

Contact assessment and management guidance: workplaces, business and industry

COVID-19 Public Health Division

Intelligence, Case Contact and Outbreak Management

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SCOPE

This guidance is to support decision making following a COVID-19 exposure in workplaces, business and industry settings. This may include but is not limited to, offices, hospitality venues, supermarkets, warehouses, construction sites and public transport depots.

It is for businesses and members of the public to assess and manage situations where an infectious case has attended business, industry or workplace premises.

This guidance does not apply to exposures in households or sensitive settings, that is schools, healthcare (hospital and community-based), residential facilities including aged care, correctional centres or other settings where there are people at high risk of severe illness.

The guidance will be updated to reflect changes to COVID-19 epidemiology and the public health response in Victoria.

Specific assessment may be required in some circumstances

This guidance is general. Specific risk assessment and tailored outbreak management by the Department of Health and Local Public Health Units may be required in some circumstances, where significant transmission events have occurred, or where other additional risks apply (workforce, operational continuity or community risks).

Workplace and employee obligations

A person who is a confirmed case of COVID-19 must notify the operator of any work premises at which they ordinarily work that they've been diagnosed with COVID-19 and of their infectious period, if they attended an indoor space at the work premises during their infectious period.

The operator of a workplace must take reasonable steps to notify employees and contractors that they have been exposed to a positive case, and to advise them of their obligation to obtain a PCR test and quarantine until they receive a negative result.

A workplace will be required to maintain a system to enable them to notify contacts and obtain assurance of a negative PCR test result from an individual prior to their return to the premises.

For further information

[Information and advice for businesses who have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace)
<<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace>>

To receive this document in another format, call the Coronavirus Hotline 1800 675 398 (press 0 for an interpreter, if required), or contact [coronavirus.vic.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)
<<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/contact-us>>.

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CONTACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT MATRIX

Contact = any staff member or contractor who has contact with a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in a **non-household** setting.

Case = any confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

EXPOSURE EVENT RISK ASSESSMENT

An exposure event is contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 during their infectious period.

1. The business conducts a risk assessment for each exposure event using the contact assessment and management matrix.
2. Individuals are identified as contacts or low risk. Contact lists are managed by the workplace and are not provided to the Local Public Health Unit unless specifically requested (for example, during an outbreak).
3. Individuals must follow the testing and quarantine requirements for their assessed level of risk (low risk or contact).

	No exposure	Low-risk exposure scenario: Contact with a confirmed case in their infectious period that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face (<1.5m) and transient (<1 minute) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distanced (>1.5m) and any duration in a large (>300m²) indoor space or outdoors AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not meet the criteria for medium or high risk 	Medium-risk exposure scenario: Contact with a confirmed case in their infectious period that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face (<1.5m) and non-transient (1–15 minutes) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distanced (>1.5m) and very prolonged (>2 hours) in a medium-sized indoor space (100–300m²) AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not meet the criteria for high risk 	High-risk exposure scenario: Contact with a confirmed case in their infectious period that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • face-to-face (<1.5m) and prolonged (>15 minutes) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct physical contact (for example, shaking hands, hugging, kissing) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distanced (>1.5m) and very prolonged (>2 hours) in a small indoor space (<100m²) 	
Masks not worn*	Extremely low risk	Low risk	Contact		
Masks worn	Extremely low risk	Low risk	Low risk (if vaccinated)	Contact (if unvaccinated)	Contact

*Mask not worn by either the case or the person exposed. Incorrect mask use or a medical mask exemption is to be considered the same as 'no mask' for assessment and management. Note: time periods are cumulative across a period of one day (for example, two separate 10-minute exposures should be assessed as a 'prolonged' (>15 min) exposure).

QUARANTINE AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS

What you need to do	Low risk (and extremely low risk)	Monitor for symptoms and get PCR tested if you have any symptoms, however mild.
	Contact	Quarantine and get PCR tested – initial PCR testing is mandatory and cannot be substituted with a rapid antigen test. Return to work only after you receive a negative initial PCR test result. Daily rapid antigen testing is strongly recommended from the day that your PCR result is obtained (when you can leave quarantine) until 7 days after exposure (for a total of five rapid antigen tests).

Note: a positive rapid antigen test must be confirmed by a PCR test.

THE PRESENCE OF SYMPTOMS ALWAYS REQUIRES TESTING

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

When is a confirmed case's infectious period?

A case's infectious period should be taken 48 hours before onset of symptoms until medical clearance. If a case is asymptomatic, they should be assumed to be infectious from 48 hours before the initial positive test.

How do you define an 'indoor space'?

Indoor space means an area, room or premises substantially enclosed by a roof and walls that are floor-to-ceiling or at least 2.1 metres high, regardless of whether the roof or walls or any part of them are permanent or temporary, or open or closed.

Who is considered to be 'fully vaccinated'?

A person must have received all scheduled doses of a TGA-approved or recognised vaccine regimen to be considered fully vaccinated.

When is rapid antigen testing strongly recommended?

Rapid antigen tests (RAT) can be undertaken every day in the 7 days after exposure, after the initial PCR result has been received. RAT is strongly recommended:

- when visiting sensitive settings and low-vaccination settings such as schools, early childhood learning centres, aged care facilities, hospitals, disability settings, elderly relatives and correctional facilities
- prior to entry to indoor settings including workplaces, social venues (for example, pubs, nightclubs, parties) and other high-risk settings (for example, gyms, beauty treatments, places of worship).

How can contacts access rapid antigen test (RAT) kits?

Five RAT kits and guidance will be provided to contacts (exposed at a workplace or educational facility) at their PCR testing location.

What should I do if a worker returns a positive rapid antigen test (RAT) result?

A positive RAT must be confirmed by a PCR test. No public health action should be undertaken without PCR confirmation of a confirmed case.

If an identified contact tests positive for COVID-19 after an exposure event, all contacts of the subsequent case must be identified and provided advice on PCR and rapid antigen testing. Additional testing of contacts is required for all identified cases. In the event of multiple cases being identified, guidance and assessment by a Local Public Health Unit is available, by calling **1300 651 160**.

What is a household or household-like contact?

A **household contact** is a person who lives with a confirmed COVID-19 case, including in a household or household-like setting.

Household-like settings include aged care facilities and boarding houses, when contact of over 4 hours has occurred.

Unvaccinated household contacts (including unvaccinated eligible school students aged 12–18) must quarantine for 14 days (until they get a negative Day 13 PCR test result).

Vaccinated household contacts (including children 0–11 years if everyone aged 12 and over in the household is vaccinated) must quarantine for 7 days (until they get a negative Day 6 PCR test result).