



# Living with COVID

## Workplace Management Plan

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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 (COVID) pandemic has created an exceptional set of circumstances. Many workers, worker representatives and employers have concerns about working safely; especially those who are required to continue working on site, outside of the home, and those who are returning to work as government restrictions ease. These concerns include the actions that should be taken to ensure workplace hygiene and cleanliness is achieved to the standard necessary to prevent the spread of infection. To address these concerns, this Management Plan has been developed by the North Burnett Regional Council to support guidance provided by Queensland Health to the Queensland community, including guidance to Queensland employers and workers, as to measures to be undertaken in the workplace to protect people against COVID infection.

As COVID becomes more prevalent in our community, it is inevitable that people who have COVID will visit our workplaces. This Management Plan recognises the natural societal shift in responding to the pandemic from dealing with COVID to that of Living with COVID.

Council is committed to working closely with Queensland Health as the lead agency and will continue actively raising awareness and sharing information with other key agencies, workers and the community to help stop the spread of COVID.

The most pressing concern at this time is making properly and fully informed decisions for the benefit of our communities, in accordance with local government's regulatory role to support the State Government's (complimentary) enforcement of Federal policy and State legislation, relating to a pandemic. These decisions are guided by the five essential elements:

1. Identifying non-essential services to ensure the delivery of essential services as the lifecycle of the pandemic evolves
2. Effective and efficient spending of community funds to support community expectations of the ongoing delivery of essential services
3. Preserving employee and volunteer wellbeing while conserving productivity
4. Addressing the Council's changing risk profile measured against the Council's competing role as Regulator and community leader
5. Implementing appropriate risk mitigation measures to lead your community through the pandemic lifecycle that support and build resilience

Changes to this document will be based on information provided through the QLD Government website <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>.

## WHAT IS COVID?

COVID is a respiratory illness caused by a new strain of coronavirus known as SARSCoV-2. Symptoms can include a fever, cough, sore throat, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath and loss of taste and/or smell. The virus most commonly spreads from person to person by close contact with someone who is infectious. It may also spread when someone touches a surface that has recently been contaminated with the respiratory droplets (from coughing or sneezing) of an infectious person and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

All workers have an individual responsibility to help control the spread of COVID. Council, together with the Executive Management team, has the additional responsibility for management, training, implementation and monitoring of our COVID response, in accordance with Federal and Queensland Government's requirements.

Managers are responsible for implementing, maintaining and compliance with this plan. This includes ensuring their workers are properly trained and equipped to undertake all related COVID activities as identified in their business unit risk assessment.

## COUNCIL'S RESPONSE - PREPARING FOR COVID IN THE WORKPLACE

Council is taking a calm and precautionary approach to slowing the transmission of COVID and will continue to monitor and triage its response as appropriate and in line with any Federal or Queensland health directive.

In preparing to live with COVID in the workplace, Council has:

- Developed Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) to ensure the continued supply of critical services such as water, wastewater and waste collection.
- Staged ongoing Risk Assessments relevant to each business unit.
- Invested in Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as face masks, gloves and hand sanitizer.
- Communicating across the workplace engineering controls such as ventilation.
- Raised awareness in communications to all staff in line with the latest advice.
- Continued liaising with core staff, advisors, the Local District Disaster Management Group and other divisions of government.
- Encouraged the practice of good hygiene by hand washing, covering sneezes and coughs and communicating the need to stay home if sick.
- Facilitated social distancing in the workplace and established work from home arrangements where possible.

Other more general protection measures that Council continues to advocate include:

- Screening of staff, contractors, customers and other visitors to the workplace for COVID symptoms.
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date employee timesheets and records of attendance at the workplace.



