

Tasmania – Updated Advice for COVID-19 Case Contacts

Members should note that Tasmanian Public Health has recently updated its advice on requirements for close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case, including the details of financial assistance available for Tasmanians who cannot earn an income because they are required to isolate or quarantine.

Who is a close contact?

Tasmanian Public Health defines a close contact as someone who has had prolonged contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case during their infectious period, creating a high risk for transmission.

This can include a person who is:

- a household contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case
- someone who has spent **more than four hours** (the 4 hours can be cumulative and occur during the case's infectious period) with a confirmed case in a house, accommodation or care facility setting
- someone that has spent 4 hours at the same site, workplace or venue as a case during a significant transmission event.

A person will be advised if they are a contact by the case themselves or by a message from Public Health.

What are close contacts required to do?

If a person is considered a close contact, they must quarantine for 7 days and take a rapid antigen test (RAT), even if they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19.

- A RAT should be taken as soon as they are notified as a contact.
- If the result of the RAT is negative, they must continue to quarantine for seven days from date of last exposure to the person who is a confirmed case.
- They should take another RAT on day 6 after your exposure to the case.
- If the result of the either RAT is positive, they need to take a PCR test.
- If the day 6 RAT is negative, they can leave quarantine on day 7
- Contacts should continue to wear a mask at all times for a further 7 days (i.e. days 8 to 14) after they leave quarantine and avoid high-risk settings and vulnerable people.
- If they develop symptoms after leaving quarantine you should isolate and have a RAT.

Note: Close contacts will **not** receive communication from Public Health when it is time to leave quarantine. They may leave quarantine once they have completed the required time in quarantine.

Members seeking further information can contact the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 or access their website [here](#).

What entitlements apply for employees required to isolate or quarantine?

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 self-quarantine as a close contact 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 TACC 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.

What financial assistance is available?

Where an employee required to isolate or quarantine is not entitled to paid leave (including casuals and those that have exhausted their paid personal/carer's leave), they may be eligible for the **Australian Government's \$750 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment and/or the Tasmanian Government's \$250 COVID-19 Test and Isolate Grant**. Employees seeking further information on eligibility requirements can be directed to [Services Australia](#) and the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

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