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COVID-19 Restrictions Update – ‘Victoria’s COVIDSafe Summer’

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has [announced](#) the further easing of restrictions in Victoria from 11.59pm on Sunday, 6 December 2020. A summary of the new ‘COVIDSafe Summer’ restrictions is available [here](#). Under these new restrictions, a face mask must be carried with you when leaving home. However, wearing a face mask is only mandatory on public transport, while in taxis or ride share vehicles, and at large retail venues.

Under the updated [Workplace Directions \(No 12\)](#) which commenced at 11:59pm on 6 December 2020, employers must take reasonable steps to ensure that workers:

- **carry a face covering with them at all times** (unless the worker has a physical or mental health illness or condition or disability which makes wearing a face covering unsuitable); and
- **wear a face covering where required to do so in accordance with any other Directions currently in force** (unless an exemption applies – e.g. the nature of the worker’s work means that wearing a face covering creates a risk to their health and safety).

Members should note that in relation to **large retail venues**, under the updated [Stay Safe Direction \(Victoria\)\(No 4\)](#), sub-clause 7(b)(ii)(B) clarifies that a **face covering must be worn** while in an indoor space at a retail facility “**where the total of all indoor spaces accessible to members of the public is 2,000 square metres or more**”.

Whilst the updated Directions mean that wearing a face covering at work is no longer mandatory for most members (i.e. unless operating a large retail venue), **VACC recommends that wherever practicable face masks continue to be worn in the workplace, particularly indoors where ventilation is poor and where it is not possible to keep 1.5 metres distance from other people – and whilst cleaning inside customer vehicles.**

Members should also note that the updated Workplace Directions also confirms that **record-keeping obligations** remain for all workers and visitors who attend the Work Premises for longer than 15 minutes; and that **density requirements** have been updated for both shared spaces (such as lunchrooms) and publicly accessible areas at the Work Premises to 1 person every 2 square metres.

VACC recommends that employers take the time to familiarise themselves with the new ‘COVIDSafe Summer’ level of restrictions and **review and update their COVIDSafe Plans** accordingly. Consultation on any changes to workplace requirements or updated COVIDSafe Plans must take place with all affected staff.

Members are encouraged to contact the VACC OHSE Unit for any further information or assistance in relation to their COVIDSafe Plans on 03 9829 1265.

Daniel Hodges
Executive Manager – Workplace Relations
Industrial Relations OHSE Department

VACC

Level 7 | 464 St Kilda Road | Melbourne Vic 3004

P: 03 9829 1122 | M: 0429 644 820 | E: dhodges@vacc.com.au