- Making sure customers, contractors and other visitors use the [Check In Qld app](#) or sign ins at offices as required. (Note: Workers who enter the workplace using their Council issued access fob are not required to check or sign in as reports can be generated from the network if required. Should a worker not use their fob to enter a workplace then sign-in will be required).
- Maintaining up-to-date contact details for workers to help with contact tracing.
- Workers also have access to the Employee Assistance Program, as well as the COVID-19 Hotline by calling 134 **COVID** (13 42 68).

## **VULNERABLE WORKERS**

Workers who may be at increased risk of a serious infection, will be supported to work from home where possible. If working from home is not feasible, a risk assessment must be undertaken for the vulnerable worker. Risks need to be assessed and addressed, depending on the worker, the workplace and the work. This may include re-assigning the vulnerable worker to a role where they don't need to have contact with others. If the risk cannot be appropriately addressed, Council will consider alternative arrangements such as leave.

Workers who are likely to be at higher risk of serious illness if they are infected with the virus include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 65 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 70 years and older
- People with compromised immune systems

There is limited evidence available to assess the risk in pregnant women.

## **VACCINATION**

Vaccination is one way to help protect people by reducing the risk of serious effects from COVID to the person who has received the vaccine. Workers and health and safety representatives will be consulted by Council about any intention to implement a vaccination program as an effective control together with other appropriate control measures in the workplace. Workers will also have the opportunity to consult their union if required. It is important that workers are kept informed about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and also about medical and other conditions which might affect their decision to be vaccinated. If workers decide for any reason not to be vaccinated, and their workplace, or role within the workplace, is not affected by a public health direction on vaccinations, their choices and privacy will be respected.

## **CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVES**

### **COUNCIL ACTIVITIES IMPLICITLY COVERED BY A DIRECTIVE**

Even though the COVID vaccine has been shown to be effective there is still a chance you may get COVID after you've had the vaccination. No vaccine is 100 per cent effective. For this reason, we must continue to apply all reasonably practicable control measures. In order to keep vulnerable persons safe in high-risk workplaces, the Chief Health Officer, under the *Public Health Act 2005* has issued public health directions to require workers in high-risk settings to be vaccinated against COVID. This direction is on the basis that there is a higher risk of transmission of COVID due to the nature of the workplace and the way in which services are provided, and there is a higher number of vulnerable persons who use or access these workplaces. Council is required by law to comply with the Chief Health Officers Public Health Directives. Accordingly, if Council conducts any business or engages staff in roles that are covered by a health directive that requires staff be vaccinated, Council must ensure that any worker employed to operate in those

facilities or perform those roles are vaccinated or have an accepted exemption (vaccination defined as receiving two doses – boosters are not a requirement at this time).

Public health directions under the *Public Health Act 2005* take precedence over work health and safety laws. The Commonwealth Government and/or Queensland Health may make further changes to public health directions that require some other workers to be vaccinated in the future if assessed as necessary. If existing public health directives are changed, we must continue to adapt and follow them.

## COUNCIL ACTIVITIES IMPACTED BY A DIRECTIVE

Council may engage a worker whose work, due to the nature of the role, is impacted by a health directive (e.g. an EHO officer who is required to inspect premises where only vaccinated persons are allowed entry). Unless otherwise specified within a directive, these workers are required to comply with the health directive as it applies to visitors and contractors at that location. In these cases, Council needs to make an assessment on whether these workers will need to be vaccinated in order to fulfill the inherent responsibilities of the workers role or whether there are other reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to avoid Council having to require affected staff be vaccinated (for example – this work activity might be allocated to only those EHOs who are vaccinated, provided the Council complement of EHOs and work demands allow.)

Both Council and the worker face penalties of fines and possible imprisonment if the directives are not complied with.

