

Updated Pandemic Orders Released as Victorian Government announces *Stay Well in Winter Campaign*

Following the extension of the Pandemic Declaration by the Victorian Premier for a further 3 months from 11:59pm 12 July 2022, new **Pandemic Orders** have been issued by the Minister for Health. The new Pandemic Orders became operative from **11:59pm 12 July 2022** – with a common nominal expiry date of **11:59pm 12 October 2022**.

The only substantive change from the previous Pandemic Orders (see previous [Bulletin](#) for details) is that the period when someone is considered a **recently confirmed case** (and therefore exempt from testing and isolation/quarantine requirements) has been reduced from 12 weeks to **4 weeks**. **Positive COVID-19 cases continue to be required to isolate for 7 days** from the day they took their test, but can now leave home for an additional reason – being to provide transport for a household member to obtain essential food.

Changes have also been made under the ***Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (COVID-19 Vaccination Information) Regulations 2022*** (the Regulations) to allow an employer to collect the vaccination information of workers if they choose to have vaccination requirements in place in their workplace. The Regulations will be in effect for 12 months from 12 July 2022. This is suggestive of a broader policy shift away from government mandates, towards recommendations and [education campaigns](#).

For the automotive industry, this means that **COVID-19 control measures will increasingly be left to employers to determine**. Accordingly, decisions regarding face mask wearing, working from home and COVID-19 vaccination policies are a matter for an employer to determine based on the individual risk profile of their workplace, in consultation with affected employees.

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

- Optimising **ventilation** in indoor areas
- **Physical distancing**
- Increased **cleaning and hygiene** measures in high touch areas
- **Face masks** (particularly indoors and/or when physical distancing is not possible)

Members must also ensure that their **COVIDSafe Plans** remain current with a copy held at the premises, and continue to consult with workers on the requirements that apply in the workplace. 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.

Additionally, members should note that the Victorian Government have announced that the [Small Business Ventilation Grant Program](#) will soon be reopened. The Program enables eligible businesses to apply for a \$500 Ventilation Rebate and/or a matched Ventilation Grant of between \$1000 and \$5000 to improve ventilation in areas accessible to customers. Additional guidance provided by the Victorian Government is available [here](#).

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

Members can access the new Pandemic Orders below:

- [Pandemic \(Workplace\) Order 2022 \(No. 10\)](#)
- [Pandemic \(Quarantine Isolation and Testing\) Order 2022 \(No. 10\)](#)
- [Pandemic \(Public Safety\) Order 2022 \(No. 3\)](#)

Members seeking further advice or assistance 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