



## Wearing of face coverings to reduce the spread of COVID-19 – VIC & NSW

### SUMMARY

#### Masks to be worn across Victoria

The wearing of face coverings will be required across all of Victoria from 11.59pm on Sunday 2 August 2020.

In New South Wales there is a recommendation to wear face coverings when leaving home and social distancing of 1.5m is not possible.

Ai Group has developed a [Fact Sheet](#) to assist employers to implement the wearing of face coverings within the workplace. It will be updated:

- When additional information is provided by Health Departments and/or WHS/OHS Regulators; and
- If requirements or recommendations change.

Information is also provided in relation to how Victorian businesses can access face coverings if normal suppliers are unable to provide them.

#### Updated cleaning guidance for Victoria

In Victoria, the DHHS has released new guidance on how to clean and disinfect when a person with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis has been in the workplace.

## REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS

### Victoria

Since early July 2020 *Stay at Home* directions have been in place in Restricted Areas of Victoria (metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire). Since 22 July 2020 there has been a requirement to wear face coverings in Restricted Areas when leaving home. Face coverings have been recommended in other parts of Victoria.

In his media statement of [30 July 2020](#), the Premier announced that **from 11.59pm on 2 August 2020, there will be mandatory requirements for face coverings to be worn across Victoria, when leaving home.**

The [DHHS website](#) has information about the mandatory wearing of face coverings, including information relevant to workplaces.

Information is also available on the WorkSafe Victoria website [here](#).

At the moment this guidance references the requirements applicable to Restricted Areas. We expect it will be updated shortly with reference to the broader coverage. The information currently provided can be used to help workplaces in regional Victoria to prepare for the mandatory wearing of masks.

It should also be noted that, whilst not directly relevant to workplaces, the Premier's announcement included new restrictions on visiting family and friends in their homes, in some regional locations.

### **Business access to face coverings**

Employers should be able to access face coverings through normal suppliers of safety equipment or personal protective equipment. Other options are hardware stores and pharmacies. DHHS guidance currently identifies that home-made masks are generally acceptable; however, these may not be appropriate for work environments.

If the business is having difficulty accessing face coverings through these channels, information about local suppliers of masks and face shields can be found via the front page of [www.business.vic.gov.au](http://www.business.vic.gov.au).

If you have an urgent requirement for face masks and cannot source them from your regular suppliers, you may be able to purchase from a limited supply the Victorian Government has set aside for industry to purchase. For further information contact Ai Group on 1300 55 66 77.

### **New guidance on how to clean and disinfect when a person with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis has been in the workplace**

DHHS Victoria has released new guidance for cleaners, business owners and managers about [How to clean and disinfect after a COVID-19 case in the workplace](#).

This guidance, as well as information and advice on how businesses can reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) infections in the workplace, is available [here](#).

### **New South Wales**

On 19 July 2020 [NSW Health Media](#) included a recommendation to *consider using masks in situations where you are unable to social distance*.

In total, the media statement says:

*As cases resulting from community transmission continue to be reported, NSW Health is calling on people across the state to redouble their efforts to stop the virus spreading.*

*People are urged to avoid non-essential travel and gatherings. Of particular concern is transmission in venues such as hotels and restaurants, the gym and social gatherings. We are calling on people across the state to take extra care and follow these steps:*

- *Don't leave home at all if you have any symptoms, except to get tested.*
- *At all times stay 1.5 m from other people.*
- *Don't go anywhere there is crowding.*
- *Get tested, even if you have the mildest of symptoms.*
- *Clean your hands regularly with soap and running water for 20 seconds or use alcohol base hand rub.*
- *Cough and sneeze into your elbow.*
- *Don't host, or go to, a gathering of more than 10 people at home.*
- *Don't go to the gym unless the equipment is thoroughly cleaned before and after customer use by supervising staff or yourself, and there is good spacing between machines and customers.*
- *All venues must have a COVID Safe plan, and ensure physical distancing between customers and staff, good hand hygiene, and check that no staff come to work with symptoms.*
- ***Consider using masks in situations where you are unable to social distance.***

## IMPLEMENTING FACE COVERINGS IN WORKPLACES

Across Victoria employers are required to introduce the wearing of face coverings, in consultation with workers, other than in situations where there is a lawful excuse or exception. If it is determined that an exception applies it will be up to the employer to demonstrate that this was a reasonable decision, that other control measures have been considered and that all reasonably practicable control measures have been introduced.

In New South Wales employers should consult with workers and their elected HSRs to identify when and where it is appropriate to wear face coverings, in addition to other control measures.

Information to assist employers to implement the wearing of face coverings can be found in the [Ai Group Fact Sheet](#) that will be updated whenever changes occur.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

### Requirements to Work from Home

Legal directions in Victoria and New South Wales are still in place requiring that people work from home unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so. Ai Group's Fact Sheet on [Official Directions to Work from Home](#) is being updated whenever changes occur.

### COVID-19 Safety Plans

Some jurisdictions require employers to have specific plans in place to ensure that appropriate risk controls are in place. Members are reminded that Ai Group has developed a Fact Sheet that outlines requirements for [COVID-19 Safety Plans](#) in each jurisdiction. Changes have recently been made in New South Wales, expanding the requirements to a broader range of workplaces and requiring some venues to register their plans with the Government.

## DO YOU REQUIRE FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

Ai Group has set up a special [section on our website](#) to provide access to Ai Group advice and assistance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For further information or assistance, please contact Ai Group's Workplace Advice Line on 1300 55 66 77 or access Ai Group's or access the [Health and Safety Resource Centre](#).

For information about our safety and workers' compensation consulting and training services, contact:

### Consulting Services

[Trinette Jaeschke](#)

0400 282 477

### Training Services

[David Tiller](#)

0499 195 307



### Tracey Browne

Manager – National Safety & Workers' Compensation Policy and Membership Services

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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