

Important update on 'Click & Collect' and Customer Waiting Areas

Over the recent Lockdown 6 period VACC has gone to great lengths to ensure that as much of retail automotive can continue to trade in some capacity.

Of note members should remain cognisant that the Victorian Government website announces that there are currently 24 automotive retail related Tier 1 or Tier 2 COVID-19 [exposure sites](#). In addition to this, there are confirmed instances of dealers being subject to on the spot fines for allowing test drives to take place. The focus is upon this sector is to get things right.

Actions taken by VACC this week

Many members have sought direction on whether they can open their customer service waiting rooms for customers who are either picking or dropping off their vehicle for repair or maintenance services or waiting for their vehicle to be serviced. VACC has this week met with internal and external stakeholders to discuss what is permissible under the current [Workplace Directions \(No. 46\)](#) and [Restricted Activity Directions \(No. 24\)](#)

Repair and Maintenance of vehicles

Automotive service and repairers are considered authorised providers and therefore permitted to be open for onsite work. Whilst the current **Workplace Directions (No. 46)** do not expressly prohibit this, VACC strongly recommends members do not allow customers to stay onsite whilst their vehicle is being serviced or repaired.

If a service department, or repairer, chooses to have their customer waiting area open, it should be subject to very strict operational criteria.

What would be the criteria?

If a dealer business decides to allow customers to remain onsite whilst they wait for their vehicle to be repaired, VACC advises members to carefully consider the following recommended procedures:

- That all consumers and employee's check-in via an electronic QR Code system. That the density requirements for the waiting area are determined and is clearly displayed to customers.
- That furniture is spaced apart to allow for social distancing.
- That there is a cleaning schedule in place to ensure high touch points in the waiting area are sanitised regularly, including toilets that customers can access.
- That the business nominates someone to monitor customer interactions onsite, for example: wearing of face masks (staff and consumer, unless an exemption applies) and complying with social distancing. This must be for all shifts and at all times.
- That the business has a Covid Safe Plan, including risk controls for managing the risk of customers on sites.
- That tea and coffee facilities be removed from the area to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission in the waiting area.
- Customers are screened before being allowed to use the waiting area. For example, asking if they have any cold and flu like symptoms. Have they been in contact with a positive case of Covid-19?
- Is there a clear delineation or barrier between sales showrooms and service lounge wait areas?

Consideration should also be given to whether allowing customers to wait onsite brings additional unwanted attention to the business and increases the risk of people potentially reporting the business to WorkSafe or Vic Police.

Important

VACC reminds dealers that they (the dealer) will incur significant cleaning costs and disruption to the business (potentially closing for 14 days) if they were to be classified as a Tier 1 exposure site as a result of allowing customers to stay onsite.

Retail sales of parts, new and used vehicles

Automotive businesses are considered “Authorised Providers” under the **Workplace Directions (No.46)**, however, there is a clear distinction to be made around permitted activities within the automotive industry. Automotive sales activities are not permitted to open for onsite operation and therefore must only operate in a “click and collect” capacity. Please see extract below from the **Restricted Activity Directions (No. 24)**.

Permitted operation – retail facility

(12) *A person who owns, controls or operates a retail facility that would otherwise be a closed work premises in the State of Victoria may operate that facility during the restricted activity period only for the purposes of contactless collection or delivery of pre-ordered goods.*

Example: pre-ordered goods may be ordered by a telephone call or by placing a ‘click and collect’ order using the Internet.

VACC recommends that no dealer showroom or parts division is available for face-to-face exchanges. Click and collect is the only form of exchange permitted with consumers under the current restrictions.

Further assistance from VACC

VACC recommends that COVIDSafe Plans should be reviewed to ensure it remains current and that cleaning, signage, record-keeping, and other applicable requirements are being adhered to and communicated with all relevant staff.

Members are encouraged to contact the VACC OHSE Unit for any further information or assistance, including in relation to their [COVIDSafe Plan](#) obligations on 03 9829 1265.

Michael McKenna MBA
Industry Policy Advisor

Industry Divisions

VACC

Level 1 | 464 St Kilda Road | Melbourne Vic 3004

P: 03 9829 1280 | **M:** 0418 822 939 | **F:** 03 9867 1795 | **W:** vacc.com.au