

Official Directions to Work from Home

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Commonwealth Government advised that people “should work from home if it works for you and your employer”, and most state/territory jurisdictions put in place legal requirements to do so. This Fact Sheet was established to provide information about the various restrictions across jurisdictions and has been updated whenever changes have occurred in an individual jurisdiction.

With effect from 6.00pm on 26 March 2021, Victoria is the last jurisdiction to remove long term requirements to work from home.

Subsequently, this is the final update of this Fact Sheet. If there are any future COVID-19 cases or outbreaks that result in the reinstatement of any working from home restrictions, members will be advised through stand-alone COVID-19 Member Advices for the relevant jurisdiction.

Other Relevant Information - Ai Group Fact Sheets

COVID-19 Safety Plans: What are they and do I need one?

<https://www.aigroup.com.au/business-services/covid19-coronavirus/>

Face Coverings

<https://www.aigroup.com.au/business-services/covid19-coronavirus/>

Ai Group COVID Member Advices

<https://www.aigroup.com.au/member-services/memberadvices/safety-workerscompensation/>

Information about Hardship Payments for workers who are required to isolate or quarantine

[New South Wales](#)

[Queensland](#)

[Tasmania](#)

[Victoria](#)

[Western Australia](#)

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AMENDMENTS TO THIS FACT SHEET

Version 1	21 May 2020	Initial publication.
Version 2	25 May 2020	Victoria: Amended to reflect announcement that Victorian restrictions will change on 1 June 2020 and emphasising the Premier’s statement to expect working from home until at least the end of June.
Version 3	1 June 2020	<p>Document reorganised into alphabetical order.</p> <p>ACT: Amended to provide a link to Canberra’s Recovery Plan and highlighting “working from home if it works for you and your employer” will continue to be expected until at least mid July 2020.</p> <p>New South Wales: Amended to reference new Gathering and Movement Order. No change to requirement for employers to allow work from home. No indication of when this may change.</p> <p>Queensland: Amended to reference new Movement and Gathering direction effective 1 June 2020, which has no mention of working from home. Included a link to web information which still encourages working from home and a link to the Roadmap indicating that working from home will continue until at least 10 July 2020.</p> <p>South Australia: Amended to link to latest Roadmap.</p> <p>Tasmania: Provided more information, with a link, about expected review of restrictions from 15 June 2020.</p> <p>Victoria: Amended to provide a link to the most recent Directions. Requirements to work from home have been strengthened – employers must not permit a person to work from the employer’s premises if it is reasonably practicable to work from home. Included link to media release of 29 May stating that working from home where reasonably practicable will continue until at least the end of June 2020.</p>
Version 4	9 June 2020	Tasmania: Stay at Home Requirements revoked from 3pm on 5 June 2020. Working from home is still encouraged. Next change expected with effect from 13 July 2020.
Version 5	17 June 2020	<p>New South Wales: To clarify that significant change to the gathering and movement requirements effective 13 June 2020, do not change the requirement that employers allow people to work at home if possible.</p> <p>Northern Territory: Amended to advise that physical distancing directions have been revoked but keeping a distance of 1.5m where possible is still expected. Provided a link to relevant public health orders.</p> <p>South Australia: Amended to provide link to current RoadMap to Recovery dated 12 June 2020.</p> <p>Tasmania: Removed broken link to revocation of stay at home requirements. Amended next expected review date from 13 July 2020 to 26 June 2020.</p> <p>Victoria: Amended to include link to media statement of 14 June 2020 which advised of changed restrictions effective 22 June, with no change to requirements to work from home.</p> <p>Western Australia: Provided a link to an updated Roadmap to Recovery which specifies new density requirements – 2m² per person, replacing 4m² per person.</p>

