

Physical Distancing and Hygiene

Safe work practices to limit exposure to COVID-19 while operating under alert level 3 at work mean first assessing the risks, and then implementing the appropriate controls, so far as is reasonably practicable. All work must be undertaken in such a way as to reduce any possible contact between workers and to promote physical distancing wherever possible.

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing, sometimes known as “social distancing”, is about keeping a safe distance from others. Physical distancing means remaining one metre away from other people. This is important to help protect us from COVID-19, which spreads via droplets from coughing and sneezing. Staying one metre away from others is an effective measure.

General Working Arrangements

- Keep team sizes as small as possible.
- Keep a record of who is in each team every day as you may be required to track back for contact tracing.
- Site teams are encouraged to put forward split/alternating shifts to avoid extensive intermingling to reduce potential of exposure.
- Work site is to be segregated into zones (or by other methods) as much as possible to keep different teams/trades physically separated at all times.
- Where possible, apply a one-way system in high-traffic areas, such as lifts, stairwells and scaffolds.
- Where practical, all office employees supporting a project work remotely.
- When using a vehicle, the [Cleaning Guide](#) must be followed.
- When using a vehicle, limit this to one person per vehicle if possible.

External interfaces

- One member of the crew nominated to receive supplies etc.
- Keep the engagement with the other person as brief as possible.
- Ask for paperwork to be emailed rather than handed over as much as possible:
 - If unavoidable, then either wear gloves when handling the item or wash hands before and after handling said items.

Site Entry

- Limit visitors to site where ever possible.
- Introduce staggered start and finish times where possible to reduce congestion and contact.
- Monitor site access points to enable physical distancing – you may need to change the number of access points, increase to reduce congestion or decrease to enable monitoring.
- Where entry systems that require skin contact e.g. fingerprint scanners are used, the [Cleaning Guide](#) must be followed.
- Require all workers to wash or clean their hands before entering and leaving the site.
- Allow plenty of space (one metre) between people waiting to enter site.
- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas e.g. scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets, desks, particularly during peak flow times.
- Where possible, conduct a remote induction before arrival on site, this can be done via video conferencing or by phone. If an in-person induction is required, reduce the number of people and hold them outdoors wherever possible.

- Delivery drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow it and must wash or clean their hands before unloading goods and materials.
- Any sign in registers should be recorded by one person where possible – do not pass material around the group and minimise contact with any screens.

Site Meetings

- Only absolutely necessary meeting participants should attend.
- Attendees should be one metre apart from each other
- Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation.
- Hold meetings in open areas where possible.
- Meetings are to be held through teleconferencing or videoconferencing where possible.

Avoiding Close Working

- Risk assessments and method statements must be updated to include COVID-19 control measures.
- Plan all work to minimise contact between workers.
- If it is not possible or safe for workers to distance themselves by one metre for a work activity the following steps must be satisfied:
 - Are the works essential and do they need to be carried out now?
 - › If not, the works should not be carried out.
 - › If they do need to be carried out additional control measures must be in place.
 - Additional controls could include:
 - › Wearing disposable overalls.
 - › Wearing of PPE (face masks).
 - › Wearing of powered ventilation.
 - › Short duration works.
 - › Reducing number of operatives.
- Re-usable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use and not shared between workers.
- Single use PPE should be disposed of so that it cannot be reused.
- Stairs should be used in preference to lifts or hoists.
- Where lifts or hoists must be used:
 - Lower their capacity to reduce congestion.
 - Regularly clean touchpoints, doors, buttons etc.
- Increase ventilation in enclosed spaces.

Toilet Facilities

- Physical distancing rules apply to the use of shared facilities, including toilets.
- Wash hands before and after using the facilities.
- Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks, toilet flush and sanitary bins.

- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Eating Arrangements

- If you need to leave site for any reason, follow site entry procedures on return.
- Dedicated eating areas should be identified on site to reduce food waste and contamination.
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area.
- The workforce should be asked to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles from home.
- Workers should sit 2 metres apart from each other whilst eating and avoid all contact.
- Where catering is provided on site, it should provide pre-prepared and wrapped food only.
- Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.
- Shared crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used unless a dishwasher is available to clean them.
- Tables should be cleaned between each use.
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up.
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines.
- Limit access and use of coffee machines and water fountains.
- Consider numbers on site for site facilities as physical distancing may require additional space/facilities.

Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms

- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day.
- Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible.
- Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time to maintain a distance of one metre.
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

General Hygiene

- Each worker must sanitise their hands with hand sanitiser or soap and running water before entry onto site, use warm water if available.
- Set up a specific place near the entry of the site for handwashing and/or sanitising. This could be as simple as on the back of a ute.
- Any personal items brought to site by workers must be segregated (kept separate from other workers items).
- Individual PPE for workers must be kept separate from other workers PPE and cleaned correctly as per the Cleaning Guide.
- All eating and drinking utensils to be cleaned by the user. Have paper towels accessible to dry.

Smoking

- Smokers/vapers must use designated area or do so off-site and butts are to be placed in the designated receptacle. Hands must be washed before and after smoking.
- Stand so that smoke or vapor produced is not going into another person's breathing zone.

Hand Washing

- Provide additional hand washing facilities to the usual welfare facilities on large, spread out sites or significant numbers of personnel on site.
- Ensure soap and fresh water is readily available and kept topped up at all times.
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable.
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels.
- Sites will need extra supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels and these should be securely stored.

Hand washing



Wet your hands under clean running water. Use warm water if available.



Put soap on your hands and wash for 20 seconds. Liquid soap is best.



Rub on both sides of both hands...



and in between fingers and thumbs...



and round and round both hands.



Rinse all the soap off under clean running water. Use warm water if available.



Dry your hands all over for 20 seconds. Using a paper towel is best.

Steps provided by Ministry of Health's guide to hand washing