

BULLETIN

Industrial Relations



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5-day Snap Lockdown to commence in Victoria from 11:59pm tonight, Thursday 15 July 2021 until 11:59pm Tuesday 20 July 2021

The Victorian Premier has late this afternoon [announced](#) a 5-day snap lockdown throughout **all of Victoria commencing from 11:59pm this evening until 11:59pm Tuesday 20 July 2021**, with the potential for Regional Victoria to be released earlier if certain criteria are met. Identical to last month's 'circuit breaker' lockdown, there will be five reasons for people to leave their home:

- shopping for things that are needed (once per day);
- care and caregiving;
- exercise (up to 2 hours per day);
- authorised work and permitted education; and
- to get vaccinated and other specified reasons.

The limitation on exercise and shopping will be **five kilometres from home** – or the closest shop (if not within the five kilometre radius).

Under the [Table of Restrictions](#) released with the Premier's Statement, the following automotive industry businesses can continue to operate through this lockdown in **Victoria as authorised providers and workers**:

- Petrol stations, including a petrol station that sells groceries
- Vehicle and mechanical repair services, including 'log book' servicing
- 'Click and collect/deliver' services
- Emergency repair workers
- Roadside assistance services
- Ancillary and support businesses, where necessary for the operations of an authorised provider
- Administrative services provided by an employer to enable its employees to work from home – e.g., payroll and IT services
- Truck stops and roadhouses, but not the provision of seated dining or shower facilities to persons who are not transport, freight or logistics drivers.

Face coverings

Must be carried at all times and **worn indoors and outdoors** except if at home, or when visiting an intimate partner's place of residence or if an exemption applies.

Density quotients

For the above workplaces that are authorised to remain open during the lockdown, density quotients in shared spaces and publicly accessible areas at the work premises of **1 person per 4 square metres**.

QR Code Requirements

The electronic record keeping requirements through **Victorian Government QR Code Service** will continue to apply for those businesses that are eligible to continue operating during the lockdown period.

COVIDSafe Plan

VACC recommend that COVIDSafe Plans should be reviewed to ensure it remains current and the 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.

What entitlements apply for employees required to self-isolate/quarantine?

Employees who have visited a location at the date and time where a COVID-19 case has visited – may be required by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to get tested and quarantine, despite not feeling unwell or not having any symptoms.

An employee is entitled to paid **personal/carer's** leave **only** in circumstances where they are unfit for work due to personal illness or injury – or in relation to carer's leave, where they are required to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household – because of a personal illness or injury affecting the member, or an unexpected emergency affecting the member. Therefore, an employee who is required to quarantine is **not entitled** to paid personal/carer's leave **unless** they meet these requirements.

Where the employee has sufficient **annual leave (or long service leave)** accrued, an employer may approve this request. In certain circumstances an employer might also consider agreeing to a request for annual leave in advance (i.e., prior to the leave having been accrued). Such an agreement must be in writing and meet a number of requirements. It is therefore recommended that members considering granting leave in advance contact the IR Department for further information.

Where neither paid personal/carer's leave nor annual leave is appropriate, the employer may approve a period of **unpaid leave** for the employee. In such circumstances it is important to note that employees required to self-isolate or quarantine by DHHS may be eligible for the **Australian Government's \$1,500 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment and/or the Victorian Government's \$450 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Test Isolation Payment**. Employees seeking further information on eligibility requirements can be directed to [Services Australia](#) and the [DHHS](#).

Can I stand down employees?

Members who are unable to operate as a result of the 5-day snap lockdown, are advised to consult with affected employees about taking **paid annual leave, long service leave, or unpaid leave** during this period. VACC advises a similar approach may be taken by businesses who are unable to provide employees with their usual ordinary hours of work, as a result of the lockdown.

Where agreement is reached, a written record of the employee's request to take leave must be kept.

If agreement is unable to be reached and the business is unable to operate as a result of the lockdown, the employer is entitled to **stand down** the employee without pay.

Members considering standing down an employee should contact our Industrial Relations experts on 03 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au for further advice and assistance.

Will the State Government provide financial support to affected businesses?

The Victorian Government has announced that it is in discussions with the Federal Government, and that it is likely to provide an update on support for affected businesses tomorrow.

VACC will continue to keep members advised of developments. Members needing further advice or assistance are encouraged to contact VACC's Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123.

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