

## Transitioning back to usual workplaces

### How do I meet my WHS duties as workers transition back to the workplace?

- Check any relevant advice from your state or territory and make sure workers are permitted to return to the usual workplace.
- Conduct a risk assessment to assess the risks resulting from any changes to work practices, procedures or the work environment, in consultation with workers and any elected Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs).
- Implement control measures to eliminate, or if not reasonably practicable, manage identified risks, taking into account:
  - › the latest health and Commonwealth, state and territory government advice
  - › any local restrictions (e.g. where there has been an identified localised outbreak)
  - › your operational environment (e.g. the size and layout of your premises and the work being carried out by workers)
  - › personal circumstances of your workers (e.g. whether they have been classified as a [vulnerable worker](#), have caring responsibilities for a [vulnerable person](#) or there is a vulnerable person in the household)
  - › new risks that arise from any resulting changes to work practices, procedures or the work environment.
- Initiate consultation with your workers and HSRs on changes to the work environment in accordance with agreed policies and procedures, and encourage workers to raise any WHS concerns with their representatives or direct manager.
- Communicate with workers and HSRs about any WHS policies you've put in place or updated (e.g. incident reporting processes) and any changes to emergency plans.
- Review and, if necessary, update your emergency plan, in consultation with workers and HSRs. Discussion may include how you will manage and respond to a potential further outbreak of COVID-19.
- Make contact with your building owner and any businesses that share your premises ahead of workers returning to discuss return to work plans and coordinate risk management (e.g. for lift usage and shared break areas).
- Review control measures periodically (e.g. as the environment changes and new information on risks becomes available), in consultation with workers and HSRs.
- Instruct workers to tell you if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 or have been tested for COVID-19.
- Direct workers to stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and recommend they get tested. Suggest calling the National Coronavirus Help Line (1800 020 080) if they require further advice.
- Inform workers about their workplace entitlements if they have COVID-19 symptoms or they are required to self-quarantine (for example, access to paid leave).

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- Review [workplace checklists](#) and re-design the workplace environment, procedures and practices to ensure physical distancing, cleaning and hygiene. Provide workers with cleaning, disinfectant and hygiene products, as well as PPE where appropriate, along with the proper training and instruction in the use of any products and PPE provided.
- Consider arrangements for deliveries, contractors and visitors attending the workplace (e.g. organising contactless deliveries and limiting non-essential visitors).
- Appoint a contact person in your business that workers can talk to about any concerns.

## How can I support my workers who are concerned about transitioning back to the usual workplace?

- Eliminate or minimise physical risks and check controls measures don't introduce additional safety risks (see our [workplace checklists](#)).
- Talk to your workers about any agreed measures you have put in place to minimise risks.
- Respond appropriately to signs a worker may be concerned or anxious about returning to the usual workplace (e.g. it is important to intervene early and provide early access to assistance).
- Set realistic and clear expectations, workloads, roles and tasks and monitor work levels. Consult with workers and HSRs on any changes.
- Offer your workers flexibility where possible (e.g. to start work at a slightly earlier or later time to avoid peak times for public transport).
- Maintain regular communication with your workers and encourage workers to stay in contact with each other. Implement systems of work to enable this, where relevant.
- Stay informed with information from official sources and share relevant information with your workers and HSRs as it becomes available.
- Inform workers about their workplace entitlements if they have COVID-19 symptoms or are required to self-quarantine (e.g. access to paid leave).
- Provide workers with a central place to find workplace information and a point of contact to discuss their concerns (e.g. HSRs).
- Provide information about mental health and other support services available to your workers (e.g. employee assistance programs, employee organisations or the [Australian Government HeadtoHealth website](#)).