



**MASTER  
ELECTRICIANS  
AUSTRALIA**

# **Electrical Industry Code of Practice COVID-19**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This Electrical Industry COVID-19 Management Plan has been designed to assist electrical contractors manage the risks of exposure to the COVID-19 virus for workers, customers and others in or near their work environment.

The suggestions within this document should be considered in conjunction with your businesses risk assessments.

## 1.1 COVID-19 Background

COVID-19 is part of the Coronavirus family. There are several Coronavirus strains, many of which do not pose a hazard to humans. Coronaviruses typically cause respiratory infections that range from the common cold to more serious diseases and can cause death. COVID-19 was first identified and reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China. The COVID-19 name represents the virus family and the year it was first identified.

## 1.2 How is COVID-19 spread?

Understanding of how COVID-19 is spread is still developing, however we know it is spread from close contact with an infected person or by contact with contaminated surfaces. COVID-19 is highly contagious.

Contact with a person is largely by face-to-face or face-to-hand contact with an infected person and from inhaling infected breath such as when someone coughs or sneezes. This may be from people in the same household or in the workplace.

Close contact occurs in many ways. Common examples are:

- living in the same household or similar environment (i.e., boarding school, hostel),
- direct contact with the body fluids,
- being in the same room or office for two hours or more,
- face-to-face contact,
- inhaling an infected persons' expired breath i.e., such as being sneezed on.

Studies suggest that depending on the surface, COVID-19 may exist on surfaces from a few hours up to several days. This may vary under different conditions such as the type of surface, temperature, and humidity of the environment. Research is ongoing on this aspect of virus behaviour.

COVID-19 is killed by most detergents and common cleaning products, as well as sanitisers complying with the Therapeutic Goods Administrations (TGA) sanitiser requirements.

## 1.3 COVID-19 Symptoms

COVID-19 causes mild to severe respiratory illness. The list of identified symptoms is growing as more is understood about the disease; however, the most common accepted symptoms are.

- fever,
- breathing difficulties and breathlessness,
- cough,
- sore throat,
- fatigue or tiredness,

- loss of sense of taste and smell

## 1.4 Hygiene and COVID-19 prevention practices

It is vital everyone practices good hygiene at all times, both at and outside of work.

Good hygiene practices include:

- frequent hand washing or hand sanitising,
- limiting contact with others, (avoiding physical contact such as shaking hands or hugs),
- maintaining social distancing (minimum 1.5mtrs between people and 4m<sup>2</sup> space around persons),
- where-ever possible workers should work by alone (i.e., not within 1.5mtrs of another person),
- covering mouth while coughing or sneezing,
- using disposable tissues when blowing noses,
- providing suitable rubbish bins for waste (i.e., foot operated rubbish bins in workshops),
- staggering rest breaks or provide sufficient rest areas so social distancing can be practised,
- requiring workers to stay away from the workplace if they are unwell and not fit for work, or have been in contact with someone else suspected of being unwell,
- encouraging workers to seek medical advice from health authorities immediately if there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their workplace or at home,
- limiting access to the workplace by other people,
- reconsidering work-related travel,
- implementing other methods of communication rather than face to face meetings, such as phone or tele conferences,
- encourage workers to download and use COVIDSafe app and the State/Territory QR code Check in App for your jurisdiction.

## 1.5 COVIDSafe App

The Australian Government Department of Health introduced the COVIDSafe app as a tool to help identify who may have been exposed to infected people and thus slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Use of the COVIDSafe app is voluntary. Downloading the app is something everyone can do to protect themselves, their family and friends and save the lives of Australians. The more Australians connect to the COVIDSafe app, the quicker health authorities can track potential spread of the virus.

Employers should encourage all staff to download the app and keep active on their phones at all times.

The COVIDSafe app is available from both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

## 1.6 QR code Check-in Apps

All states and territories have their own Check In Apps for managing visitors to business premises. All apps are available in both Apple and Android versions. It is important for business to register to use QR code check-in's where it is available and ensure visitors to

business premises check in correctly. Most governments have made using the apps mandatory for most businesses.

QR code check-in information is used by contact tracers to identify who has been in an exposure site during dates and times of concern to allow them to quickly track and contain the virus.

Where QR code check in is not possible, i.e a visitor does not have a mobile phone, the business must maintain a physical check in process and maintain records of visitors to their premises to facilitate health authority contact tracers should the need arise.

Business must ensure their workers use correct check in processes, including QR codes, whenever they visit other business premises.

## 1.7 COVID-19 vaccination

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) which is part of the Australian Government Department of Health has approved two COVID-19 vaccines for use, and is considering others as they become available.

Current approved vaccines are the;

- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, and
- Oxford/Astrazeneca vaccine.