Council facilities subject to vaccination requirements currently include:

- Reginald Murray Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre and Visitor Information
- Art Galleries (Mundubbera Art Gallery and Monto Cultural Centre)
- Museums (Biggenden, Eidsvold, Gayndah, Monto, Mt Perry and Mundubbera)
- Showgrounds (Eidsvold and Mt Perry – pending event classification)

## EVIDENCE OF VACCINATION

### WHERE VACCINATION IS MANDATED

If a worker occupies a role where it has been lawfully and reasonably mandated that the worker must be vaccinated, the Council can request the worker to provide evidence of their vaccination status. A failure or refusal to provide that evidence makes it reasonable for Council to treat the worker as an unvaccinated person.

Should Council opt to collect and maintain evidence of a worker's vaccination, Council will ensure it complies with privacy laws and public records legislation in the storage of this information. This evidence is a medical record and accordingly, access to these records may be delegated to prescribed individuals only and the information collected will only be used for the purposes for which it was given i.e., evidence of vaccination for employer.

### WHERE VACCINATION IS NOT MANDATED BUT MAY BE ENCOURAGED

Council may ask a worker to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status. The same conditions regarding evidence gathering applies in such circumstances. The emphasis here is that disclosure is consensual. Collecting of this data and hence an awareness of the extent of vaccination of workers will assist Council when formulating any future health directive response.

## WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE

The proof of vaccination obtainable through myGov or the Australian Immunisation Register is the ideal source of evidence. Initial verification from the vaccination provider may be acceptable as an interim measure until the information is available from the ideal source. Acceptance or otherwise will be at the Chief Executive Officers discretion.

Copies of a persons evidence of vaccination digital certificate can now also be uploaded directly to the QLD Government Check-in App and this form of evidence will also suffice.

## MEDICAL EXEMPTION

A medical exemption requires more than a note from the local Doctor indicating the worker should be exempted. A workers exemption status will be recorded on the workers Medicare details, which the worker may be asked to provide evidence of.

Medical exemption or not, Council retains the responsibility to provide a safe work environment for both the worker as well as those whom the worker might come into contact with and whom the vaccine mandate was designed to protect. Accordingly, the worker claiming exemption, together with the workers Manager will need to conduct an appropriate risk assessment and instigate reasonable adjustments or risk mitigation strategies to established practices and procedures to afford the desirable levels of protection. In extreme cases, it might require the deployment of the worker to alternative duties.

## GENERAL DUTIES UNDER THE WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 2011 (QLD)

It is Council's duty as an employer to provide its workers with a safe and healthy work environment. Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), Council must assess risks and implement and review control measures to prevent or minimise exposure to those risks.

To properly manage exposure to risks related to COVID, Council will, through business unit risk assessments:

- identify workplace hazards (such as potential for transmission on the worksite or hazards resulting from a worker who tests positive for COVID) including ventilation
- determine who might be harmed, and how (including workers and any other individuals in the workplace)
- decide on control measures (including ways to prevent the spread of infection)
- put controls in place
- review the controls regularly.

Workers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others in the workplace. Workers must co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure that relates to health or safety at the workplace, including in relation to COVID.

Council must notify Work Health and Safety Queensland of a confirmed case of COVID as diagnosed by a medical practitioner and arising out of the conduct of the business or undertaking:

- that requires the worker to have immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital

- to which the carrying out of work is a significant contributing factor, including any infection that is reliably attributable to carrying out work that involves providing treatment or care to a person, or that involves contact with human blood or bodily substances.

The actions taken by both Council and its workers to discharge their duties under the WHS Act are an important part of the community response to COVID. A safe workplace is achieved when everyone involved communicates with each other to identify hazards and risks, talks about health and safety concerns and works together to find solutions.

## OUR ROLE IN KEEPING OUR WORKPLACES SAFE, CLEAN AND HEALTHY

### 1. MEASURES AT THE WORKPLACE

Where workers and others are attending the workplace, a range of measures should be put in place to minimise the risks posed by COVID to workers and others. Detailed information regarding COVID-19 workplace risk management has been published online by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and Safe Work Australia. For more information please visit <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces> and [https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/19210/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/19210/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf).

