

COVID-19 DUTIES UNDER WHS LAW

The model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws require you to take care of the health, safety and welfare of your workers, including yourself and other staff, contractors and volunteers, and others (clients, customers, visitors) at your workplace.

This includes:

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is without risk to health and safety
- providing adequate and accessible facilities for the welfare of workers to carry out their work, and
- monitoring the health of workers and the conditions of the workplace for the purpose of preventing illness or injury.

Duty to Workers

You must do what you can to ensure the health and safety of your workers. You must eliminate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 if reasonably practicable. If you are not able to eliminate the risk of exposure to COVID-19, you must minimise that risk, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Protect workers from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by, for example:

- implementing working from home arrangements
- requiring workers to practice physical distancing
- requiring workers to practice good hygiene (e.g., through workplace policies and ensuring access to adequate and well stocked hygiene facilities)
- requiring workers to stay home when sick, and
- cleaning the workplace regularly and thoroughly.



Duty to other people in the workplace

You must ensure the work of your business or undertaking does not put the health and safety of other persons (such as customers, clients and visitors) at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Protect others from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by, for example:

- requiring them to practice physical distancing, including through contactless deliveries and payments requiring them to practice good hygiene, and
- requiring others to stay away from the workplace, unless essential, e.g., such as family, friends and visitors.

Duty to maintain the workplace and facilities

You must maintain your workplace to ensure the work environment does not put workers and others at risk of contracting COVID-19.

Maintain a safe work environment by, for example:

- cleaning the workplace regularly and thoroughly
- restructuring the layout of the workplace to allow for physical distancing, and
- limiting the number of people in the workplace at any given time.

You must also provide adequate facilities in your workplace to protect your workers from contracting COVID-19.

Facilities that are required include:

- washroom facilities including adequate supply of soap, water and paper towel
- hand sanitiser, where it is not possible for workers to wash their hands, and
- staff rooms that are regularly cleaned and allow for physical distancing.

Provide workers with regular breaks to use these facilities, particularly to allow workers to wash their hands.

Duty to provide information, training, instruction and supervision

You must provide your workers with any information or training that is necessary to protect them from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 arising from their work.

Information and training may include:

- providing guidance on how to properly wash hands
- training workers in how to fit and use any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)
- training workers to exercise adequate cleaning practices throughout the day
- providing workers with instructions on how to set up a safe home workplace, and
- providing workers with instructions on staying home from work if sick.

Start Here, Go Anywhere!