Coronavirus COVID-19

Key considerations for undertaking a risk assessment – COVID-19

The risks associated with exposure to COVID-19 may not be the same for all businesses and will depend on a range of factors including the industry and nature of your work, your geographic location, business size, workforce demographics and characteristics etc. You must consult with workers and any health and safety representatives when identifying risks and control measures for your workplace.

Key considerations for undertaking a risk assessment

Key considerations include (but are not be limited to) the following:

> What is the latest advice from government and key industry and employee associations on control measures?

> What is the current advice from health authorities about the current situation and case numbers for COVID-19 cases in the local community/region?
  o Information on the latest number and location of COVID-19 cases (including in some cases heat maps) is available from your jurisdictional health authority.

> What are the current legal requirements (e.g. public health orders, health directions) for my area and how do they apply to my business?
  o Get the latest information: jurisdictional health authority.

> Does the nature of the work undertaken by my business increase the risk of my workers being exposed to COVID-19?
  o Does the work require regular and close contact between workers or with members of the community?
  o Can work processes or practices reasonably be modified?
  o Is working from home or modified shift arrangements possible?
  o Am I working in a high-risk environment (e.g. with vulnerable people)?

> Does my workplace have facilities for hand washing and/or hand sanitising?
  o Are these sufficiently stocked and in good working order?

swa.gov.au/coronavirus

safe work australia

> Does my workplace environment/set-up increase the risk of my workers and/or clients being exposed to COVID-19 and can this be changed?

  o What is the size of the workplace?

  o How many workers or others are at the workplace?

  o Is work done inside, outside or in vehicles?

  o Are there restrictive entry/exit points or high touch points, such as doors, lifts etc? If so, what steps have I taken to reduce the risks at these points?

  o Can modifications be made to enable increased physical distancing (also known as social distancing)?

  o When was my workplace emergency plan last reviewed? Have I considered physical distancing considerations if the workplace needed to safely evacuate? (e.g. if there was a fire?)

> Do I have workers that fall within a vulnerable worker category?

  o Vulnerable workers include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions; people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions; people 70 years and older; and people with compromised immune systems.

  o If you have vulnerable workers in your workplace you must undertake a risk assessment including consideration of the characteristics of the worker, the workplace and the work. Seek medical advice as needed and keep information about a worker's medical conditions confidential. See the Vulnerable workers information on our website for further information.

> What are my current cleaning and disinfecting arrangements?

  o Are they consistent with guidance provided by Safe Work Australia?

  o Do I have, or have access to, sufficient and appropriate cleaning supplies, including detergents and disinfectants?

  o Have I identified and cleaned frequently touched surfaces?

  o Do I need to review arrangements (e.g. increase frequency) with contracted cleaner?

> How prepared is my business if there is a case of COVID-19 in the workplace?

  o Do workers understand the need to stay home if they are unwell, even if they think an illness is minor?

  o Have I established and talked to my staff about the processes we will follow if COVID-19 directly affects the workplace (e.g. an infected person has been on site)?

  o Can I get advice from industry and employee associations to stay informed on the risks?

  o Do I have all workers' current contact details and their emergency contacts?

  o Do I have records which will allow me to quickly identify which staff were in close contact with the infected person, e.g. work teams, shift rosters, who is eating in each lunchroom, response to unexpected issues such as plant breakdowns?

- Have I trained workers about COVID-19 including how areas may need to be cleaned and disinfected in the event of any contamination and other risk controls?

- How will I stop individual workers with COVID-19 being stigmatised?

- Are workers fearful of being at work? Have I checked in with them lately?

> Is there an increased risk of violence in my workplace?

- Are customers likely to be stressed or frustrated, e.g. if products are restricted or no longer available?

> What worker communication and support mechanisms are in place?

- Am I regularly checking people are OK?

- Do I have effective communication channels established to keep workers informed and consult them on key issues?

- Do I have an employee assistance program that workers can access or other support services I can refer workers to (e.g. Beyond Blue COVID-19 support)?

- Are there any other supports I can offer?

- Have I considered how I will keep in touch with workers who may be more isolated because of working from home or other physical distancing arrangements?

> Do the changes I plan to make to my business or changes arising from COVID-19 change the risk?

- Do the changes I'm planning for COVID-19 increase risks or introduce new risks I need to control?

- Are there other things changing that might increase risks like upset customers, working from home, increased demands or shortage of safety supplies?

- Do I have processes in place to identify and respond to any other risks that arise once changes are implemented?

> Do I have a plan to review my control measures to ensure they are effective?

swa.gov.au/coronavirus

safe work australia