

	<h2>MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19</h2>	Document No:	WHS-PRO-042	
		Approval Date:	24/02/2022	
		Approved By:	J. Campton	
		Review Date:	17/02/2024 or as required	
		Responsible Officer: Manager People and Professional Development	Expiry Date:	N/A
		Authorising Officer: Chief Operating Officer		Issue No:

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 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 society, including organisations and employers, will need to play a role to stop the spread of the disease.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Conference Agencies. In addition, 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](#)
[Covid-19 Safety Risk Assessment](#)

4. Definitions

Coronavirus COVID-19

A newly discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. However, older people and those with underlying medical problems are more likely to develop severe symptoms.

Current evidence suggests that the virus spreads primarily by respiratory droplets among people in close contact with each other. The virus can spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles when they cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe heavily. These liquid particles are of different sizes, ranging from larger 'respiratory droplets' to smaller 'aerosols'. People may be highly infectious before their symptoms show. Even people with mild or no symptoms can spread COVID-19.

Close Contact

You are a close contact if you:

- Live in the same house as someone who tests positive;
- Have spent 4 hours or longer with someone in a home, or health or aged care environment who tests positive; or
- Are determined as one by your state or territory health department.

Some state and territory health departments further define close contacts as high, moderate and low risk.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) Test

A polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is a nose and throat swab taken at a testing clinic and sent to a lab to be tested. PCR tests are the most accurate way to confirm if a person has COVID-19, and results usually take 24 to 48 hours.

Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)

A rapid antigen test (RAT) is a quick way to detect COVID-19. These tests involve taking either a saliva sample or nasal swab placed into a chemical solution. The result usually takes 10 to 30 minutes. They are available from pharmacies, supermarkets and other retail stores. Most people can now use a RAT result to confirm they are positive for COVID-19. Occasionally, they may not pick up an infection, and you may need to take another RAT or have a PCR test if symptoms continue.

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, particularly 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.

Worker

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

- An appointee
- An employee
- A contractor or sub-contractor
- An employee of a labour-hire company
- An apprentice or trainee
- A work experience student
- A volunteer
- Any other person carrying out work for the Conference or a Conference agency

Personnel

All workers of the Conference and external parties working on Conference premises, including tenants.

Supervisor

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

5. Responsibilities

Workers

Workers must:

- Comply with this procedure.
- Report any suspected or confirmed infection or close contact status to their supervisor.
- Be mindful of and comply with the requirements of both the Conference and the applicable state/territory health authority as they relate to COVID-19.

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 or close contact status to the Chief Operating Officer.
- Implement any recommended infection control process based on current local health authority advice and this procedure.

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The Chief Operating Officer will:

- Notify the General Secretary of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Conference staff.
- Notify the COVID-19 Working Group of any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Conference staff.
- Coordinate required actions for a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 at the workplace.

Manager, People and Professional Development

- Inform Catholic Church Insurance (CCI) and WorkSafe of positive employee cases of COVID-19 where required.
- Track all isolating staff in the WHS-001 COVID-19 Quarantine Tracking Spreadsheet.

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. People may be infectious before their symptoms show.

If you develop symptoms, become aware that you are a close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or otherwise suspect you may have COVID-19

- Do not come to the workplace. Instead, stay at home and notify your supervisor as per section 5.
- You must remain isolated (self-isolate) either in your home or a healthcare setting while symptoms persist and until you are confirmed as negative for COVID-19.
- Arrange to be tested via a PCR Test or RAT for COVID-19, following hygiene and isolation guidance from your relevant state or territory health department. Do not attend a pharmacy to collect RATs if you are symptomatic; however, a RAT may be used if you already have one, or someone can drop one off to you (using contactless measures). If you undertake a RAT test and it is negative, but you are symptomatic arrange to be tested via a PCR test.

If you and your household members are not classified as close, high or moderate risk contacts and test and remain negative for COVID-19 using a PCR test, you can return to the workplace when you are symptom-free.

If you or a household member are a close contact or test positive for COVID-19, follow the steps in sections 7 and 8 of this procedure.

7. What to do if you or a household member tests positive for COVID-19

If you test positive for COVID-19, do not come to the workplace. Instead, stay at home and notify your supervisor according to the procedure in section 5. Remain away from the workplace for ten days from the onset of symptoms or the day you undertook your positive covid test, whichever is the latter. Once the ten days have passed, a negative PCR test or RAT must be returned for the staff member before returning to the workplace.

If a household member tests positive for COVID-19, do not come to the workplace, even if you test negative. Stay at home and notify your supervisor as per section 5. Remain away from the workplace for ten days from the household members onset of symptoms or they day they had their positive covid test, whichever is the latter. Once the ten days have passed, a negative PCR test must be returned for the staff member before returning to the workplace.

People and Professional Development will track all isolating staff in the WHS-001 COVID-19 Quarantine Tracking Spreadsheet.