Risk mitigation measures for the workplace include (but are not limited to) the following:

Risk Mitigation Measures (Examples only)
Move workstations, desks and tables so that they are at least 1.5 metres apart. Ensure the number of workers in an office-based environment (e.g. undertaking administrative work) are limited to one person per four square metres.
Wear masks when indoors and outdoors where social distancing is not possible.
Restrict the number of persons within an enclosed area (to one person per two square metres of space (for example, in vehicles, meeting rooms or in lunch or crib rooms). Workplaces where areas are open to, or used by, the public may be required to limit occupant density.
Don't shake hands to greet people.
Stagger start / finish times.
Stagger meal breaks to limit the number of workers congregating in one area at any given time.
Separate workers from customers and/or other workers using barriers, screens or social distancing markers on the floor.
Keep indoor areas where people gather well ventilated through natural or mechanical means, for example by adjusting air conditioning or opening windows to maintain a supply of fresh air.
Regularly clean high touch surfaces including door handles, benchtops, kitchens, tabletops and desks, bathroom fixtures, toilets, water taps, lunchrooms, photocopiers, reception desks, sign-in stations and desktop equipment including keyboards and telephones. Carrying out a risk assessment will help determine how often cleaning should be done.



Antibacterial wipes, spray and paper towel is available in each location (refer to page 16 for locations and process).
Create specific walkways for different workers through a construction site to maintain physical separation.
Conduct toolbox and other meetings online, where possible. If not possible, conduct such meetings in wide open spaces to enable workers to keep the required physical distance of at least 1.5 metres.
Consider what work can be carried out off-site such as prefabrication work, or administrative work from home.
Restrict visitors to the workplace and use the <a href="#">Check In Qld app</a> for all visitors entering the workplace (this is set up for outward facing facilities and boardrooms)
Encourage customers to use tap and go, direct deposit or other contactless payment option instead of cash.
Wear gloves when cleaning and managing cash or external documents.
Limit the number of people in work vehicles – and if reasonably practicable to do so, then PPE must be worn by those in the vehicle, with increased cleaning and disinfecting of the vehicle following use. <b>Refer to Vehicle and Travel COVID restrictions – page 16.</b>
Ensure records of worker attendance is easy to check if contact tracing is required (this includes sign-in books at facilities, using your own FOB to access facilities and completing timesheets accurately).
Reduce the sharing of equipment and tools (e.g. hot desking).

## 2. PRACTICE GOOD PERSONAL AND HAND HYGIENE

Good personal and hand hygiene helps protect against infection and prevents the virus from spreading.

Risk mitigation measures include (but are not limited to) the following:

Risk Mitigation Measures (Examples only)
<p>All workers are encouraged to practice good hygiene by frequently cleaning their hands. Hand washing should take at least 20 to 30 seconds. Wash the whole of each hand (palms, fingers, nails and back of hands), covering all areas with soap before rinsing with water. If hand washing is not practical, alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60 per cent ethanol or 70 per cent iso-propanol is recommended. Apply hand sanitiser and rub hands for at least 20 – 30 seconds, covering all surfaces. Alcohol-free hand sanitisers are not recommended because they have not been shown to be effective against the virus that causes COVID.</p> <p><b>Approved hand sanitiser is available in each location (refer to page 16 for locations and process).</b></p>

Provide hand washing facilities including clean running water, soap (preferably liquid not bar or cake), and paper towels or an air dryer. If hand washing facilities are not readily available, please ensure the use of hand sanitiser.
Hand sanitiser will be placed in locations such as lunchrooms, worker-customer interface areas and at office entrances/exits to encourage hand hygiene.
Promote good personal hygiene when sneezing and coughing. People should cover their coughs or sneezes with an elbow or tissue, dispose of the tissue immediately and wash/sanitise their hands, and avoid touching your face.
Ensure symptomatic people (workers, contactors, customers, etc.) do not come into the workplace.
Use personal protective equipment (PPE) as appropriate. <b>Masks and gloves are available in each location (refer to page 16 for locations and process).</b>

## MANAGING CONFIRMED COVID IN THE WORKPLACE

### WHAT DOES A WORKER DO IF THEY TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

Workers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of other persons in the workplace.

