

	<b>MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19</b>	<b>Document No:</b>	<b>WHS-PRO-042</b>
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	Employment Relations Manager	<b>Issue No:</b>	<b>26/06/2020</b>
	<b>Authorising Officer: Chief Operating Officer</b>		

## 1. Purpose

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (Conference) is committed to providing, as far as reasonably practicable, a safe place of work for our workers, volunteers and visitors. That includes minimising the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other infections.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the outbreak to be a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern". WHO and our local Australian Health authorities are taking action to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. All sectors of the society, including organisations and employers, will need to play a role to stop the spread of the disease.

As the situation continues to evolve, we ask that our workers, volunteers and visitors stay engaged with and alert to our communications for the most up-to-date advice in regard to arrangements for our workers and our workplaces.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Conference Agencies. It covers all workers and visitors at Conference and Conference-controlled premises.

## 3. Related Documents

[ACBC Work Health & Safety Policy](#)  
[WHS-PRO-025 Working Off Site](#)  
[WHS PRO-026 Working from Home](#)  
[HR-PRO-019 Flexible Work Arrangements](#)  
[HR-PRO-023 Personal and Carers Leave](#)  
[HR-PRO-031 Employee Assistance Program](#)

## 4. Definitions

### Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can make humans and animals sick. They cause illnesses that can range from the common cold to more severe diseases. Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China.

There is evidence that the virus spreads from person-to-person. The virus is most likely spread through:

- close contact with an infectious person
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth, nose, eyes or face.

Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and then recover. Some people who are infected may not get sick at all or only have mild symptoms and recover easily. However, some go on to experience more serious illness very quickly and may require to be hospitalised.

Risk of serious illness and death increases:

- 1) With age, as people over 70 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 70; and
- 2) In people with weakened or compromised immune systems and those with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease, cancer and any other chronic medical conditions.

### **Self-isolation or Self-quarantine**

Self-isolation or self-quarantine means that the person who has to be isolated must stay in their own home and avoid public places, in particular work, school, childcare or any other public space. Only people who usually live in your home or other place of residence should be permitted on the premises. Visitors should not be allowed into the home.

### **High Risk or Moderate Risk Countries**

Information on high or moderate risk countries is available from [www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers)

### **Close Contact**

Close contact is defined as requiring:

- Greater than 15 minutes face-to-face contact in any setting with a confirmed case in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case, or
- Sharing of a closed space with a confirmed case for a prolonged period (e.g. more than 2 hours) in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case.

### **Worker**

A worker is any individual that carries out work for the Conference. A worker can be:

- An employee
- A contractor or sub-contractor
- An employee of a labour-hire company
- An apprentice or trainee
- A work experience student
- A volunteer

### **Supervisor**

The Supervisor is an Agency Head, Director, Manager, Coordinator or Team Leader, who is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of one or more workers.

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **Supervisors**

Supervisors must ensure that:

- Their workers are made aware of this procedure and that they are expected to comply.
- They report any suspected or confirmed infection to the Office for Employment Relations.
- Implement any recommended infection control process

### **Workers**

Workers must:

- Comply with this procedure.
- Report any suspected or confirmed infection to their Supervisor and the Chief Operating Officer.
- Be mindful of and comply with the requirements of other organisations in regard to COVID-19

## **6. What to do if you suspect that you have COVID-19**

The symptoms of COVID-19 include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

If you develop symptoms (fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath):

- Do not come to work. Stay at home and notify your Supervisor and the Chief Operating Officer

by email or telephone.

- Arrange to see a doctor for an urgent assessment. Testing can be ordered by your GP, or at a hospital emergency department. You should telephone the health clinic or hospital or healthdirect on 1800 022 222 before you arrive and advise of your travel history or whether you have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. If available, wear a surgical mask on your way to attend medical testing.
- You must remain isolated (self-isolate) either in your home or a healthcare setting until Public Health authorities inform you it is safe to return to your usual activities.
- You can return to work when you have obtained clearance from your doctor.

## 7. Controlling the Spread of Infection

**Personal Hygiene:** Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with your elbow.
- Dispose of used tissues in a covered bin
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- If feeling unwell, avoid contact with others (stay 1.5 metres or more away from people) and take action as described in Section 6.

### **If you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19**

If you have been in close contact with a person who has confirmed COVID-19 cases, you must self-isolate for 14 days following the exposure. If you develop symptoms, take action as described in Section 6.

### **Infection Control Measures at Work:**

**Coronavirus working group** – A Coronavirus working group has been set up to monitor the situation and to provide information to Conference workers and to recommend and implement infection control measures. Up-to-date information on work arrangements will be provided through emails and other electronic means as appropriate, and at general staff meetings.

**Cleaning regime** – the cleaning regime at workplaces is to be strengthened by commencing additional disinfectant cleaning of work surfaces, especially those which are in common use such as kitchens; bathrooms; door, cupboard and fridge handles. A supply of personal disinfectant wipes for keyboards and phones will be made available.

**Physical distancing** – maintain a maximum of one person per 4 square metres. In addition, maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from others.

**Hand sanitisers** – Alcohol-based hand sanitisers will be provided and placed at entrances and other prominent areas in the workplace.

**Signage** – Signage will be posted at appropriate locations to instruct workers and visitors to workplaces on the specific requirements implemented at each workplace to contain the spread of infection.