8. What to do if you are notified or are otherwise made aware that you are a close or high or moderate risk contact

If you or someone you live with is notified of being a close contact for COVID-19, do not come to the workplace, even if you test negative for COVID-19. Instead, stay at home and notify your supervisor as per section 5. Follow the government guidance on isolation and testing requirements.

Remain away from the office for ten days from the date of exposure or the day of the positive COVID test, whichever is the latter. Once the ten days have passed, a negative PCR test must be returned for the staff member before returning to the workplace. If you subsequently test positive to COVID-19, follow the steps in section 7 of this procedure.

People and Professional Development will track all isolating staff in the WHS-001 COVID-19 Quarantine Tracking Spreadsheet.

9. Returning to the workplace after an isolation period

Personnel who are required to isolate due to:

- Testing positive to COVID-19;
- Being a close or high or moderate risk contact to someone who has tested positive to COVID-19; or
- A household member testing positive to COVID-19 or being a close or high or moderate risk contact.

Can return to the office after:

- Isolating from the workplace for ten (10) days.
- Returning a negative COVID-19 PCR test at the end of the isolation period.
- Being symptom-free.

Workers who feel well enough may continue to work from home during isolation from the workplace, where their role allows them to do so (see section 11 of this procedure for more information).

10. Controlling the Spread of Infection

Personal Hygiene: Practicing 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 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.

Infection Control Measures at the Workplace:

COVID-19 working group – a COVID-19 working group has been set up to monitor the situation, provide information to Conference workers, and recommend and implement infection control measures. In addition, up-to-date information on work arrangements will be provided through emails and other electronic means as appropriate and at general staff meetings.

The workplace cleaning regime has been strengthened by additional disinfectant cleaning of work surfaces, especially common use areas such as kitchens, bathrooms, doors, cupboards, and fridge handles. In addition, a supply of personal disinfectant wipes for keyboards and phones are available. Additional cleaning for positive COVID-19 cases at the Braddon precinct will be conducted as determined by risk assessment and government health guidelines.

Physical distancing – maintain social distancing in line with the health advice in your state/territory. Shared spaces should be limited while COVID-19 community transmission is present, and workers coming to the workplace should work in a closed office where possible.

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

Signage – Signage is posted at appropriate locations to instruct workers and visitors 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.

Travel

- Where possible, use video or telephone conferencing facilities to conduct meetings rather than travel.
- Staff must abide by any restrictions on movement as advised by the relevant health authority.
- All non-essential interstate or overseas travel should be carefully considered, considering restrictions in that region/state/territory or restrictions required upon returning. All work related overseas and interstate travel requires COO approval before departure.

11. 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 work can 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. In addition, arrangements may need to be made to enable workers to work from home or cover for workers absent from the workplace.

A worker who has developed symptoms and has gone into self-isolation cannot 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 requested in advance. In addition, reasonable negative leave balances can be worked off or claimed back if employment ends before this is achieved.

Other types of paid leave can be requested if accruals exist (i.e., annual leave or long service leave) if personal leave is exhausted and any negative balance becomes excessive.

Unpaid personal leave can also be requested should other paid leave entitlements not be available or suitable; however, paid personal leave entitlements need to be exhausted first.

12. Conference Workers in External Work Locations

Some Conference workers work in offices that other organisations manage. These workers must comply with the requirements put in place by the organisations and maintain good personal hygiene practices.

13. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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

Our EAP Provider is Access EAP and their contact details are as follows:

Phone: 1800 818 728

Email: info@accesseap.com.au

Web: accesseap.com.au

14. Visitors

- Do not have visitors in offices unless this is essential. Conduct meetings using video or phone conferencing.
- Visitors must comply with good hygiene practices for infection control.

15. Meetings

All meetings with two or more external attendees, or that are held offsite, require a [Covid-19 Safety Risk Assessment for Meetings](#) to be completed and is to be submitted and approved by the Chief Operations Officer.

16. If there is a suspected case of infection at the workplace

Where there is a suspected case of COVID-19 infection at the workplace, the following steps are to be taken immediately:

1. Supervisor to advise the COO of the suspected infection, who will then coordinate the following:
 - a. Identification of personnel who may have recently come into close physical contact with the suspected infected person (including external organisations working on Conference premises).
 - b. Convene the COVID-19 Working Group to conduct a risk assessment and devise appropriate actions.
 - c. Ensure all personnel identified in step 1(a) are informed (Note: Most likely those in the same team) to self-isolate and work from home if well enough.
2. The supervisor is to keep in contact with any isolating workers and advise the COO of any updates.
3. All affected personnel identified in step 1(a) are to:
 - a. Monitor their health for COVID symptoms,
 - b. Practise good personal hygiene,
 - c. Get tested immediately should they become unwell or develop symptoms,
 - d. Provide regular updates to their supervisor on their health.
 - e. Remain away from the workplace until they are notified that they can return

The following steps will depend on whether the suspected case is confirmed or not as follows:

- If it eventuates that it is not a COVID-19 infection, all affected personnel will be notified via the COO that they can return to the workplace.
- If the suspected infection results in a positive COVID-19 result, the steps in section 16 are to be followed.