Queensland Health will contact a worker if they have a positive test for COVID. The worker must [self-isolate](#) and follow the instructions of health authorities. They should also inform their Manager of the diagnosis and they must not attend the workplace until safe to do so.

Queensland Health may also contact Council, if required, for the purpose of contact tracing.

Confirmed cases of COVID must isolate for seven days from the date they tested positive. This directive may change and infected workers are encouraged to monitor Queensland Health for more [information](#). If you have tested positive on a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), you should report your positive RAT result to Queensland Health. You do not need to take a PCR test to confirm your positive RAT result.

No other staff must quarantine unless they are considered a close contact. To understand what is a close contact please refer to the Queensland Health [definition of a close contact](#).

### ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS

Once you find out that you are a close contact, you must:

- get tested using a
  - Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), or
  - PCR test.
- immediately travel by private transport or by transport arranged by a government authority directly to your home or suitable accommodation to quarantine. Private transport means either:
  - a private vehicle - a diagnosed person may drive themselves or be driven by a close contact;
  - or

- if they are within 5km of where they will isolate and wear a face mask, they can travel directly there on foot or by privately owned bicycle, scooter, or other personal mobility device.
- quarantine for 7 days since your last contact with the diagnosed case. If you are quarantining in the same place as another diagnosed person, your quarantine period is the same as the diagnosed person's isolation period.

If a worker is diagnosed or informed of their positive test result when away from their home, they must travel directly to the premises they will be isolating at by private transport, ambulance or government arranged transport.

## **INFORM YOUR CLOSE CONTACTS**

You must inform everyone in your household that you are a confirmed case of COVID-19. A household member is considered to be a close contact if they have spent more than 4 hours with you in a house, accommodation or care facility setting during their infectious period.

## **STAY HOME (OR IN YOUR PLACE OF ACCOMMODATION)**

You're not allowed to let anyone else into your home (or wherever you are isolating), apart from:

- a person who usually lives there, or who is isolating or quarantining there
- a person who is entering to provide emergency, medical, or other essential care
- if a direction is given by an emergency officer

During your period of isolation, you must not leave where you are isolating, except to travel by private vehicle, ambulance, or government arranged transport to:

- seek medical treatment at a hospital (such as a person leaving isolation to go to a hospital in an ambulance)
- avoid injury or illness or to escape a risk of harm, including: escaping a risk of harm related to sexual or domestic and family violence; or accessing support from a domestic and family violence support service.
- In an emergency
- If directed by an emergency officer

If you are leaving quarantine for these very limited reasons, you must wear a mask (unless not practical because of an emergency situation or risk of harm) and follow any infection control measures as directed.

## **CONTACT TRACING**

If requested by a **public health officer**, workers must provide:

- the address they are isolating or quarantining at
- a contact telephone number, email address and date of birth
- the contact details, including at least a name and telephone number, of any other people who are residing in, or have recently resided in, the premises
- any other information or documents required by a public health officer.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace, Queensland Health will be notified by the medical practitioner or pathologist who confirms the diagnosis. Any worker who may be required to travel interstate will be subject to quarantining restrictions applicable to the relevant State or Territory.

## **LEAVE AND TIMESHEETS**

Please refer to Administrative Direction – Leave Management Plan COVID-19 Doc ID 1079483.

For staff that may not have access to personal leave or other forms of leave, you may be eligible for the Federal Governments Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment. Refer here for more details:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment-queensland?context=60352>.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION AFTER SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COVID-19 INFECTION**

Areas that have been used by a worker or any other person who may have attended the workplace with a confirmed COVID infection must be cleaned and disinfected.