Vaccines are intended to reduce the likelihood of someone developing COVID-19 symptoms and protect against severe aspects of the disease. Both vaccines require two doses to be administered at specific timeframes to achieve maximum efficacy.

Everyone who has received both doses will be able to access a COVID-19 vaccination certificate from the vaccination centre or Medicare.

The Australian government is providing vaccinations to everyone in Australia for free, regardless of citizenship or residency status. If anyone has concerns about the vaccines, they should seek advice from a registered medical practitioner.

The government has flagged changes to how COVID-19 outbreaks are managed in the future will be influenced by the proportion of the population who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

To maintain long term protection, it's likely annual booster vaccinations will be required to maintain protection against future strains of the virus in the same way that influenza vaccination boosters are managed.

## 1.8 Influenza vaccinations

International experience indicates persons who have impaired immune systems and/or are suffering from other health conditions, are at increased risk of experiencing more severe COVID-19 symptoms. As such it is recommended all workers have a current flu vaccination to reduce the risk of becoming compromised from influenza. Vaccination certificates are available at the time of vaccination. It is recommended workers obtain these and are kept on the personnel file.

*Note: As part of their COVID-19 management strategy, many aged care facilities have imposed a requirement for all workers and visitors to their facilities to have a current flu*

*vaccination prior to entry. If your business provides services to this sector, you will need to carry a vaccination certificate from your vaccination provider, as evidence.*

## **1.9 COVID-19 training**

Training about the COVID-19 virus is important so workers understand the hazards, risks, and your controls. Information and training resources are available from both Federal and State/Territory health authorities. Do not use materials from social media sources unless specifically supplied by reputable sources.

The Australian Government Department of Health website has a free on-line COVID-19 Infection Control Training course available. The course has excellent information about the virus and practical information about how to control its spread. The course takes between 15 and 30mins and can be accessed at <https://covid-19training.gov.au/>. Upon successful completion of the course a Certificate of Acknowledgement is available. Having all workers complete this course or similar is recommended as part of your COVID-19 control plan.

## **1.10 Safety Meetings, Toolbox Talks and Prestart Meetings**

Safety meetings, toolbox talks and daily prestart meetings are vital components of an effective safety management program and should not cease during the COVID-19 pandemic, however the way you conduct these meetings may need to change.

Consider if it is feasible to hold meetings using apps such as Zoom and Messenger, or via phone conferences. Most apps have the advantage of being able to record the meeting so other workers can view later where unable to attend.

Where face-to-face meetings are unavoidable, you must ensure social distancing requirements are satisfied (minimum 1.5mtrs between and 4m<sup>2</sup> space around persons) and sanitise the meeting venue both before and after a meeting.

## **1.11 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Whilst PPE is lowest on the hierarchy of hazard control methods, it is still extremely useful for COVID-19 to support other control methods. PPE is a vital tool for assisting you manage the increased risks posed by the COVID-19 virus in the workplace.

Employers must provide appropriate PPE for workers where their controls indicate this is required. Typical PPE to protect against infection and prevent the virus spreading, includes;

- Masks (preferably N95) or minimum P2 Respirators. Both reusable and disposable are acceptable.
- Safety Glasses,
- Disposable Gloves,
- Alcohol based hand sanitiser,
- Alcohol based disposable wipes.

Other PPE

In some environments extra PPE may be required by the facility operator. For example protective gowns and faceshields may be required if working in medical or aged care

environments. The PCBU for the facility will instruct workers about their requirements if applicable.

## 1.12 Masks and Respirators

Masks have proven to be extremely effective in reducing the risk of catching COVID-19 and have become a common feature of government restrictions for containing outbreaks.

In general terms, the basic difference between respirators and masks are, respirators are designed to form a complete seal on the face to filter particles and aerosols from the atmosphere. Masks do not necessarily form a face seal and are mainly designed for preventing fluid splashes and globules from being inhaled.

Both devices are available in disposable and reusable variations.

In the electrical industry **respirators** are mainly used for filtering hazardous dusts such as Asbestos and Silica using a minimum P2 rated filter. P2 filters, are also capable of filtering COVID-19 virus particles from the air.

It is important to ensure an effective face seal is maintained when using respirators, thus training is required for staff in how to wear and maintain them. If using reusable respirators in the workplace, workers must be fit- tested and should have a fit-test card to evidence this

Many respirators filter incoming air and exhaust expired air via an exhalation valve. As a COVID-19 control measure these provide protection for the wearer from inhaling COVID-19 but since the expired air is not filtered, an infected person wearing a respirator could still spread the virus.

### Masks

Masks do not create a facial seal. They tend to be smaller, lighter, and cheaper than respirators and have lower filtering capability. There is no requirement for fit-testing masks.

