exposure to COVID-19, determining whether a HCW works at other locations, etc.

Visitor Restrictions:

- Do not have to be from the same household
- No time limits.
- No specified purpose required.
- A group may exceed the “two visitors at a time” rule if dependents of a visitor (or patient in hospital) are in the group and care for the dependents cannot be arranged.
- Based on local risk assessment, services may also determine their own requirements, conditions or restrictions for visitors.

Permitted purposes:

- Provide essential care or support for the patient’s immediate physical or emotional wellbeing.
- Is the parent, carer or guardian of a person under the age of 18.
- As a nominated person (as defined in the Mental Health Act 2014).
- As an interpreter or to provide language support.
- To learn to support the patient or resident’s care upon discharge.
- As the partner or support person of a patient in maternity care, pregnancy.
- Accompany to emergency department or outpatient.
- Is immediate family (including kinship) of a patient with life-threatening condition.

End of life visits:

- Two visitors at a time
- Do not have to be from the same household
- No time limits.
- No specified purpose required.
- A group may exceed the “two visitors at a time” rule if dependents of a visitor (or patient in hospital) are in the group and care for the dependents cannot be arranged.
- No daily limit.

Higher risk employee categories:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
- People 70 years and older
- People with compromised immune systems
- Pregnant women >28 weeks gestation

High risk hospital work premises:

a) any ward treating confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19);

b) where the Chief Health Officer (or their delegate) notifies a hospital that there is community transmission in an area proximate to that hospital, that hospital's:

- ward(s) treating any high-risk suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19);
- emergency department; and
- intensive care unit.

High-risk hospital work premises worker: any worker involved in the direct care of patients in high-risk hospital Work Premises AND those workers who interact with a high-risk hospital Work Premises

PPE supplies

Nurses, midwives and personal care workers can be assured that the state's PPE supplies are good and tracking systems are in place.

Fit testing as part of the Victorian Respiratory Protection Program is well underway at public health services. Health care services should prioritise healthcare workers for fit testing based on their clinical area of work. ANMF is advocating for all private aged care facilities to undertake a fit testing program.

Irrespective of fit testing, fit checking should be undertaken every time someone puts a P2/N95 respirator on. If the appropriate fit is not achieved, the respirator is not providing adequate protection. In these circumstances someone who can achieve an appropriate fit should undertake the procedure or delay the procedure until an appropriate fit can be achieved.

Personal protective equipment concern?

ANMF continues to attend the PPE taskforce union consultation meetings. **Members with concerns about PPE should:**

1. **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/membersassistance (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.

Elective surgery paused

Elective surgery will be paused from 5pm, Friday 28 May 2021. Under the COVID ALERT guidance only categories 1 and 2A surgery will proceed.

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Employment stability payment

ANMF is liaising with the Andrews Government advocating for stability payments for private and public sector nurses, particularly bank staff, in the event they are impacted by the category 3 elective surgery pause.

Testing and isolation payments

\$450 test isolation payment

The Victorian Government provides a \$450 test isolation payment to workers required to isolate between taking a COVID-19 test and don't have access to paid leave.

More information, eligibility and applications <https://bit.ly/3fWygqQ>

\$1500 disaster leave payment

The Federal Government provides a \$1500 disaster leave payment if you tested positive or were identified as a close contact and have to isolate for 14 days. You are eligible for the payment if you do not have access to paid leave during your isolation period.

Call 180 22 66 to make a claim.

More information, eligibility and applications <https://bit.ly/3bWnfXG>

Emergency accommodation for healthcare workers

Nurses and midwives, employed in public and private sector healthcare services, are eligible to access the 'frontline accommodation program' if they need support to quarantine or isolate safely.

ANMF is advocating the Commonwealth Government provide a similar program for nurses and personal care workers employed in private aged care.

For details <https://bit.ly/2X6cABJ>

People aged 40-49 years now eligible to attend state vaccination centres

Please let your friends and family members, aged 40 – 49 years, know that they are now eligible to attend a state vaccination centre and can receive the Pfizer vaccine from Friday 28 May 2021.

Let them know that vaccination is the best way to protect themselves and the community.

To receive the Pfizer vaccine, people in this age bracket must make a **booking through the Victorian Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398** to ensure they attend a centre that has supply of the Pfizer vaccine.

Read the Victorian Government media release Vaccine roll out to expand to all Victorian 40 and over (27 May 2021) <https://bit.ly/3wzg2oe>

Members encouraged to vaccinate

Any member, including private aged care nurses and personal care workers, who has not had their vaccination is strongly encouraged to book their vaccination to protect themselves, their family, their patients, clients, residents and the community.

Special paid leave is available for public sector nurses and midwives if you experience an expected adverse reaction to your vaccine. ANMF encourages all other employers, including the Commonwealth Government for private aged care, to follow the Victorian Health Department's advice for special leave for these circumstances.

For more information see COVID-19 newsflash #40 via <https://bit.ly/3wDtjwb>

Bookings and additional location information visit bit.ly/3aJLGHk

Book an appointment - call the Victorian Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398.

A translator is available - if required by pressing option 0.

Vaccination numbers update

Victorian vaccination numbers – as of 27 May 2021, Victoria's vaccination centres had administered 398,009 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, with 12,877 in the last 24 hours. (Excludes doses administered by the Federal Government.) **View the Victorian Government's vaccination data dashboard** <https://bit.ly/319HzPq>

National vaccination numbers – as of 26 May 2021, a total 3,795,280 vaccines have been administered across Australia, with 104,658 in the last 24 hours. **View the Federal Government's national and aged care vaccination data** <https://bit.ly/3vTkJcR>

COVID-19 stressed? Take the self-care quiz

This is an uncertain time, and the re-introduction of restrictions will be of concern to many members. All nurses, midwives, personal care workers and nursing and midwifery students are encouraged to reflect on their current circumstances and wellbeing and fill out the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria's self-care plan questionnaire via <https://bit.ly/343qHLf>. You will be emailed a self-care plan.

To contact NMHPV call 9415 7551 or email admin@nmhp.org.au Find out more www.nmhp.org.au

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

The ANMF (Vic Branch) 'Don't bring it home' guide is designed to assist members 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

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

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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.