

CORONAVIRUS [COVID- 19 PLAN]

Australian Govt Health Sector Emergency Response Plan in Summary



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A virus can spread from person to person and may vary greatly. Sustained person-to-person spread in the community has been reported in China and continues to spread internationally.

Symptoms of COVID-19 reported illnesses have ranged from mild to severe, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. It is reported that symptoms could appear as long as 14 days after exposure.

The novel coronavirus outbreak represents a significant risk to Australia and therefore the federal government has taken a precautionary approach in line with preparedness and response guidance for a pandemic, working collaboratively with state and territory and whole of government partners to implement strategies to minimise disease transmission through strong border measures and widespread communication activities.

Australia will approach this novel coronavirus outbreak by undertaking activities to:

1. monitor and investigate outbreaks as they occur;
2. identify and characterise the nature of the virus and the clinical severity of the disease;
3. research respiratory disease-specific management strategies;
4. respond promptly and effectively to minimise the novel coronavirus outbreak impact;
5. undertake strategies to minimise the risk of further disease transmission; and
6. contribute to the rapid and confident recovery of individuals, communities and services.

For further information download a full version of the COVID-19 PLAN at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/australian-health-sector-emergency-response-plan-for-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

The following table provides a summary of COVID-19 PLAN and guidance in interpreting this for businesses.

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<p>1. Monitor and investigate outbreaks as they occur</p>	<p>Provide information to support best practice health care and to empower the community and responders to manage their own risk of exposure.</p> <p>Minimise transmission</p> <p>Manage initial cases and contacts</p> <p>Provide a coordinated and consistent approach.</p> <p>Risk control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm with stakeholders the application of standard infection control. • Provide advice to the public on respiratory hygiene and hand-washing. 	<p>Provide information to staff about precautionary measures.</p> <p>There are no current special precautions that have officially been advised, however, practicing regular good hand hygiene using soap and water, and the use of an alcohol-based hand rub solution is beneficial in helping prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses. This is of particular importance when travelling or working in heavily populated areas such as airports, schools, hospitals, shopping centres etc. and when in a high public population presence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-touch Soap Dispensers which help to promote hand hygiene by eliminating the need for contact and – subsequently – the spread of germs. • Hand Sanitisers to combat spreading of germs, made available around your location. • Ensure regular, thorough anti-bacterial cleaning takes place in communal areas, such as the kitchen and reception. Table tops, surfaces and storage shelves should be cleaned regularly using anti-bacterial surface wipes. • Toilet Seat Sanitisers to limit the spread of bacteria during washroom visits.
<p>2. Identify and characterise the nature of the virus and the clinical severity of the disease</p>	<p>The Australian Government is responsible for national communications to the public and the health care sector at a national level, with direct responsibility for communications with the primary care sector and at our international borders.</p> <p>Identify and characterise the nature of the disease within the Australian context.</p> <p>Communicate to engage, empower and build confidence in the community. Inform, engage and empower the public.</p>	<p>Look out for any communications coming directly from government health agencies [check govt websites regularly] – both federal and state based health departments.</p> <p>Act on any directives and in particular, communicate well with staff asap.</p> <p>Put in place a policy for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff reporting any symptoms • any possible contagion at a worksite where staff are working • any staff on leave who return from an overseas holiday – confirm their holiday destinations are not at risk and they have no flu like symptoms

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3. Research respiratory disease-specific management strategies	Characterisation of the virus will be undertaken as early as possible in the outbreak, including ongoing analysis of sequencing information that could indicate viral mutation, and revised regularly as more information becomes available.	<p>There is some evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission in Australia and is being carefully monitored.</p> <p>Similar to other respiratory viruses, it is believed that transmission occurs via droplets produced when a person coughs or sneezes. These droplets land on surfaces and are picked up on the hands of others and spread further. People catch the virus when they touch their infected hands to their mouth, nose or eyes.</p>
4. Respond promptly and effectively to minimise the novel coronavirus outbreak impact	The significance of transmissibility will vary depending on the stage of progress of the outbreak. It should also be considered that, as the novel coronavirus outbreak is caused by a new virus, there will be high vulnerability in the population to the virus.	<p>Coronaviruses appear to spread more slowly than influenza, allowing a window of several days to identify and isolate cases while they are still infectious.</p> <p>Set in place a COVID – 19 Committee with representatives from Executive, Senior management, Middle management [supervisors] and workers. The Committee should become familiar with health dept state plans and participate in the planning and ongoing monitoring of company COVID-19 risk management activities.</p> <p>If a pandemic is declared this committee should be in daily communications and lead the risk management [over page] activities in relation to management of COVID – 19 on behalf of the organisation.</p> <p>Develop specific safety and welfare plans for the ongoing safe systems of work in high risk locations such as hospitals, airports public transport, schools and aged care facilities. These must be done in consultation with representatives and stakeholder groups including the facility itself, resident representation, workers' representation and state government emergency response [COVID-19] Plans.</p>

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<p>5. Undertake strategies to minimise the risk of further disease transmission</p>	<p>A clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities between parties responding to a novel coronavirus outbreak will support quick decision making and efficient, coordinated use of resources.</p> <p>At all levels, planning will consider what is needed to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities, and address the needs of special groups, such as the aged care sector and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>Consultation will be integral to decision making regarding the approach to managing a novel coronavirus outbreak.</p>	<p>Risk management in the case of a WHO <u>declared</u> pandemic.</p> <p>Review employment resources, safe systems of work and plan accordingly taking into account several scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for loss of 30% staff from infection or requested leave [Note Fair Work Aust – staff can request leave where they consider they are at risk due to health and welfare – leave to be granted against any leave entitlement due or leave without pay where no entitled leave is available]. • Identify most ‘at risk’ workplaces/worksites and liaise with clients to determine how to proceed [what contingencies to put in place such as with schools/ shopping centres etc]. • Communication strategy with staff / management on a day to day basis to ensure resources availability. • Risk review of PPE and training according to sites and site risks. Remember this MUST be done in consultation with and participation of staff. Resource PPE needs asap. • Review of safe work methods associated with the level of risk of a potential affected workplace – seek advice form heath dept and suppliers in relation to cleaning and hygiene products and work methods.

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<p>6. Contribute to the rapid and confident recovery of individuals, communities and services</p>	<p>The Australian Government and state and territory governments will work together to provide advice and leadership on the appropriate methods and timing for implementing public health measures. They will develop communication strategies and resources for novel coronavirus immunisation and coordinate implementation of novel coronavirus immunisation programs.</p> <p>State and territory governments will develop and validate specific novel coronavirus tests; undertake novel coronavirus laboratory testing as required to monitor the outbreak and for individual patient care; implement testing protocols to support case management, surveillance needs and to preserve laboratory capacity; support and undertake novel coronavirus point of care testing if recommended.</p>	<p>Ongoing COVID – 19 surveillance</p> <p>Continue through the COVID-19 Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor for change in the virus, additional or changed instruction from govt agencies [Health websites are more reliable than TV or other news items which can be inaccurate or exaggerated] • Continue internal and client communications and site by site analysis of performance and risk data from both locations as necessary. • Review processes and policies as necessary. • Update management plans in line with lessons observations and govt or client directives [consult with staff at all times].