Those responsible for the cleaning of the area must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) before entering the area. This includes:

- disposable gloves
- protective eyewear to protect your eyes from the cleaning chemicals
- mask ensuring it always covers both the nose and mouth and do not let it dangle from the neck or place below nose or on the forehead.
- once the cleaner has entered the area, they should avoid touching their face and touching or adjusting their face mask.

There is no need to shut down an entire workplace while cleaning and disinfection takes place, particularly if the person has only accessed or visited parts of the workplace, however cleaning and disinfection must occur before workers return to affected areas. There is no requirement for 'clearance testing' or other approval processes for workers to return to the affected areas on completion of cleaning and disinfection.

Outward facing facilities (e.g. Customer Service and Library Centres) may be closed until the clean has taken place.

### **Steps**

1. Physically clean surfaces using detergent and water followed by disinfection (use as per the label instructions), followed by rinsing and drying. A clean cloth (disposable or able to be laundered) should be used each time.
2. It can be useful to have colour-coded cloths or sponges for each area (e.g. blue in the bathroom, yellow in the kitchen) so that it is easier to keep them separate.
3. Make sure the disinfectant has enough time in contact with the surface, is used at the right concentration and is applied to a clean, dry surface. Rinse the surface after disinfection if needed to prevent any residue from being left behind.
4. Start the cleaning process in the cleanest areas and finish in the dirtier areas to prevent cross-infection.
5. Disposable cleaning cloths should be placed in the general waste after use.
6. Wear either single-use or reusable gloves (such as washing-up gloves) when cleaning. If using

reusable gloves wash them off using running water and detergent after use and hang outside to dry.

7. Wash your hands after you have finished cleaning and removed the gloves.
8. Ensure that cleaning equipment is well maintained, cleaned after use and appropriately stored.

The following process must be adopted to safely remove personal protective equipment:

1. Remove and dispose of gloves. The outside of gloves may be contaminated. Remove gloves being careful not to contaminate bare hands during glove removal. Clean your hands. This can be done with either soap and running water or hand sanitiser.
2. Remove protective eyewear. The outside of protective eyewear may be contaminated. Remove eyewear by tilting the head forward and removing. Avoid touching the front surface of the eyewear. Reusable protective eyewear should be washed in detergent and water and allowed to completely air dry. Clean your hands. This can be done with either soap and running water or hand sanitiser.
3. Remove and dispose of the face mask. Do not touch the front of the mask. Remove the mask by holding the elastic straps or ties and remove without touching the front. Clean your hands. This can be done with either soap and running water or hand sanitiser.
4. PPE can be disposed of into the general waste.

If sustained community transmission continues, health authorities may recommend the continued use of face masks by the community. If you have been told to wear a face mask, it is important to [use it correctly](#). Avoid touching the face mask while you're wearing it, and if you do, wash your hands. Do not reuse single-use face masks and replace the mask regularly, including if you have coughed or sneezed into it. Always wash your hands immediately after removing and disposing of the mask. If you are using a reusable fabric mask, it should be laundered regularly.

More information regarding [COVID-19 Cleaning, Disinfection and Waste Management](#) is available on the Queensland Health website.

Note: Minimum standards that must be followed for the handling of hazardous chemicals are outlined in the [Managing risks of hazardous chemicals Code of Practice 2021](#).

## WHEN CAN A WORKER RETURN TO WORK IF THEY HAD COVID?

A health care provider will advise an infected worker when they are no longer infectious and can return to work. The length of isolation required for a confirmed case is usually 7 days but duration may vary, depending on the situation. This advice may change if case numbers continue to increase in the Queensland community.

