

Limited Exemption from Close Contact Requirements provided to Specific Workers

Further to recent announcements made by the [Victorian Premier](#) and [National Cabinet](#), the Victorian Chief Health Officer has issued the [Exemption of Specific Workers – Contacts Conditions and Other Directions \(No 1\)](#) (Exemption Directions), commencing at **11:59pm on 18 January 2022** and ending at 11:59pm on 1 March 2022.

Members should note that the Exemption Directions have **very limited relevance** to the automotive industry, extending only to **the maintenance and repair of equipment essential for, and provision of, the following services:**

- **Emergency Services:** the Victoria State Emergency Services; Fire Rescue Victoria, the Country Fire Authority or any other firefighting services; the Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority; aquatic safety services, including lifesaving services and marine search and rescue services; paramedical services; ambulance and paramedics services; air ambulance and medical retrieval services (including Royal Flying Doctor Service); Victoria Police, protective services and police custody services; essential infrastructure and essential services that are required to maintain or protect human health, safety and wellbeing (whether provided by a public or private undertaking), and including maintenance and repair of such infrastructure
- **Transport:** a bus company service; and a public transport service
- **Utility and Urban:** specialist services to support telecommunications as a critical service during the COVID-19 pandemic; services to support the ongoing provision and regulation of electricity, gas, liquid fuels and refinery services, water, sewage and waste and recycling services and their maintenance; domestic and commercial waste and resource recovery services (including collection, treatment and disposal services and transfer stations); the operation of primary clinical waste incinerators by specialised clinical waste workers; telecommunications, broadcasting and internet infrastructure and services sector.

In addition, **the requirement to notify WorkSafe of a COVID-19 diagnosed case having attended the workplace has been removed, effective from 14 January 2022** – following the gazetting of the *Occupational Health and Safety (COVID-19 Incident Notification) Revocation Regulations 2022*.

An updated summary of current [COVID-19 testing, isolation and notification requirements](#) is available [here](#)

Members are also reminded that other **COVIDSettings remain in effect**, with **Authorised Officers** currently conducting **random audits** on businesses throughout Victoria. Businesses who are unable to produce their **completed COVIDSafe Plan** for inspection on request, or are not complying with their COVIDSafe Plan, 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 regarding their COVIDSafe Plan.

VACC will continue to engage with Victorian Government officials over the coming days 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.

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