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Version 6	22 June 2020	<p>Queensland: Updated to reflect change to roadmap; “you can return to work if it works for you and your employer”. Information provided about hardship payment for persons that are required to isolate and do not have access to sick leave, including a link to information on eligibility information.</p> <p>Victoria: Updated to provide links to new directions dated 21 June 2020 and effective through to 12 July 2020 which continue the working at home requirement. Removed links to previous media statements and provided a link to the 20 June 2020 media statement advising that work at home requirements will continue until at least 31 July 2020. Provided information about a new \$1500 payment for workers who are required to isolated but do not have access to sick leave.</p>
Version 7	25 June 2020	<p>Victoria: Updated to include information about eligibility and approval processes for the \$1500 hardship payment that was announced on 20 June 2020.</p>
Version 8	2 July 2020	<p>ACT: Updated to reflect easing of work from home restrictions from 10 July 2020, described as “gradual return to work”.</p> <p>New South Wales: Updated to reference current public health order which continues to require employers to allow workers to work from home if it is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Queensland: Updated to provide link to current public health order.</p> <p>Tasmania: Updated to reflect the previously advised change to restrictions on 26 June. The previous statement “working from home is encouraged” has been removed from the roadmap.</p> <p>Victoria: Updated effective dates of current public health order which ceases on 12 July 2020. It is important to recognise that the working from home requirements are expected to continue beyond the current public health order, through to the end of July 2020.</p>
Version 9	6 July 2020	<p>General: New <i>Recent Developments</i> section introduced early in the document to highlight states and territories that still have working from home requirements in place.</p> <p>Victoria: Updated to reflect changes to Directions that became effective on 1 July 2020 and 4 July 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lockdown of specific public housing estates from 4 July 2020; residents cannot leave their homes except in an emergency. • Increased restrictions on specific postcodes from 1 July 2020 and 4 July 2020; these do not make changes to working from home requirements, but people may be asked to demonstrate their reason for leaving home. • New references to Directions for the rest of Victoria which extend the operation date of restrictions initiated on 1 July 2020 to 19 July 2020 (previously 12 July 2020).
Version 10	8 July 2020	<p>Victoria: Updated to reflect increased restrictions applying to metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire with effect from 11.59pm on 8 July 2020; these do not change working from home requirements but may result in people to asked to demonstrate their reasons for leaving home and create difficulties commuting if the travel requires workers to cross a border between the Restricted Areas and the rest of Victoria. Includes information about school holidays being extended and the possibility of home schooling returning for most students in the Restricted Areas.</p> <p>Victoria / New South Wales hard border: Following the closure of the border between Victoria and New South Wales, a link has been provided to a separate Ai Group Member Advice that provides information on all current border closures within Australia.</p>

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Version 11	9 July 2020	<p>ACT: A “gradual return to work” will commence at 12 noon on 10 July 2020; advice continues to avoid public transport in peak times.</p> <p>Victoria: Updated to remove previous information about <i>Restricted Postcodes</i> and replace with information about <i>Restricted Areas</i> (Metropolitan Melbourne and the Mitchell Shire). Included a brief summary of working from home arrangements. Provided links to Directions effective from 11.59pm on 8 July 2020 to 11.59pm on 19 July 2020, noting that they are most likely to be extended to 19 August 2020. Removed information about the hard border between Victoria and New South Wales, whilst retaining a link to the relevant Member Advice on all border closures in the <i>Recent Developments</i> section of this document.</p>
Version 12	13 July 2020	<p>ACT: Minor changes to bring into current tense. Also, information about next review point being 23 July 2020.</p> <p>Victoria: Updated information about Public Housing lockdowns. Confirmation that, with the exception of VCE students and special schools, home schooling will be in place in Restricted Areas from 20 July until at least 19 August 2020. Onsite supervision will be available for students whose parents cannot work from home, vulnerable students and students with a disability.</p>
Version 13	20 July 2020	<p>Removed reference to Commonwealth Health Department Guidance now that most jurisdictions no longer have requirements to work from home unless it is not reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The document has been reorganised so that information about jurisdictions with ongoing requirements to work from home is at the start of the document (New South Wales and Victoria). Information for jurisdictions that no longer have specific working from home directions has been significantly reduced, but still include links to current relevant information about roadmaps and expectations.</p> <p>New South Wales: Added information about a recommendation to consider wearing a mask if social distancing cannot be achieved.</p> <p>Victoria: Included information about mandatory requirement for masks in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire and recommendations in other locations. A link to Ai Group information on the impact on workplaces has been provided. Advised on the conclusion of public housing lockdowns. Included links to new directions that continue restrictions through to at least 16 August 2020.</p>
Version 14	24 July 2020	<p>Victoria: Updated information about mandatory requirement for face coverings in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, including providing information about employer obligation to take reasonable steps to ensure employees wear coverings at work. Included information about new \$300 hardship payment. Provided a link to the Ai Group Fact Sheet on face coverings. Updated links to directions effective 11.59pm on 22 July 2020 to 11.59pm on 16 August 2020.</p>
Version 15	19 August 2020	<p>Victoria: Updated information with reference to the Stage 3 and Stage 4 Restrictions in place until at least 13 September 2020. Summary of increase restrictions provided under Stage 4 including information about <i>Permitted Work Premises</i>, Permitted Worker Permits, and restrictions on numbers in some industries. Removed references to individual restrictions as they are now all integrated into workplace requirements. Links provided to relevant Directions.</p>
Version 16	14 September 2020	<p>Victoria: Updated to provide links to Directions effective from 11.59pm on 13 September 2020. There has not been any substantive to requirements or restrictions on activities. Also included a link to the DHHS webpage, Roadmap for Reopening.</p>