If you are a diagnosed case of COVID-19, you can end your isolation when **any** of the following takes place:

- 7 days have passed since you took the COVID-19 test that returned a positive result and:
  - you have not had COVID-19 symptoms for the last 48 hours (or the only your only remaining symptom is a very mild dry cough which is persistent but not getting worse)
  - you have not received a further direction to isolate under the *Public Health Act 2005*
- 10 days have passed since you took the COVID-19 test that returned a positive result and:
  - on day 7 of isolation you had fever and acute respiratory symptoms
  - you have not received a further direction to isolate under the *Public Health Act 2005*
- your positive result is found to be caused by a long-standing infection, and you are no longer infectious



- a medical practitioner working within a COVID-19 healthcare framework approved by Queensland Health determines you meet the requirements for release from isolation, and authorises your release
- a registered nurse or a medical practitioner from a treating Hospital and Health Service certifies that you meet release from isolation criteria.

Council will not require a negative COVID test to return to work unless recommended by a healthcare provider or Queensland Health, pending the role and circumstances.

## **CRITICALLY ESSENTIAL WORKERS**

An employer in a critical industry can identify and create a list of critically essential roles. A close contact who performs a critically essential role is considered a critically essential worker.

Critically Essential Works identified at NBRC as of **29 January 2022** include:

- Treatment Plant Operators (Water and Waste-Water Team)
- Contractor Technical Support Services for Water and Waste-Water (e.g. Plumber, electrician, tradesperson, machine operator, plant operator, SCADA technician, Civil Works contractor)
- Bus Drivers (for public transport)
- Waste Management Facility Attendants

These roles have been submitted through the QLD Health Services Portal located here <https://healthserviceportal.health.qld.gov.au/> on 29 January 2022.

Should the region encounter a disaster, Disaster Management Staff will be activated including (but not exhaustive) staff to operate Local Disaster Coordination Centres and Evacuation Centres, and Civil Works staff to undertake road closures and emergent works repairs. These roles may be classed as critically essential workers depending on the type of disaster event. All other options will be considered prior to requiring a COVID positive staff member to work during their isolation period.

Up to date information on critically essential worker requirements can be accessed online here <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/industry-and-businesses/critically-essential-worker-requirements>.

Critically essential workers can then leave quarantine to carry out that role if they:

- have no COVID-19 symptoms
- are fully vaccinated. In the context of the direction for critically essential workers, to be fully vaccinated means 2 doses of a vaccine and, if eligible, a booster shot.

When leaving your place of quarantine to go to work, you must:

- use a mask when indoors. Also wear a mask outdoors if you cannot physically distance from other people.
- travel to and from your workplace by private transport, by the most direct route practicable and without stopping (except for refuelling and that should be contactless if possible)
- monitor your symptoms
- regularly clean your hands

- get tested on day 6 of your quarantine period (and at any point of your quarantine if you develop COVID-19 symptoms)
- practice physical distance from other people until the end of your quarantine period
- comply with any industry or employer requirements for workers in a critically essential role
- return directly to quarantine when not at work.

Note: If your workplace is in a remote area, you can quarantine close to the remote workplace rather than return to your original place of quarantine and then return to that original place of quarantine when your shift ends.

Your child can only attend school or childcare if they are not a close contact. If they are identified as a [close contact](#) they cannot attend school or childcare for the purposes of you being able to leave to undertake critical essential work.

## IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, you must return to quarantine and not attend the workplace. Get tested and stay in quarantine until you receive a negative result and your symptoms resolve.

Stay up to date on any developments here

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/confirmed-cases-and-close-contacts/critically-essential-worker-requirements>

## WORKING FROM HOME

Depending on the type of role, some staff may elect to work from home to reduce the spread of COVID and as a business continuity measure to separate themselves from team members.

This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the supervisor of each team.

The steps for accessing a working from home arrangement during this time:

- Consult with team and supervisor
- Submit an AskICT ticket if you require a laptop
- Divert desk phone to your work or personal mobile
- Complete the *Working from home Checklist* Doc ID 1080528
- Send a picture of your work from home setup and send along with your completed checklist to AskPeople

Working from the office is still available for people who may not have the service, internet, set up, space or motivation for working from home. Appropriate controls will be put in place in the workplace to minimise COVID risks.