**Communication** – There will be regular communication with workers on the status of return to workplaces and requirements while at workplaces.

**COVIDSafe** – Encourage workers to download the COVIDSafe App.

## **Travel**

- All non-essential travel overseas to cease until further notice. Essential travel is travel that is required to meet legal or regulatory requirements.
- All non-essential travel interstate to cease until further notice.
- Where possible, use video or telephone conferencing facilities to conduct meetings rather than travel.
- Those who have recently returned from overseas must self-isolate for 14 days. It may be possible for them to work from home during this time. They should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and should take their temperature twice a day. Employees should also practice social distancing and avoid crowds and small gatherings in enclosed spaces. If they develop flu-like symptoms they must see their doctor. They must obtain a medical clearance before returning to work.

## **8. Self-isolation, Remote Work and Personal Leave**

Where a worker has developed symptoms and has gone into self-isolation, ways of working from home should be explored. If it is possible for work to be carried out from home, the Conference's [Working from Home](#) and [Flexible Work Arrangement](#) procedures will apply. To prepare for this, Supervisors will need to conduct a mapping exercise with the workers who will be impacted, identifying the tasks which can be carried out from home. Arrangements may need to be made to enable workers to work from home and/or cover for workers who will be absent from the workplace.

Where a worker who has developed symptoms and has gone into self-isolation is not able to work from home, their absence from work will be treated as personal leave and the Conference's personal leave procedure will apply.

If the worker does not have sufficient accumulated personal leave, additional personal leave can be granted in advance. Negative leave balances can be worked off or claimed back if employment is terminated before this is achieved.

## **9. Conference Workers in Shared Work Locations**

A number of Conference workers work in offices that are managed by other organisations. These workers must comply with the requirements put in place by the organisations, and maintain good personal hygiene practices.

## **10. Employee Assistance Program**

Employees should be made aware of the availability of the Employee Assistance Program during this time. Our provider has its own measures in place to provide the service without risk of infection to its clients and their own staff.

## **11. Visitors**

- Do not have visitors in offices unless this is essential. Conduct meetings using video or phone conferencing.
- Those who have recently returned from overseas should not be asked to visit workplaces. They can be asked to conduct meetings via video or telephone.
- Visitors must be made aware of good hygiene practices for infection control
- Where it is necessary to have visitors to the office, including visitors from another Conference Agency or building within the Braddon precinct, a register documenting the name, email address and phone number of the visitor must be kept. This information is only to be used for contact tracing purposes. This information is to be retained for a minimum of 28 days.

## **12. If there is a suspected case of infection**

1. Immediately identify persons who may have recently come into close physical contact with the infected worker.
2. Advise all affected workers identified in step 1 (Note: Most likely those who are in the same team)

to work from home. They should:

- Monitor their health, including doing temperature checks twice daily
- Practice good personal hygiene
- See a doctor immediately if they are unwell and have themselves tested
- Provide regular updates to their Supervisor and the Employment Relations Manager on their health. The Employment Relations Manager will notify other employees when an update of the outcome of tests for any suspect cases is received.

### 13. If there is confirmed infection

1. If someone at the workplace is a confirmed case, contact the Coronavirus Helpline **(1800 020 080)** who will engage to identify any persons at the workplace who may have had close contact with the confirmed case. Ensure that all staff cooperate with the health officers and provide them with necessary information and assistance.
2. The Health Department will most likely send officers who will assess whether any staff should be placed in quarantine.
3. For employees who are not placed in quarantine, advise them to monitor their health closely as per measures of suspect case.

If notified of a confirmed case:

1. Immediately vacate and block-off work area where the individual worked.
2. Request cleaners to carry out a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the section and the office, in consultation and accordance with health authority guidelines.
3. The Employment Relations Manager and Supervisor to regularly keep in contact with an employee who is a suspected/confirmed case and ensure that support is given to the staff from a mental health perspective. Further considerations may need to be made for the staff in terms of social consequence of a case of COVID-19 in the workplace, including offering information and support to both the staff member and also his/her co-workers.

Note: In cases where there is a confirmed case by the employee, once confirmed the employee should be on sick leave until medical clearance.

4. Office closure will be considered (and may well be mandated) if a worker or visitor has a confirmed case of COVID-19. In this case, business continuity measures will be taken to ensure that the work of the Conference continues. In general, this will be a reversion to working from home arrangements.
5. The Chief Operating Officer and the Coronavirus Working Group will consult with health authorities and determine when it will be safe to return to the office.
6. The Coronavirus Working Group will determine how to manage the return to offices and how this information will be communicated to workers.

Workers, visitors and clients will be informed so that appropriate measures can be taken to minimise the spread of infection.

### 14. More Information

Visit the [Australian Government Department of Health homepage](#)

Call the Public Health Information Line on 1800 004 599.

Contact your state or territory public health agency:

[Vic Health](#) or call 1300 651 160

[ACT Health](#) or call 02 5124 9213

[NSW Health](#) or call 1300 066 055

[Queensland Health](#) or call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

[South Australia Health](#) or call 1300 232 272

[Smart Traveller](#)

[World Health Organisation](#)

[International SOS](#)

Concerned workers can also contact the dedicated national novel coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.