

Lockdown restrictions extended in Victoria

The Victorian Premier has today [announced](#) that lockdown restrictions in place throughout Victoria will be **extended from 11:59pm Thursday 2 September 2021 until “70 per cent of Victorians have had at least one dose of vaccine”**, which is expected to be on or around **23 September 2021**.

As part of the announcement, the Victorian Premier released an updated [Table of restrictions](#) outlining the only change, being the partial re-opening of outdoor playgrounds.

Accordingly, throughout **Victoria**, there remain five reasons for people to leave their home:

- getting necessary goods or services
- care or other compassionate reasons
- exercise (up to 2 hours per day)
- authorised work and permitted education if it can't be done from home
- to get vaccinated at the nearest possible location (and other specified reasons).

The limitation on exercise and shopping remains at **five kilometres from home** – or the closest location (if not within the five kilometre radius).

Members are reminded that currently, the following automotive industry businesses can continue to operate throughout **Victoria** as **authorised providers and workers**:

- Petrol stations, including a petrol station that sells groceries
- Vehicle and mechanical repair services
- Contactless '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.

Work Permits

Authorised workers continue to be required to **carry permits** when working, and when travelling for work. Members are advised to review Work Permits they have issued, and **update as required** to reflect the extension of the lockdown beyond 2 September 2021. Members can access a copy of the **Authorised Worker Permit template** [here](#), and are encouraged to review our previous Bulletin [here](#) should the require further information.

Face masks

Face masks 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 are **1 person per 4 square metres**.

QR Code Requirements

The electronic record keeping requirements through **Victorian Government QR Code Service** continue to apply for those businesses that are eligible to continue operating. The requirement to make reasonable efforts to ensure people check-in and to prominently display QR Code signage at each entrance remains unchanged.

COVIDSafe Plan

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.

VACC also provides the following advice on frequently asked questions:

Can I stand down employees?

Members who are unable to operate as a result of the lockdown extension, 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.

Workers who suffer a reduction in hours as a result of a lockdown that commenced from 6 August 2021, will be able to access the increased payment amount of **\$750** for individuals that lose **20 hours or more** of work, and **\$450** for individuals that lose between **8 and 20 hours** of work, through the **Australian Government's COVID-19 Disaster Payment scheme**. No liquid asset eligibility test will apply, with applications to be made through [Services Australia](#).

Whilst members can access a **Reduction in Hours** template letter [here](#) and a **Stand Down** template letter [here](#), members considering implementing such arrangements are encouraged to contact our Industrial Relations team on 03 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au for further advice and assistance.

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](#).

What financial support is available to affected businesses?

Members can access further information on current government-funded initiatives [here](#).

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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