

Permission to attend work as a close contact for workers in high-risk settings or facilities



Factsheet | Version 1.4 | 9 May 2022

Workplaces, identified as high risk settings and/or facilities are able to register for essential staff to be have permission to attend work as a close contact.

An exemption process is in place to enable workplaces, identified as high risk, to register for essential staff who are close contacts to enter facilities and provide services if they are identified as a critical worker.

Eligible high-risk facilities

Identified sectors which may apply for this exemption for workers include:

- Support and special school staff;
- Residential disability facilities;
- Aged care services;
- Hospitals;
- Essential service workers at prisons, detention centres or correctional facilities.

Information for workplaces

Before registering an eligible workplace must:

- Conduct a risk assessment and seek alternative solutions for staff shortages such as short-term recruitment or staggered shifts for other workers.
- Know the minimum number of staff required to provide services and be able to justify that the close contact returning to work is necessary. There must be no other reasonable alternative available.
- Implement transmission risk mitigations such as all staff wearing surgical masks, using physical distancing and the close contact taking solo breaks.
- Consult with affected co-workers on the steps being taken for the close contacts return to the workplace.

- Establish a review process to ensure that once the critical worker shortage has passed the close contact will return to completing their close contact period.
- ensure that the close contact meets the requirements to register for permission to attend work as a close contact.

Standards for the close contact workers

A close contact will only be permitted to attend work as a close contact if they work in one of the identified settings, and:

- They do not have COVID-19 (if the close contact tests positive at any time, the permission to attend work is immediately revoked and that person must comply with requirements for confirmed cases, including isolation).
- They are fully vaccinated (with a TGA approved vaccine).
- They are tested for COVID-19 (via rapid antigen test) and receive a negative test result every day before they come into the workplace.
- They do not have symptoms of COVID-19 (cold or flu symptoms) at any time when they are at work or before arriving at work - if so, the worker must isolate immediately and seek a test.
- Their presence in the workplace is critical to the ongoing operations of the workplace/business and they cannot perform the role remotely.
- They are supportive of returning to work during their close contact period and have agreed to the conditions of being permitted to attend work as a close contact.

Workplaces / employers - how to register

To be granted permission to attend work as a close contact the employer must:

- Register the worker's attendance at the workplace through a Tasmanian Government registration portal before the staff member arrives at work - coronavirus.tas.gov.au/criticalworkers;
- Confirm, each day that the worker intends to come to the workplace, that the worker has returned a negative COVID-19 test before they arrive at the workplace; and
- Continuously review COVID-19 safe practices and risk assessments to manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Daily requirements for the close contact workers

Close contact workers must meet the following conditions each day they attend work:

- Wear a surgical mask continuously when outside home, including outdoors and at the workplace.
- Meet daily testing requirements with a negative result before arriving at the workplace.
- Not attend work if symptomatic. If symptoms develop at work, leave immediately and have a COVID-19 test. Symptomatic workers will no longer be exempt from attending high-risk settings and are still considered close contacts.
- Comply with any additional conditions as provided to the worker, based on the sector they work in.

Once these requirements are met, the worker may return to the workplace.

The permission to attend work as a close contact applies for a maximum of 7 days, which is the close contact duration. If a worker is to become a close contact again, the business must begin a new registration.

How can I stay informed?

It's important to stay informed as the situation changes.

For the latest information visit:

coronavirus.tas.gov.au/criticalworkers

Business Tasmania can be contacted on **1800 440 026** or email ask@business.tas.gov.au for questions.