

Coronavirus is serious it can cause serious health issues and even death.

What should an employer do to protect workers and others at a workplace?

Under WHS laws, employers must do everything that is reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk of a worker contracting COVID-19 at the workplace, or where this is not reasonably practicable, they must minimise the risk of a worker contracting COVID-19 at the workplace

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 closely monitoring the information provided by the [Australian Government Department of Health](#), the [Smartraveller website](#) and advice from state or territory government agencies, including health departments and WHS regulators.

Control Measures

- What control measures will be reasonably practicable will depend on the work being carried out by workers and particular workplaces. Generally, you should:
- continually monitor relevant information sources and update control measures when and if necessary. Employers should continue to provide information to workers, including changes to control measures, as the situation develops
- Provide a work environment that is without risk to health and safety, including access to facilities for good hygiene such as adequate supply of soap, water and toilet paper; and make sure these are kept clean, properly stocked and in good working order.
 - If there are no supplies of hand sanitiser, a PCBU should consider providing access to soap rather than hand sanitiser.
- If those supplies are not available, for the purposes of the model WHS laws, it would not be reasonably practicable for an employer to provide them. For example:
 - If there are no supplies of masks in Australia, an employer cannot be required, to provide a mask. In those circumstances, an employer should consider what alternative measures or approaches can be taken to eliminate or minimise risk.
- Ultimately however, if an employer is unable to obtain necessary supplies to provide a work environment that is without risks, they should consider whether the risks posed to workers and others at the workplace are so great that workers should not be required to attend the workplace and perform work. This will need to be determined on a case by case basis

Worker responsibilities

- Workers also 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 always practice good hygiene and other measures to protect against infections, including:
 - avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
 - covering their mouth and nose while coughing or sneezing
 - disposing of used tissues immediately
 - washing their hands often, with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds
 - carrying hand sanitiser and using it as needed
 - not shaking hands
 - where possible, avoiding shared use of phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment
 - seeing a health care professional if they start to feel unwell and staying away from the workplace and other public places

TOOLBOX TALK

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