



# Preparing your business for COVID-19 cases and outbreaks

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From 15 December 2021, Tasmania's response to COVID-19 transitions from zero cases to living in a COVID-19 vaccinated community.

This means that in coming months, you will need to be prepared for a case or outbreak of COVID-19 occurring in your business or organisation, and be ready to act quickly to limit the spread of the virus within your workplace.

This fact sheet outlines what you will be expected to do if a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 (a confirmed case) is linked to your business or organisation, and what you can do to prepare yourself, your staff and your clients / customers.

## What happens when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

Public Health will interview the case and undertake rapid contact tracing to work out who may have been in close contact with the case while they were infectious.

The main purpose of contract tracing is to identify contacts (people who have had contact with the case) and exposure locations, and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

A number of key steps are taken to control a case or outbreak of COVID-19, and include:

- isolating the case (even if they are vaccinated) and organising appropriate, safe medical care
- identifying and quarantining close contacts of the case – the quarantine time will depend on whether the contact is vaccinated, whether personal protective equipment (PPE) was used, and how long the contact was exposed to the case

- communicating early with the business or setting where the case may have visited
- continuing widespread testing within the community to identify further cases
- encouraging Public Health social measures such as social distancing, hand hygiene, mask wearing, optimising ventilation and staying at home when unwell.

**IMPORTANT: if a case is identified as having spent time at your business while they were infectious, you will be notified by Public Health.**

## What to do if there is a case or an outbreak in your workplace or business

If Public Health notifies you that you have a confirmed COVID-19 case linked to your workplace, they will work with you to identify what you need to do to protect other people and continue your normal activities within your business as soon and as safely as possible.

The initial steps Public Health may ask you to take are to:

1. **Review and activate your COVID-19 Safety Plan.**
2. **Instruct people in your setting to wear face masks.**
3. **Support Public Health contact tracing** by collecting and providing any additional staffing and visitor information that has not been collected via the Check in TAS app. This may include staffing rosters, manual check in/visitor log sheets or spreadsheets.
4. **Advise any contacts you may identify to quarantine at home** and follow the instructions on the [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au) website. Public Health will provide additional instructions in the following days.
5. **Liase with Public Health to coordinate appropriate communications** about the case or outbreak to other people who are associated with your workplace.

6. **Organise cleaning and disinfection** of frequently touched areas, as outlined in your COVID-19 Safety Plan.
7. **Advise staff, visitors, contractors and customers** of the situation (in consultation with Public Health).
8. **Continue to encourage COVID-safe behaviours** including physical distancing, hand hygiene, advising staff and visitors to stay at home if unwell, and covering coughs and sneezes.

**IMPORTANT:** depending on the circumstances, if the confirmed case is an employee, you may also be required by law to notify WorkSafe Tasmania of the case.

## What you can do to prepare for a case or outbreak in your workplace

Being prepared for cases or an outbreak of COVID-19 in your workplace will help you to respond well and quickly, and minimise disruption to normal services and activities.

The actions your business/organisation will take if there is a case linked to your premises should be outlined in your COVID-19 Safety Plan (under the section *Responding to an incident of COVID-19 in the workplace*).

Preparedness activities for your business or organisation may include:

- updating your WorkSafe COVID-19 Safety Plan to align with the information provided in this information sheet
- encouraging all staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19
- ensuring that your workplace has an adequate supply of facemasks available for staff if required
- encouraging all staff and visitors to use the Check in TAS app, and making sure that you have manual check in/visitor logs available
- maintaining adequate cleaning supplies
- optimising ventilation in your workplace
- identifying the person who will lead your response and be the main contact person for Public Health
- planning how you will communicate about a case or outbreak associated with your workplace
- considering how you will safely continue business during the response, suspend activities if necessary and resume activities after the response

- having a plan for staff to work from home (if possible/appropriate) and how this will be enacted
- reviewing existing screening processes (if appropriate).

## Keep informed

Advice about COVID-19 is updated frequently as the situation evolves in Tasmania.

For the latest information, visit:

- Tasmanian Government coronavirus website: [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au)
- Tasmanian Public Health Hotline: **1800 671 738**
- Australian Government Department of Health: [health.gov.au](https://health.gov.au)