Masks are not subject to the same operational verification requirements as respirators.

Some Australian health authorities have published instructions for people to make their own masks, however MEA recommends if businesses are using masks as a COVID-19 control, they should buy masks certified to either P2 or N95 rating. This will ensure they are correctly constructed and capable of filtering COVID-19 particles.

Where reusable masks are used, wearers must have clear instructions on use, including when and how to wear, clean and maintain them.

If disposable masks are used, they should be replaced when they become soiled, moist, or damaged. This may be several times during a working shift.

If you are using masks as a COVID-19 control;

- Ensure masks are constructed to provide either P2 or N95 filtering,
- Document company requirements for the use of masks, including when they are required,
- Ensure staff are trained in the use of masks and the company requirements,
- Use in conjunction with other COVID-19 control methods such as hand sanitising and restricting workplace access.

## Respirators

For respirators to be effective, users need to be clean shaven around the areas where the respirator seals. Depending on the type of respirator, moustashes that do not extend beyond the corners of the mouth may be acceptable, but full beards are not.

Workers with beards need to be consulted about the potential impacts of beards on respirators. Whilst positive pressure respirators that work with beards are available, consideration also has to be given to the potential for airborne particulates to become lodged in exposed facial hair that may gain entry to the body once the respirator has been removed.

Remember, Respirators require the person to be fit tested for the type of mask they are using. If you change model or brand of respirator, or the user has a substantial weight change, a new fit test will be required to ensure the respirator seals effectively. When someone is properly fit tested they will be issued with a card identifying the respirator type they have been fit tested for. This card should be carried with their respirator. Businesses should also keep a copy of the card on record.

Reusable respirators shall be fully cleaned after each use and stored in a suitable container/location.

Disposable respirators should be disposed of after use and not reused. A fresh respirator should be used after each meal/rest break and shift change.

### **1.13 Management of PPE**

Workers must be trained in how to use the required PPE correctly.

Workers have a responsibility to the care and maintain their PPE, so that remains effective and its life is maximised. PPE should be maintained in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.

PPE should be stored in accordance with manufacturer's instructions in a clean and operational condition.

Repair or discard damaged or defective PPE. PPE that is damaged or lost must be reported to management as soon as practicable.



## 2.0 Workforce

### 2.1 Employer obligations

Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws require employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their workers and others at the workplace. This includes providing and maintaining a work environment that is without risk to health and safety and adequate facilities for workers in carrying out their work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

To comply with the laws, an employer must identify risks in the workplace, and do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate those risks, or where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate them, minimise those risks.

Employee consultation and involvement is an important step in identifying hazards and suitable controls. This is important when considering COVID-19 controls. With consultation, comes a better understanding of the issues and increased employee ownership of control strategies.

Key considerations in determining what measures are reasonably practicable include:

- likelihood of the risk occurring,
- degree of harm that might result,
- availability and suitability of a control measure.

Further information about assessing risks and control measures is available from your state or territory Code of Practice for managing the work environment and facilities.

Employers must have measures in place to eliminate or manage the risks arising from COVID-19. To do this, you should keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 information and advice to ensure that any action taken is appropriate. This includes monitoring the information available from the Australian Government Department of Health, State or Territory government departments/agencies and relevant industry associations. The Smartraveller website also has information for those businesses who have staff that travel overseas.

It is not possible to eliminate the risk of workers contracting COVID-19 while carrying out work, so you must do all that is reasonably practicable to minimise that risk.

The control measures for your business will depend on the work being carried out by workers and each workplace. Generally:

- determine appropriate control measures in consultation with workers, or their representatives, considering official information sources,
- implement those control measures and clearly communicate them to all workers. Communication should give clear direction and guidance about what is expected of workers,
- workers should know when to stay away from the workplace,
- what action to take if they become unwell,
- what symptoms to be concerned about.

It is important to monitor relevant information sources and update your control measures as information and circumstances change and ensure workers are informed of all changes.

It is important that workers are provided with appropriate PPE, facilities, information, and training on how and why they are required to use them.

COVID-19 is a notifiable disease. If a staff member contracts COVID-19 whilst at work the business must report this to the relevant Work Health Safety regulator.

## 2.2 Employee obligations

Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws require workers to follow company procedures, participate in WHS processes and not do any action or inaction that can cause injury or harm.

With respect to COVID-19, workers must understand the requirements of them which include, following company policies and procedures, use and maintenance of PPE provided, and observing company hygiene and control practices.

