Employers' Quick Guide to Coronavirus in the Workplace*

Is the worker at risk of having Coronavirus?

For example:
- Has the worker been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19? For "close contact" - See Link.
- Is the worker reporting or displaying flu symptoms? Flu symptoms - see Link.
- Has the worker been in close contact with someone who as returned from overseas who is displaying flu symptoms?

Yes ⬇

Is the worker returning to work from overseas/ cruise ship?

Yes ⬇

- Direct worker not to attend work and to work from home if possible – worker must self-isolate for 14 days.
- After 14 days, conduct WHS risk assessment and consider directing worker to obtain medical information via the steps below.
- Apply appropriate leave / work from home arrangements pending return to work (see below).

Direct worker not to attend work

- Employers have a duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the workplace is without risk to workers' health and safety.
- Consider directing worker to obtain and provide medical information, including via telemedicine (to reduce the strain on the health system).
- Consider directing any worker who has been in close contact with the worker to follow these same steps.

Assess Risk ⬇

Assess risk & consider medical information

- Consider medical and other relevant information on a case-by-case basis. The medical information may include whether:
  - the worker shows any evidence of viral infection
  - self-isolation is recommended
  - the worker meets the criteria for a COVID-19 test
- Conduct WHS risk assessment re whether worker (or workers who have been in close contact) are fit to return to work without risk to themselves or others.

If fit to return ➡

- Seek advice if uncertain whether employee can return.
- Record WHS risk assessment.

Alternative arrangements / Stand down

- Consider agreeing to leave in advance/ double leave at half pay and carefully document any agreement.
- Seek legal advice prior to standing employees down without pay.

No ⬆

While worker is off work ⬇

- Is the worker **fit** to work from home – based on risk assessment?
- Can the worker **practically** work from home?

No ➡

Does the employee have accrued personal leave?

No ➡

Does the employee have annual leave / Long service leave (LSL)

Yes ⬇

Yes ⬇

Yes ⬇

Work from home

- Direct worker to work from home until fit to return to work, based on medical information and WHS assessment.

Take personal leave

- Direct the employee to take personal leave until fit to return to work, based on medical information and WHS assessment.

Offer annual leave / LSL

- Offer employee annual leave until employee is fit to return to work, based on medical information and WHS assessment.
- Offer LSL if the entitlement has crystallised.

* Updated 23 March 2020. The impact of COVID-19 is rapidly developing, which may require a different response. Action must be in accordance with your employment contracts and any applicable Enterprise Agreement or Modern Award. Seek updated advice before putting a plan into action. This guide is intended to provide commentary and general information only.

QUICK TIPS

- **Clear communication**.
  - Avoid heavy-handedness, but be firm in taking steps to manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace and the steps outlined in the flowchart.
  - Don't rely on self-reporting. Direct workers to inform you of matters that may put them in the "at risk" category.
  - Identify the process you will follow if a worker is at risk of having COVID-19.
  - Identify the leave (for employees) or working from home arrangements (for all workers) that will be used if a worker is at risk or confirmed to have COVID-19.

- **Know when to seek advice**. For example:
  - if you are unsure whether it is safe for a worker to be in the workplace;
  - if you are unsure whether the medical information the employee has provided is sufficient;
  - if you are unsure whether you can direct a worker to provide further medical information;
  - prior to directing employees to take unpaid leave; or
  - prior to standing down employees without pay.

- **Implement WHS controls**
  - Implement common-sense WHS controls for managing the risk of COVID-19. The WHO Guide "Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19" is a useful, practical guide to managing the risk of spreading the virus in your workplace.
  - Take the steps suggested in the flowchart in respect of workers at risk of having COVID-19 or who have returned from overseas or a cruise ship. If a worker has a confirmed case of COVID-19, treat other workers who have been in close contact as workers at risk.