## COUNCIL EVENTS

### OUTDOOR EVENTS

Can continue to be held in line with Queensland Health requirements. Holding of outdoor events will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the number of cases in the community and strain to health services.

## INDOOR EVENTS

Will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where possible, meetings should be held via Teams or Zoom to reduce travel and face-to-face interaction. In cases where this is not possible for all attendees, masks, social distancing and appropriate density limits will need to be observed. Please note the conditions for each facility/boardroom utilised.

## COUNCIL MEETINGS

May be held in person, remotely or a combination of the 2. The decision will be made by the Mayor and CEO in consultation with councillors.

Division 4 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* refers the handling of meetings of a local government to minimise risks involving COVID-19.

- Section 277B states that a local government or committee meeting may be held by audio or audio visual link;
- Section 227C allows the Chairperson to allow another person to take part by audio or audio visual link (deputations); and
- Section 277D states that the local government must ensure the meeting is available for real-time viewing or listening by the public at 1 of the local government's public offices or on the local government's website.

## COVID RELATED COSTS

Departments of Council may incur COVID related costs including additional PPE, additional cleaning outside of budget, etc.

Please liaise with the finance team on how these costs should be accounted for.

## VEHICLES AND TRAVEL

Travel is to be reduced as much as possible to reduce the spread of COVID in the North Burnett community. The number of passengers travelling in a vehicle should be reduced to allow for social distancing. These standard restrictions should be observed:

- Single cab – 1 person
- Dual cab/wagon – 2 people

If your team requires additional vehicles to be able to comply with this guideline, please contact the Fleet Team.

Masks should be worn at all times when travelling in a vehicle with another person.

Touch points should be wiped with antibacterial wipes before and after use.

## PPE

PPE stocks are distributed across the region. The following PPE is available for staff to use in the workplace:

- Hand sanitiser (please take your empty bottles to be re-filled from bulk stocks)
- Sanitising spray to clean desks and surfaces
- Paper towel to use for wiping down items with sanitising spray
- Masks
- Disinfectant wipes
- Gloves (M, L, XL in size)

These items are available in the following locations:

- Biggenden – Photocopy Room with Stationery Stocks
- Eidsvold – Boardroom – Rates Building
- Gayndah – Morning Tea Room with Stationery Stocks
- Monto – Kitchen Hallway Cupboards at Monto Depot
- Mt Perry – Customer Service and Library Server Room Cupboards
- Mundubbera – Old Centrelink Room at Mundubbera QGAP Office

The process to access these stocks:

1. Go to location, select items required and fill out the register to note what items you have taken
2. Customer Service and Library staff will monitor stock and request additional stock from stores as required
3. If you require hand sanitiser, please bring your empty bottles and re-fill from the bulk containers using the pump attached

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Restrictions for businesses eased from **5am, 17 December 2021**. Find [current requirements for businesses across Queensland](#).

For the latest COVID-19 advice visit the [Queensland Health website](#).

The Australian Federal Government is in charge of selecting, buying and regulating COVID-19 vaccines. The Queensland Government is in charge of delivering the vaccine across our state. For more information about the vaccines visit:

- The [Australian Government website](#)
- The National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- [Qld Health Question and Answers website](#)

Council will continue to operate in accordance with the latest updates from the lead agency, [Queensland Health](#) - with the overall goal of helping to slow the spread of the virus and reduce peak demand on health facilities. The best way to stay informed is to follow their advice and you can do this by visiting the [Covid-19 website](#) or by calling 134 COVID ([13 42 68](#)).

Further information about managing risks to [psychological health](#) during the COVIDpandemic is available from [Worksafe Queensland](#).

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

1. NBRC Global Risk Assessment
2. Work Vehicles Risk Assessment
3. Departmental Risk Assessments