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Version 17	17 September 2020	Victoria: Updated to provide links to current Directions. Included brief information on the restrictions on car pooling in metropolitan Melbourne.
Version 18	28 September 2020	Simplified the introduction to reflect significant changes since this Fact Sheet was first established. Removed information on the wearing of face coverings, but retained link to Fact Sheet. Victoria: Removed a lot of detail which is now included in a separate Victorian Member Advice that focuses on restriction levels and risk controls for Victoria. This will provide one source of up to date information for Victorian workplaces. Removed information about jurisdictions that no longer have requirements for people to work from home, i.e. all jurisdictions other than NSW and VIC.
Version 19	28 October 2020	NSW: Updated reference to the Directions that require people to work from home. Victoria: Updated information to reflect that metropolitan Melbourne moved to the Third Step and Permitted Worker Permits are no longer required. Provided information about Metro-Regional Travel Permits for workers.
Version 29	19 November 2020	SA: Updated to reflect the impacts of the 6-day <i>Circuit Breaker</i> that commenced at 12.01am on 19 November that requires most businesses to close. VIC: Updated to reflect the reduced restrictions that came into effect at 11.59pm on 8 November 2020
Version 30	22 November 2020	SA: Advised of the early cessation of the <i>Circuit Breaker</i> lockdown. Working from home is being encouraged.
Version 31	23 November 2020	VIC: Updated to reflect the 22 November announcement that Victorian workers will be able to gradually return to the workplace from 30 November 2020.
Version 32	30 November 2020	General: Removed reference link to Border Closures updates. VIC: Updated to reflect the 29 November Directions and provided a link to the Returning to the Workplace Q&A Member Advice.
Version 33	4 December 2020	NSW: Updated to reflect announcement that NSW are repealing work from home requirements from 14 December 2020. SA: Updated to reflect current guidance on working from home, following the conclusion of the <i>Circuit Breaker</i> .
Version 34	14 December 2020	NSW and SA: Updated to confirm a return to workplaces in these jurisdictions. VIC is currently the only jurisdiction with working from home requirements in the Directions.
Version 35	20 December 2020	NSW: Amended to reflect the Northern Beaches restrictions in place from 19 December to 23 December 2020
Version 36	5 January 2021	NSW: Updated in line with the removal of the southern area of the Northern Beaches from the Stay at Home requirements.
Version 37	7 January 2021	VIC: Introduction updated to reflect a delay in the expected increase in numbers of people who have been working from home being allowed to return to work.
Version 38	8 January 2021	QLD: updated to include information on the Brisbane lockdown effective 6pm on 8 January 2021.
Version 39	12 January 2021	QLD and NSW: Stay at home requirements no longer applying to the NSW Northern Beaches and the impacted areas of QLD.

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Version 40	18 January 2021	VIC: updated for increase in numbers permitted to return to the workplace.
Version 41	1 February 2021	WA: updated to reflect the hard lockdown in WA
Version 42	3 February 2021	VIC: updated to reflect the announcement that number would increase to 75% on February 2021
Version 43	4 February 2021	VIC: updated to reflect the “pause” in the increase in numbers that was planned for 8 February 2021
Version 44	8 February 2021	WA: updated to reflect the easing of restrictions in Perth, Peel and South Western Region. Still restrictions on movement into and out of the affected area of Perth and the Peel Region
Version 45	12 February 2021	VIC: updated to reflect the 5 day lockdown across Victoria
Version 46	15 February 2021	WA: updated to reflect the end of restriction for Perth and the Peel Region
Version 47	18 February 2021	WA: all reference removed VIC: amended to reflect the end of the 5 day lockdown
Version 48	1 March 2021	VIC: amended to reflect the increase in numbers of employees allowed in offices.
Version 49	23 March 2021	VIC: amended to reflect the changes that will take effect at 11.59pm on 26 March 2021 – no longer a requirement to work from home and no limit on the number of people returning to the workplace, as long as the density quotient of 1 person per 2 square metres rule can be achieved.
Version 50	26 March 2021	Updated to reflect that there are no longer any specific requirements in Australia to work from home, with Victorian requirements ceasing at 6pm on 26 March 2021. This is the last update of the Fact Sheet. Any working from home requirements that occur due to future cases of COVID-19 will be communicated via a detailed Member Advice for the relevant jurisdiction.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or assistance, please contact the
Ai Group Workplace Advice Service on 1300 55 66 77