Good hygiene and control practice includes:

- download and use the COVIDSafe and QR code Check in Apps,
- frequent hand washing or hand sanitising,
- limiting contact with others, (avoiding physical contact such as shaking hands or hugs),
- maintaining social distancing (minimum 1.5mtrs between and 4m<sup>2</sup> space around persons),
- where-ever possible workers work by themselves (i.e., not within 1.5mtrs of another person),
- covering mouths while coughing or sneezing,
- using disposable tissues when blowing nose,
- using suitable rubbish bins for waste (i.e., foot operated rubbish bins in workshops),
- staggering rest breaks or provide sufficient rest areas so social distancing can be practised,
- notifying the employer if they or someone they have had close contact with is tested, or confirmed, as having, COVID-19,
- workers staying away from the workplace if they are unwell and not fit for work, or have been in contact with someone else suspected of being unwell,
- seeking medical advice from health authorities immediately if there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace or at home,
- limit access to the workplace by other people,
- reconsider work-related travel, and,
- using other methods of communication rather than face to face meetings, such as phone or tele conferences.

Workers should be reminded they have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

Workers should be provided with a point of contact to discuss their concerns, and access to support services, including employee assistance programs.

## 2.3 Working from home

Where it is practicable and suits the needs of the business, employees should continue to work from home until health authorities indicate it is safe for everyone to return to the workplace. Where workers are working from home, employers are required to take reasonable steps to ensure the home work environment is physically and mentally safe. Steps should be put in place to ensure workers do not feel unsupported or alone. Regular

phone or video catch-ups and meetings should be arranged to ensure workers are not isolated due to not attending the normal work environment.

## 2.4 Health screening and monitoring

Monitoring the health of employees is important. Where workers have been absent from the workplace on holiday, or extended periods such as working from home, they should be screened for COVID-19 risk factors prior to returning to work. Where risk factors exist, workers should be required to stay away from work until proven they do not have COVID-19. Preferably screening should be conducted before workers return to the workplace. Screening can be conducted by phone, text, email or web-based media.

Where employers use electronic systems such as job management, it may be possible to include COVID-19 screening in part of the workers log-in process.

Where screening occurs care must be taken to preserve workers privacy and they are not made to feel ostracised or victimised with respect to their answers or any treatment required.

Workers should initially be screened using the questions below:

<b>Checklist for screening workers for possible COVID-19 exposure factors</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
Has the worker or any persons at the workers home, been diagnosed with the COVID-19?		
Has anyone at the workers home arrived from overseas or interstate in the last 14 days?		
Is anyone at the workers home, including the worker, in isolation or quarantine?		
Is there anyone at the workers home, that is unwell and could potentially have COVID-19 (difficulty breathing, coughing, cold like symptoms)?		
Is there anyone at the workers home that has been in contact with anyone with COVID-19?		
Are there any persons at the property that have been to an identified Exposure Site during a date and time of concern?		

A **YES** answer to any of the above questions should be investigated. The worker should not be permitted to commence work until a health official confirms the worker is not carrying COVID-19.

Workers should also be required to inform the employer if the answer to any of the question's changes.

It is recommended workers are rescreened on a regular basis. Periodic rescreening of workers is recommended, as workers may forget, or overlook, to advise the employer of changes in their circumstances. The frequency of rescreening will depend on each business however this may be completed during fortnightly or monthly safety meetings.

## 2.5 Vulnerable workers

Health authorities have recognised that some groups in our community are more vulnerable to the severe health effects of COVID-19. The following groups of people have been deemed as vulnerable workers in relation to the COVID-19 virus.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions,
- People 65 years and older with a chronic medical condition,
- People 70 years and older,
- People with compromised immune systems,
- People who are pregnant.

If you have any of these workers in your business, you need to consider extra precautions to provide for their safety from COVID-19.

## 2.6 COVIDSafe and Influenza message to workers

It is important to clearly detail your businesses expectations for managing COVID-19 to staff. At a minimum it is suggested to;

- Encourage all staff to download and activate the COVIDSafe and QR code Check in app for your state/territory,
- Encourage all workers to be vaccinated for influenza. Whilst it does not prevent the COVID-19 virus, international experience has shown people have greater risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms if they have compromised health due to other illnesses,
- Encourage all workers to be vaccinated for COVID-19 when possible.
- Clearly explain requirements for using PPE including if and how to wear mask or respirators.

As part of the process for screening workers the following questions could be asked. A NO answer should not necessarily prevent them from working, unless a particular worksite or health directive requires either of these to be in place, i.e. many aged care facilities require workers and visitors have a current influenza vaccination before allowing access to their facility.

I have;	Yes	No	Comment - if required
<b>COVIDSafe and QR code Check in apps loaded and active on my phone</b>			

<b>Flu vaccination completed</b>			
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## 2.7 Standard hygiene practices

Infectious agents can be spread in a variety of ways, including:

- breathing in airborne virus from coughs and sneezes.
- Touching contaminated objects, such as handrails or door handles,
- Eating contaminated food,
- Skin-to-skin contact.,
- Sharing personal items such as clothing, tools, electronic equipment, or other objects,
- Contact with body fluids. Pathogens in saliva, urine, faeces, or blood can be passed to another person's body via cuts or abrasions, or through the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes.

