

Pandemic Orders revoked as Pandemic Declaration ends

Following the Victorian Premier [announcement](#) last week, the current Pandemic Declaration made under section 165AE of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* was not extended. Accordingly, from **11:59pm on Wednesday, 12 October 2022**, the Pandemic Declaration came to an end, together with the Pandemic Orders.

As a result, Victorians are **no longer required to isolate after testing positive for COVID-19** and **close contacts no longer need to continually test negative on RATs**. Although these measures continue to be **“strongly recommended”** by the Victorian Government.

For the automotive industry, this means that the **management of COVID-19 in the workplace is now purely an occupational health and safety issue**. COVID-19 control measures such as the wearing of face masks, working from home and COVID-19 vaccination policies are therefore a matter for an employer to determine, based on the individual risk profile of their workplace, in consultation with affected employees.

VACC recommends that members give particular consideration to the following **practical control measures** for their workplaces:

- **Fitness for work** – consistent with existing personal/carer’s leave arrangements, ensuring that employees who are unwell and symptomatic for COVID-19 do not attend the workplace.
- Optimising **ventilation** in indoor areas
- Ensuring appropriate **physical distancing**
- Increased **cleaning and hygiene** measures in high touch areas
- **Face masks** (particularly indoors and/or when physical distancing is not possible)

Additionally, depending on the risk profile of the workplace, members may also wish to consider the appropriateness of retaining requirements under the now revoked Pandemic Orders in relation to testing, isolation and notification.

In doing so, members should be aware that if an employer decides to direct a full-time or part-time employee to not attend work when they have COVID-19, the employee will be entitled to be paid for the isolation period if they are otherwise ‘fit for work’ (i.e. not symptomatic). However, where an employee is symptomatic, normal personal/carer’s leave arrangements apply – i.e. the employee is entitled to paid sick leave (and unpaid sick leave once the accrued entitlement has been exhausted).

Members should also note that the Victorian Premier’s announcement advised that COVIDSafe Plans remain a requirement, with a continuing need to keep a copy at the workplace. Members should therefore ensure that they update their COVIDSafe Plans to reflect any changes to how they manage the risk of COVID-19 in their workplaces.

Members seeking further advice regarding the implementation of control measures and/or assistance in updating their COVIDSafe Plans are encouraged to contact the **VACC OHSE Unit on 03 9829 1265** should they require any assistance.

Members seeking further advice or assistance are encouraged to contact VACC's Workplace Relations team on 03 9829 1123 or ir@vacc.com.au.

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