

# COVID-19 Safety Plans

## What are they and do I need one?

Summary of status at 11 June 2020

### Overarching Requirement to Manage the Risks of COVID-19

Work Health and Safety Laws establish an obligation for employers to manage the risks associated with work so far as is reasonably practicable. In consultation with workers, employers must identify hazards and controls risks by eliminating or minimising the risk. In line with these laws, COVID-19 is a hazard that must be managed in work situations.

The Model WHS Code *How to manage work health and safety risks* provides a framework for identifying and managing risks including: consulting with workers; consulting, cooperating and coordinating with other duty holders (suppliers, customers, labour hire companies, contractors); identifying hazards; assessing risks; controlling risks, including application of the hierarchy of controls; implementing control measures; and ensuring that control measures remain effective.

When controlling risks, employers are expected to access and apply the *current state of knowledge* about a particular hazard and the required controls. When addressing COVID-19 risks this state of knowledge is currently available from Commonwealth and State/Territory health departments and local health and safety regulators, Safe Work Australia and from various industry bodies, including Ai Group.

Key controls that need to be considered in relation to COVID-19 include: physical distancing; personal hygiene; cleaning protocols; contact tracing; and responding to a COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case.

### Specific COVID-19 Safety Plans

The National COVID-19 Coordination Commission has released a [Planning Tool](#) to help organisations plan for ramping up or reopening. The tool provides good information about things businesses should consider to aid their business to meet COVID-19 health related directions and to access financial support and assistance.

In relation to developing plans that are specifically focused on applying the public health orders within workplaces, it would be expected by each work health and safety regulator, and the department of health, that organisations that are operating during COVID-19 would have identified the COVID-19 risks in their workplace and introduced appropriate controls.

Whether a specific checklist or plan is required is being determined by each state/territory. In some cases requirements are being established and administered under work health and safety (WHS) laws; in other cases health departments are taking the lead.

# COVID-19 Safety Plans

The focus on these approaches has become higher as decisions are being made to reopen venues that were forced to close when restrictions were commenced in March 2020. However, some of the requirements are impacting all businesses.

The information below is designed to provide a snapshot of what is required. Employers are encouraged to use the links provided to ensure that there is a full understanding of the requirements in the relevant state/territory.

## ACT

The ACT government has recently released a [Business Resource Pack](#) to provide assistance to certain businesses that are required to develop a COVID Safety Plan as part of reopening. A list of these businesses can be found on the front page of the [Guidelines for your COVID Safety Plan](#).

The COVID Safety Plan must be in writing and available to be produced on request by compliance and enforcement officers, but it does not need to be submitted for approval.

## New South Wales

[Public Health \(COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement\) Order \(No 3\) 2020](#) establishes which businesses are required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in order to reopen as restrictions are lifted. The relevant businesses are listed in Schedule 1 of the Order.

If a COVID-19 safety plan is required for the premises, the occupier or operator of the premises must develop and comply with a safety plan for the premises that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 safety checklist for the type of premises, keep a copy of the COVID-19 safety plan on the premises and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested.

Completion of a COVID-19 safety plan allows organisations to register as a COVID Safe business. Businesses that register can download and display Information about their COVID Safe business, including the provision of a URL that allows customers to provide feedback about the business is providing a COVID Safe environment. Industry specific COVID Safety plans and information about the COVID Safe business program can be found at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/covid-safe-businesses>.

## Northern Territory

All NT businesses are required to lodge a COVID-19 Safety Plan by filling out and submitting the relevant checklists online.

As part of NT's [Roadmap to a new Normal](#) any business or organisation that continued to operate during the period of restrictions and all businesses previously restricted must complete a COVID-19 Safety Plan checklist by 5 June. Plans for businesses that continued to operate without restrictions must complete a generic checklist; other workplaces are required to complete a checklist that is specific to their industry. The checklists are available from the link above.

# COVID-19 Safety Plans

## Queensland

The Queensland Government has recently launched a suite of documents on their webpage for [COVID Safe Businesses](#).

### ***Businesses with high risk of transmission***

The information is largely targeted at businesses which have been identified by the Chief Health Officer as having a high risk of transmission; a list of these businesses can be found at the link above. These organisations were forced to close at the start of the restrictions and will be required to complete a mandatory checklist and participate in mandatory training.

An option has been identified for Industry Bodies to develop industry wide COVID SAFE Plans for these high risk workplaces, based on best practice, if they wish to have additional customers on their premises.

Large venues such as zoos, convention centres, amusement parks etc will be able to develop a site specific plan to seek approval to have larger numbers of patrons on site.

Further information about the plans for high risk industries/workplaces can be found in this [FAQ](#).

### ***Other businesses***

It is important to recognise that the [Framework for COVID SAFE Businesses](#) included on the website, highlights an expectation that “All individual businesses should have a WHS Plan to manage COVID-19 and it should be made available when requested – this is an internal plan that does not need to be submitted for approval.”

A template for a general COVID plan, within a WHS Plan can be found on the [WorkSafe QLD](#) website.

## South Australia

COVID-Safe Plans are required for all defined public activities. A list of defined public activities can be found on the first page of the [FAQ for South Australia Roadmap for easing COVID-19 Restrictions](#).

If a business was allowed to reopen during Step 1 of South Australia’s Roadmap to Recovery a Plan must be completed before 1 June.

There is an obligation to keep the plan available for inspection by an authorised officer.

[https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/209482/FAQ-Step-2-FINAL-watermarked.pdf](https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/209482/FAQ-Step-2-FINAL-watermarked.pdf)

## Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government announced that it was to introduce an amendment to their version of the WHS Regulations to include specific COVID-19 provisions that would expire after 6 months. At 2 June 2020, these regulations had not been made.

However, a [Framework](#) has been established that includes a requirement to establish a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

# COVID-19 Safety Plans

Information on the website advises:

*Workplaces that are **reopening**: you will be expected to have a safety plan in place.*

*Workplaces that have **continued to operate**: you should prepare a safety plan by 15 June 2020. Most workplaces that have continued to operate will likely be able to demonstrate that they meet the minimum standards in the measures they have already applied.*

*Keep your completed plans/checklist at your workplace: you do not need to submit them to WorkSafe. That way, when an inspector visits, you can use them to show how you are complying with the minimum standards.*

<https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/Health-and-Safety/safety-alerts/coronavirus/covid-safe-workplaces-framework>

## Victoria

As restrictions are being lifted, some industries will be expected to complete COVID Safety plans as part of restarting business. Information about restrictions and requirements can be found [here](#). [Guidelines and checklists](#) for specific industries are also available.

There are no requirements for other businesses to do specific COVID safety plans.

## Western Australia

In WA COVID Safety Plans and Certificates are required for businesses that are re-opening after being required to close due to COVID-19, in line with the [WA roadmap](#).

Businesses reopening as part of Phase 3, from 6 June need to develop a COVID Safety Plan. Businesses that opened in Phase 2, need to review the Phase 3 guidelines and update the COVID Safety Plan accordingly. If business capacity can increase in Phase 3, this needs to be reflected on a new COVID Safety Plan certificate.

Premises that were not required to close may choose to voluntarily complete a COVID Safety Plan and display a COVID Safety Plan Certificate.

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-business-and-industry-advice>

# COVID-19 Safety Plans

## Amendments to this Fact Sheet

Version 1	2 June 2020	Initial publication
Version 2	11 June 2020	New South Wales: Updated to provide links to industry specific COVID-19 Safety Plans and information about the COVID Safe business program.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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