Therefore it is vital workers practice good hygiene and social distancing at all times, including during and outside of work hours.

## 2.8 Education

Educate workers on good health and hygiene practices.

- Instruct workers to stay away from work when they are unwell, even if they feel fit enough to work?
- Look for signs of 'presenteeism'? Are managers and supervisors modelling the correct behaviours or is there a culture of 'soldiering on' that needs to be discussed as a team?
- Have you informed workers about the importance of hand washing?
- Have you trained workers on how to wash their hands (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly?
- Have you trained workers on how to correctly use alcohol-based hand sanitiser?
- Inform workers and others when they need to wash their hands. This includes:
  - before and after eating,
  - after coughing or sneezing,
  - after going to the toilet,
  - after changing tasks,
  - after touching potentially contaminated surfaces,
  - before starting jobs at customer premises,
  - after completing jobs at customer premises,
- Inform workers of the following good hygiene measures to limit the spread of the virus:
  - cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue,
  - avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth,
  - dispose of tissues hygienically,
  - dispose of waste (paper towels, respirators, gloves etc) in appropriate waste containers,
  - wash hands before and after smoking,
  - clean and disinfect surfaces and shared equipment,
  - wash body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day,
  - stay minimum of 1.5 metres away from others,

- don't shake hands and avoid any other close physical contact where possible,
  - no spitting,
  - put cigarette butts in the bin,
- Where practicable, implement measures to minimise contact between people:
    - Can you provide a system for cashless transactions?
    - Require workers to minimise contact with others, including customers.

## **2.9 Mental Health**

It is possible workers may experience stress and worry due to a range of issues including; concerns about family and friends, job security, health effects of contracting COVID-19, economic concerns, and the unknown timeframe the pandemic is likely to continue.

Maintaining good lines of communication between management and workers is vital to helping manage these stresses. Employers should talk to workers, monitor for signs of mental health stress and provide information about where to find support. Information on where to access mental health support could be in the form of posters and signs in the workplace, email/text to workers, or links via job management programs.

Information on where to find support is available from each state/territory health departments website, industry associations and Mental Health Australia - [mhaustralia.org.au/need-help](http://mhaustralia.org.au/need-help)

## **3.0 Travel, vehicles and transporting workers**

### **3.1 Cleaning**

Regular internal cleaning of company vehicles should be adopted.

Where vehicles are occupied or operated by multiple operators, they should be sanitised after each use and at the end of the work day. All surfaces that are touched by users or likely to contain particles breathed out should be cleaned. This includes, but not limited to, drivers controls (steering wheel, indicators, gear shift etc), door handles, window controls, radio, mirrors, dashboard, seatbelt, seats and seat adjuster.

Passenger areas should also be santised if they have been used.

Refer vehicle manufactuers instructions for products that can be used.

### **3.2 Drivers/Operators**

Where practical vehicles should be assigned a specific operator. This will reduce the frequency of needing to sanitise the vehicle.

Requiring operators to use disposable gloves may be another practical control to reduce risk of contact exposure and time and effort invloved in sanitising vehicles.

### **3.3 Passengers and seating**

Where practicable, avoid having multiple persons in the same vehicle.

When passengers are carried in a vehicle, they should be seated to maximise the distance between persons and maintain as much social distance as possible. Seats should be assigned to specific workers. Assigned seating may reduce the need to sanitise seats which needs to be completed each time a new passenger is about to occupy a seat.

Where multiple passengers are carried in a vehicle, consideration should be given to requiring them to wear masks or respirators to reduce risk of inhaling another persons expired air and potentially airborne contaminants.

### **3.4 Air conditioning and ventilation systems**

Every step should be taken to avoid recirculating air within a vehicle, even when only occupied by one person. Recirculating air has the potential to spread airborne contaminants throughout a vehicle cab.

Where practicable vehicle windows should be left open whilst driving to ensure regular air changes within the vehicle.

If air conditioning and ventilation systems are used, the filters need to be serviced regularly.

### **3.5 Travel interstate and overseas**

Each State and Territory has a border permit system for managing safe travel between other States/Territories. Each states process is slightly different so businesses will need to check the relevant State/Territory requirements before travel.

Border permits when issued must be complied. Business must ensure workers travelling interstate for work, comply with their border permits.

The Australian Government currently has restrictions in place for Australian citizens and residents intending to travel overseas. If a business has overseas work organised that requires workers to travel from Australia, they will need to contact the Department of Home Affairs to complete the appropriate paperwork to gain authorisations to leave and return to the country.

