

5 things to do in your workplace: COVID-19

There are a number of practical steps employers can take to manage the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the workplace. You must take action, it's the law.

No matter what type of work your business carries out, these steps will help to identify all you can reasonably do to protect the health and safety of workers and others at your workplace.



1. Talk to your workers

Everyone is being bombarded with information. Your workers may be confused or concerned about what they hear. Stay across authoritative sources and provide information to workers about the measures you are planning to take to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the workplace. And remember, consulting workers is a must. For more information, read the [Model Code of Practice on work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination](#) at swa.gov.au.



2. Think about your workplace

Nominate a person or team to dedicate their time to infection control. Work with them to take a close look at the work environment, find potential areas of risk and come up with a plan to address them. Think about how you will keep high-touch surfaces clean and how you will put in additional hygiene measures such as hand-sanitizing stations.

You should also review your existing policies and practices. Can people work from home if necessary and do they have a safe environment to do so? Have you briefed your workers about the symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if they are unwell?

Issues will vary for every workplace but to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety look at your existing protocols. You can't find – and fix – breakdowns if you don't look for them.



3. Train your workers

The basics of keeping viral infections out of the workplace are well known: Wash your hands thoroughly and often. Cover your coughs and sneezes. Observe rules for social distancing. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly. Stay home if you are sick. These things are straightforward, but we know that people don't always do them enough. Make sure your workers know how to comply with hygiene guidance in their day-to-day activities by providing training.

Designate members of your infection prevention team to teach their colleagues the proper procedures. Correct handwashing protocol, for instance, is easy to learn. The [Department of Health](#) has instructive posters and videos on their website.



4. Review control measures

Be vigilant with health and safety. Ask your infection prevention team and all workers, to keep a close eye on compliance and report any concerns. Continue to review the situation. Are there any obvious breakdowns? Is there anything you missed? Is your plan working? This will enable you to implement further controls as you go along and make further improvements.



5. Future proof

The pandemic situation is rapidly evolving. By looking ahead you can start to plan for what you will do if you need to close the doors for a period of time or need to require your workers to work from home.

- > Do you have a plan to ensure business continuity?
- > Do you know what to do if a staff member or one of their close relatives is found to have COVID-19 symptoms?
- > If this were to happen, do you know how to disinfect affected workspaces?
- > Do you have a protocol in place to reopen your workplace after a potential quarantine?

You may not end up needing these protocols, but it's better to think ahead.