17. If there is a confirmed infection at the workplace

Where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 infection at the workplace, the following steps are to be taken immediately (see Appendix A of this procedure for a detailed action checklist):

1. The infected person must be instructed to return home and isolate as outlined in section 7 of this procedure. Any other personnel working within the same vicinity as the infected person should also be instructed to return home.
2. The supervisor is to advise the COO of the confirmed infection, who will coordinate the following:
 - a. Identification of all personnel who may have recently come into close physical contact with the infected worker (including external organisations working on Conference premises).
 - b. Notify and send all other personnel from the affected site home immediately.
 - c. Convene the COVID-19 working group to assess risk to other personnel based on the contact they had with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 while that person was infectious in the workplace and conduct a risk assessment and inform appropriate actions.
 - d. The assessment of workplace risk may indicate personnel who have had high-risk or moderate risk exposures. In this situation, personnel will be notified accordingly and instructed to follow government health advice and section 8 of this procedure.
 - e. Office closure will be considered where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. The COO will prepare a recommendation for the General Secretary's approval. In this case, business

- continuity measures will be taken to ensure that any essential work of the Conference continues. In general, this will be a reversion to working from home arrangements.
- f. The COO and the COVID-19 Working Group will consult with health guidelines, and directions will determine cleaning measures required and when it will be safe to return to the office, in consultation with the General Secretary.
 - g. The COVID-19 Working Group will determine how to manage the return to offices and communicate this information to workers in consultation with the General Secretary.
3. The supervisor is to regularly contact a worker who is a suspected/confirmed case and ensure that support is given to the staff from a mental health perspective. In addition, the supervisor is to keep the COO and Manager People, and Professional Development informed of updates.

18. Privacy and Confidentiality

The anonymity of personnel reporting suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 will be protected wherever possible. However, there will be situations where personnel identification will be required for health and safety and operational reasons. At a minimum, the General Secretary, COO and the COVID-19 Working Group will be notified of personnel details. Catholic Church Insurance (CCI) and WorkSafe may also need to be supplied with further information of Conference workers. In the case of a COVID-19 infection at work, details of the personnel who have tested positive may need to be shared more widely to protect the health and safety of those who may be close contacts. However, this information will not be shared more widely than is necessary.

19. 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

Appendix A – Confirmed case in the workplace checklist

The following checklist should guide the steps to be followed in the case of a positive case of COVID-19 in the workplace. However, this is a guide only, and additional steps may be required depending on the circumstances.

A confirmed case in the workplace checklist	Action By	Date	Actions taken
You must do the following immediately after being notified that a worker or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19.			
1. If the infected person tests positive at the workplace or is at the workplace when the infection is notified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the infected person home immediately. • Send any personnel working in contact with the infected employee to work from home and await further communication advising return to the workplace. 	Supervisor		
2. Notify the Chief Operating Officer	Supervisor		
3. Notify all affected personnel of the Conference Identification of and communication to all affected personnel of the Conference.	COO		
4. Convene COVID-19 Working Group Who will assess risk to other personnel outside those identified at step 3, conduct a risk assessment and inform appropriate actions and communications.	COO & COVID-19 Working Group		
5. Follow state CCI and WorkSafe reporting Guidelines for the work location Management of reporting of any required cases to the relevant authorities.	Manager People and Professional Development		
6. Close or vacate the workplace if required. The risk assessment undertaken by the COVID-19 Working Group at step 4 will recommend actions to the General Secretary and staff will be advised accordingly. If the workplace is required to close, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Support Officer to take home cable gate phone <input type="checkbox"/> All landlines redirected <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings locked and alarmed <input type="checkbox"/> Mail deliveries to be held <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate signage erected to notify how deliveries should be managed <input type="checkbox"/> Contact details for IT helpdesk provided to all staff <input type="checkbox"/> Staff requiring IT equipment as per COVID preparedness survey to be dispatched <input type="checkbox"/> Non-urgent maintenance and repairs cancelled/postponed <input type="checkbox"/> If possible, turn off non-essential electrical devices (monitors, printers, kitchen appliances, aircon, etc.) 	COO		
7. Clean as required.	COO		

	Engage cleaning company to undertake a clean of both office buildings and any extra cleaning required as a result of the risk assessment and actions.			
8.	Update staff Keep staff informed of developments via email, including when it is safe to return to the office	General Secretary		
9.	Returning to the office On return to the office, revisit item 3 above (and reinstate actions if the office has been closed).	COO		