## **4.0 Facilities**

### **4.1 Offices**

Where practicable and suits the business needs, workers should continue to work from home until Health Authorities indicate it is safe to fully reopen offices.

Where offices are operating, they must be arranged so minimum social distancing requirements can be satisfied and maintained. A minimum 4m<sup>2</sup> space should be maintained around every worker in offices.

Regular sanitising of office spaces should be implemented. Sanitising should be minimum of daily where offices are used by persons not living in the same bubble, but may be more frequent depending on the businesses risk assessment based on the nature of the office environment and how utilised.

Airconditioning systems should be regularly serviced. Particular attention should be paid to sanitising filters, frequency to be determined by the PCBU in conjunction with a risk assessment.

Where practicable office doors should be latched open to reduce workers having to touch doors and handles. Where it is not practicable or safe to keep doors open, frequent sanitising of door handles and frequently touched surfaces should be implemented. Hand sanitiser may also be placed near frequently used doors for workers to use after operating door handles.

***Note; Fire doors should not be latched open.***

### **4.2 Reception areas**

Steps should be taken to reduce the number of visitors to business premises and reception areas.

Hand santiser should be available for visitors.

Remove magazines etc from waiting areas as these are a potential transmission source.

Screens should be installed to reduce potential for airborne contaminants from expired breath being exchanged between visitors and staff.

Sign-in (visitor register) processes should be changed to eliminate visitors having to physically sign-in. Site specific instructions such as Emergency procedure details which are commonly acknowledged during sign-in processes could be text to visitors and receipt and acknowledgement collected from them.

Reception areas should be regularly sanitised throughout the work day. Frequency can be dependant on the frequency of visitors to reception, i.e; more frequent the more often visits occur.



Where visitor passes are used, on return they should be placed in a specific receptacle and sanitised before reuse/reissue.

### **4.3 QR code Check-in**

All states and territories have their own Check In Apps for managing visitors to business premises. All Apps are available in both Apple and Android versions. It is important for business to register to use QR code check in's where it is available and ensure visitors to business premises check in correctly.

Where QR code check in is not possible, i.e a visitor does not have a mobile phone, the business must maintain a physical check in process and maintain records of visitors to their premises to facilitate health authority contact tracers should the need arise.

Business must ensure their workers use correct check in processes, including QR codes, whenever they visit other business premises.

### **4.4 Amenities**

Businesses must ensure workers have access to appropriate amenities.

Amenities include:

- Lunchrooms,
- Common areas,
- Toilets,
- Change rooms.

Amenities should be provided with appropriate sanitising and hygiene resources, including:

- Hand washing facilities, such as a wash basin, clean running water, soap, and paper towels,
- Access to hand sanitiser,
- Rubbish bins with touch-free lids (e.g., foot pedal bins),
- Appropriate waste management systems.

### **4.5 Lunchrooms and common areas**

Consideration should be given to ability for workers to use lunchrooms and common areas without impinging on social distancing requirements.

Tables and chairs should be restricted and arranged so workers have 4m<sup>2</sup> personal space around them and do not have to pass within 1.5mtrs of each other. To assist users, maximum room capacity signage could be put up at room entries to eliminate confusion.

Hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser should be available in each lunchroom and a regular sanitising program for the facility implemented. This should occur at least after each break time and end of the work day.

Where sufficient space is not available to maintain social distancing requirements, break times should be staggered so workers can maintain social distancing requirements.

## **4.6 Toilets, bathrooms and changerooms**

Latching open doors to bathrooms may affect building hygiene requirements where toilets are accessed from lunchroom facilities. In these cases doors will have to remain closed and strict sanitising procedures implemented to reduce contact transmission risk.

Where communal toilets are accessed from workshop areas, it may be possible to latch open the main access door and address privacy with a screen that workers could walk around without having to touch doors. Toilet cubicle doors should not be latched open.

## **4.7 Lifts**

Notices should be attached at all lift doors advising the maximum number of passengers to allow social distancing requirements of 4m<sup>2</sup> per person.

Lift call and operation buttons need to be sanitised regularly and consideration given to other methods of safe operation of buttons, such as providing hand sanitiser nearby or disposable options such as sticks that can be used on controls and disposed of in an appropriate receptacle.

## **4.8 Shared equipment**

Use of shared office equipment such as copiers, printers, phones and computers should be reduced as far as practicable. Where shared use can not be eliminated, sanitising controls need to be implemented. Consider using controls such as personal issue of devices or disposable stylis for operating touch screen devices.

## **4.9 Cleaning and Sanitising**

Current research indicates the COVID-19 virus is destroyed by most standard cleaning products.

