

Updated Pandemic Orders give effect to easing of face mask related COVIDSafe Settings

Further to our previous Bulletins, updated Pandemic Orders made by the Minister for Health became operative from **11:59pm 25 February 2022** – with a common expiry date of **11:59pm 12 April 2022**.

For the **automotive industry**, the new [**Pandemic \(Movement and Gathering\) Order 2022 \(No. 4\)**](#) and [**Pandemic \(Workplace\) Order 2022 \(No. 6\)**](#) (Pandemic Orders) confirm that employers must continue to ensure face masks are carried by workers at all times, with **the requirement to wear face masks now limited to workers who are working in an indoor space that is a publicly accessible area of a retail premises or a food and drink premises**, unless an exemption applies. However, it remains **strongly recommended** that face mask continue to be worn in other situations **where physical distancing is not possible**.

Members are reminded that for the purposes of the Pandemic Orders:

- **indoor space** means *an area, room or premises that is or are substantially enclosed by a roof and walls that are permanent structures rising either from floor to ceiling or are at least 2.1 metres high, regardless of whether the roof or walls or any part of them are open or closed*
- **retail premises** means *a premises that is used wholly or predominantly for the sale or hire of goods by retail, or the retail provision of services (e.g. vehicle dealerships, auto parts retailers, car rentals and petrol stations)*

Members are reminded that all other **COVIDSettings remain in effect**, which include employer requirements in relation to COVIDSafe Plans, record-keeping (e.g. vaccination status of specified workers) and applicable signage (**note**: for the automotive industry, signage relating to face masks is no longer required).

Members can access a summary of current [COVID-19 testing, isolation and notification requirement FAQs](#) [here](#).

As previously noted, **Authorised Officers are continuing random audits** on businesses throughout Victoria. Businesses who are unable to demonstrate their compliance (e.g. completed COVIDSafe Plan and/or vaccination status register of relevant employees, including working directors) for inspection on request, face an **on-the-spot fine** of up to **\$10,904** or up to **\$21,809** for serious offences. VACC encourages members to contact the **VACC OHSE Unit on 03 9829 1265** should they require any assistance.

Members should also note that for workers wishing to apply for the \$450 one-off **Victorian Test Isolation Payment**, applications close at 9:00am on 9 March 2022 for eligible workers who have taken a COVID-19 PCR test on or before 1 March 2022. Further information on the application process is available [here](#).

VACC will continue to engage with Victorian Government officials and will keep members advised of developments. In the interim, members seeking further information are encouraged to contact VACC's Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au.

Daniel Hodges
Executive Manager – Workplace Relations
Industrial Relations | OHSE