Regular cleaning and sanitising (minimum of twice daily) of frequently touched surfaces such as toilets, door handles, stair handrails, light switches, lift buttons, tabletops, etc is recommended.

## 5.0 Site work environments

### 5.1 General principles

Workers should have sufficient workspace to maintain social distancing requirements (min 1.5mtrs between people and 4m<sup>2</sup> personal space). Where this is not possible, extra precautions shall be implemented such as use of PPE i.e., masks or respirators, and restricting time periods where workers share the same space.

Avoid sharing tools and equipment wherever possible. For example, drop saws, drills, ladders, or elevating work platforms (EWP's) should not be used by more than one worker, unless sanitised first. Where it is not possible to eliminate shared use:

- Provide cleaning products (e.g., alcohol wipes or spray) where the tools and equipment is kept/located,
- Ensure users wipe down tools and equipment immediately before and after use,
- Ensure users thoroughly wash or sanitise their hands before and after every use.

### 5.2 Customer advice

Keeping customers and workers informed about your COVID-19 work processes is very important so everyone has a clear understanding of what to expect. Customers are more likely to have confidence in your business where they understand you have effective controls in place to look after your own workers and others in the customers premises.

Where possible discuss your procedures with customers before arriving on site. Procedures should address;

- Minimising number of persons in the work area,
- No physical interaction with your workers (i.e., shaking hands),
- Hygiene expectations, including hand sanitizing and if masks or other PPE is required to be worn,
- COVID-19 site risk assessment,
- Using the COVIDSafe and QR code Check in apps,
- Any COVID-19 Infection control training workers have had,
- Process if working in teams,
- Process for interacting with other trades/services, if appropriate.

This could be addressed via a pre-visit email or key points in a text with link to your procedures on your webpage.

Steps should be taken to reduce the number of persons in the work environment and maintain 4m<sup>2</sup> space around each worker. Customers should be required to remain outside of work areas and away from workers.

### 5.3 Work teams

Work teams are unavoidable for some jobs. When required, maintain as much social distancing as possible and limit the time that workers are required to be in close proximity to each other. Use of PPE such as masks or respirators, disposable gloves and safety gloves should also be implemented.

For larger businesses with work teams, it is good practice to assign fixed (permanent) teams of workers. Ideally work teams should not interchange members or assist other teams. Having consistent teams provides a degree of business risk control in that if a team member becomes infected with COVID-19 or quarantined, potentially only that work team is affected by isolation and not the entire workforce.

## 5.4 COVID-19 site risk assessment

Prior to workers attending work sites, a site specific COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed. Risk assessment should identify if COVID-19 high risk factors are present such as;

- Has anyone on-site been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Has anyone on-site arrived from interstate or overseas in the last 14 days?
- Is anyone on-site in isolation?
- Is anyone on-site unwell or could potentially have COVID-19 (difficulty breathing, coughing, cold like symptoms)?
- Has anyone on-site been in contact with anyone with COVID-19?
- Are there any persons at the property that have been to an identified Exposure Site during a date and time of concern?

If the answer to any question is 'Yes', specific controls to manage the increased COVID-19 exposure risk, need to be documented and agreed by management prior to site visit commencing.

## 5.5 Documentation and paperwork

Handling of documents between workers and customers should be avoided. Whenever possible documentation should be electronic and emailed to the customer.

Where physical handling of documents is required, use of disposable gloves or hand sanitising immediately before and after handling must be implemented.

## 5.6 Domestic/residential environments

Workers must wash or sanitise hands when they arrive at site (before starting work), when the job is complete (before leaving site) and, before and after any break periods.

The basic principle is 'take no infection in, bring no infection out'.

If using customers facilities (tap and sink) for washing, workers should have their own soap and paper towel. **Workers should not use customers resources due to increased transmission risk.**

Avoid touching pets.

Where practicable, fittings (power points, light switches, electrical equipment) should be wiped down with sanitising wipes before being handled.

If handling air conditioning filters, extra precautions should be taken due to the potential for contaminants to concentrate in the filter. Disposable gloves and respirators should also be used.

## 5.7 Commercial/industrial environments

Commercial/Industrial workplaces should have their own COVID-19 control processes in place, these must be discussed with the customer prior to work commencing, to ensure they do not clash with your company procedures and expectations. Where differences are identified, discuss with customer to agree on safe approach for your workers on their site.

Observe social distancing requirements (4m<sup>2</sup> clear space around each person) and implement controls where this is not possible. Controls may include;

- health screening questions to identify COVID-19 risk factors,
- use of PPE, i.e., masks or respirators, gloves, eye protection,
- sanitising work area before and after workers have handled equipment.

## **5.8 Construction work environments**

Construction work generally falls into two broad types;

- Smaller projects where number of different companies/trades at the same time is limited,
- Larger projects where multiple companies/trades are present at the same time.

Small projects, for example a single domestic residential construction site, are frequently arranged so only one trade/service provider is on site at a time. For these projects, liaise with the project manager to ensure your workers are the only ones on site. Preferably site visits should occur on different days to other trades/service providers.

Commonly touched areas should be sanitised before starting work and again when finished. This may be achieved using standard disinfectants or cleaning products.

On larger projects, discuss with the project/site manager regarding their site COVID-19 management plan. Any conflict with your own processes must be discussed and resolved. Some states have a Code of Practice for large construction projects. Where this is the case, that Code of Practice should be complied with.

Clearly define workspaces and potential interaction with other trades/service providers.

Use of site amenities, common areas and break times must be agreed with project/site managers to minimise potential for workers to come in contact with each other.

Visitors should be excluded from work sites.

## **5.9 Workshop and warehouse environments**

Assess workshops and warehouses to ensure social distances can be maintained. Where practical, areas around workstations should be marked to delineate a workers minimum 4m<sup>2</sup> personal space.

Shared tools and equipment such as drill presses, metal cutters/folders, welders, and pallet jacks must be kept clean and controls sanitised after each use.

Warehouse equipment such as forklifts should be treated in the same way as other vehicles as per section 3.0 of this code.

## **5.10 Aged care facilities**

Aged care facilities have strict requirements due to the high risk of negative health outcomes should COVID-19 virus affect their residents. All aged care facilities must have

their own COVID-19 risk management systems in place and these need to be complied with to work in these environments.

Most facilities require visitors to site to have had the latest influenza vaccination and may exclude persons from site whom do not have proof of a current vaccination.

To provide service to this sector is it recommended workers have a current vaccination and carry a vaccination certificate. These are available from the clinic or pharmacy at time of vaccination.

Completion of the Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 Infection Control training course is recommended. Where staff have completed the course, they should have their Certificate of Acknowledgment available whilst working on-site.

## **5.11 Working interstate or overseas**

The situation regarding border closures within Australia and Internationally is fluid and changes depending on outbreaks in the community. If considering travel outside of your state/territory it is recommended businesses check current and expected quarantine or isolation arrangements, with health authorities in both their own state/territory and the one they intend to travel to. This needs to be done before arranging work and travel.

Web page details for all the Australian Government and state/territory health departments are listed in section 6.1 of this code.

## 6.0 Appendices

### 6.1 References

The following websites contain COVID-19 resources and reference material:

**Australian Government Department of Health**

<https://www.health.gov.au/>

**Australian Government COVID-19 Infection Control training course**

<https://covid-19training.gov.au/>

**COVIDSafe app information**

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app>

**Master Electricians Australia**

<https://www.masterelectricians.com.au/>

**State and Territory Health departments**

ACT <https://health.act.gov.au/>

NSW <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/>

NT <https://health.nt.gov.au/>

QLD <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/>

SA <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/>

TAS <https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/>

VIC <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/>

WA <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/>

Mental Health Australia

<https://mhaustralia.org>

**Safe Work Australia COVID-19 resources**

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces>

### 6.2 MEA COVID-19 resources

For a full list of MEA COVID-19 resources, head to: <https://www.masterelectricians.com.au/member-resources/covid-19-customer-procedure-checklists> or alternatively click the green headings below to download the following:

### **Consumer Electrical Safety Check Campaign**

Marketing assets for you to offer an In-Home Electrical Safety Check.

### **COVID-19 Two-Person Restrictions – Workplace**

Do you have staff who work together in twos? Have you considered how to manage this with the new government restrictions?

### **COVID-19 Travelling in Vehicles**

Do you have staff who travel in the same vehicle? Have you considered how to manage staff in these close proximity environments?

### **Reducing the risk of COVID-19 procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines and information (via Government Departments) to effectively reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19. This procedure can be customised to include your company name.

### **Customer/client checklist prior to attending site**

This risk assessment checklist may be used in collaboration with the client, prior to attending the site. If required, please download the checklist, save it, and send to your customers as an attachment.

### **COVID-19 Management procedure for customers**

This document may be used to customise your own procedure to suit the specific requirements of your business. It is to be provided to customers to explain the 'on-site' processes your company has in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

### **COVID-19 Advisory Notice – Customer contact precautions**

Resource outlining the steps to minimise risk of infection and spread prior to attending the customers premises, commercial obligations and essential company policies and procedures.

### **COVID-19 Procedure – Working from Home – Employee Safety Checklist**

This is a 10-point safety checklist to help employers ensure the safety of the employees temporarily working from home. The checklist also links to State and Territory guidelines for managing work environments.