

Preparing a COVID safe plan

Last reviewed: 6 August 2020

This document has been developed by Optometry Australia to support optometrists and optometry practices during Victoria's Stage 4 lockdown. It builds on the minimum requirements of a [Victorian workplace COVID Safe Plan](#), providing a template COVID safe plan for completion and routine review by all practices in Greater Melbourne.

Once finalised, your COVID safe plan must be accessible for all practice staff and may be requested by DHHS representatives during spot checks or in the case of a positive diagnosis linked to your practice.

In addition to your COVID safe plan, all Victorian workplaces are required to establish and maintain a register of every person who attends the workplace for a period of more than 15 minutes. This includes all workers (including sub-contractors) and any customers, clients or visitors permitted in the workplace (including workplace inspectors). If an employee or visitor tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), a current and accurate workplace attendance register will allow the employer to immediately identify anyone who has been in close contact with that person within the prior 48 hours. A [template](#) for the attendance register is available.

Optometry Australia recommends that optometrists and optometry practices:

1. Understand your responsibilities

- Information on public health directions applying to both employees and employers is available at: <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/creating-a-covid-safe-workplace>.

You can also refer to the following guidance:

- Optometry Australia: [Infection control factsheet](#)
- Optometry Australia: [Advice on cleaning requirements](#)
- DHHS: [Preventing infection in the workplace](#)
- DHHS: [Preparing for a case of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in your workplace](#)
- DHHS: [Planning and responding to cases of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- DHHS: [Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce COVID-19 transmission](#)
- Worksafe: [Managing COVID-19 risks – face coverings in workplaces](#)
- WorkSafe: [Other relevant industry specific guidance](#)
- Business Victoria: [Attendance record template](#)

2. Prepare your plan

Refer to the template provided below. Your COVID Safe Plan must set out, at a minimum:

- The process you have in place to keep records of all staff or patients who attend the practice
- Your actions to mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 in your practice
- The level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce
- How you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your practice/workforce

3. Keep your plan up to date and ready

Your COVID Safe Plan must be reviewed and updated routinely, and when restrictions or public health advice changes. Optometry Australia recommends that during the Stage 4 lockdown in Victoria, your COVID safe plan should be reviewed fortnightly.

Organisations with multiple premises must complete a COVID Safe Plan for each location.

You do not have to lodge your COVID Safe Plan with the Victorian Government.

However, you may be required to provide the COVID safe plan to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or Worksafe upon request or in the event of a confirmed positive case at your workplace. There will be random business spot checks for COVID Safe Plans.

4. Share your plan

Your workforce needs to be familiar with this plan. Where possible it is recommended that you discuss the plan with all practice staff before you finalise it.

Once you have completed the plan, share it with your team and make sure it is readily accessible at all times.

Need more information?

If you require further COVID-19 clarification or advice, please don't hesitate to contact the Optometry Australia Optometry Advisor Helpdesk on 03 9668 8500 or at national@optometry.org.au.

Optometry Australia COVID safe plan template

This COVID safe plan has been completed by (name): _____

For the (optometry practice): _____

On the (date): _____

Scheduled for review on (date): _____

| Requirements | Actions to consider | Agreed practice actions |
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| Ensuring wellness of patients and staff | | |
| Identify and implement protocols and procedures, enabling the practice to identify patients who pose a risk of COVID-19 transmission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact patients by phone prior to physical practice attendance to determine level of COVID-19 transmission risk • Consider implementing temperature checks for all people entering the practice • To support the development of actions in this area, we recommend practices Optometry Australia's advice around triaging urgent and critical care and providing telehealth and teleoptometry services | |
| Provide staff with information and training on COVID-19, including when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Optometry Australia's infection control guidelines and advice • Review Optometry Australia's advice regarding facemasks and PPE • Review Australian Government Department of Health's environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols for health and residential care facilities | |
| Make staff aware of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self-isolate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Optometry Australia's Staffing, HR and financial support webpage | |
| Display conditions of entry for any patients (website, social media, entry points). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note Optometry Australia's practice posters and social media tiles | |

| Requirements | Actions to consider | Agreed practice actions |
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| Hygiene, cleaning and infection control | | |
| <p>Provide and promote hand sanitiser stations for use on entering practice and during consultations.</p> <p>Ensure adequate supplies of hand soap and paper towels are available for staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Location of hand sanitiser stations throughout the practice</i> • <i>Ensuring rubbish bins are available to dispose of paper towels</i> • <i>Ensuring adequate supplies of soap and sanitiser</i> • <i>Ensuring staff have information on how to wash and sanitise their hands correctly</i> | |
| <p>Where possible: enhance airflow by opening doors/windows and adjusting air conditioning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Making sure that windows and air conditioning are set for optimum air flow at the start of each workday or shift</i> | |
| <p>Ensure all staff wear appropriate face covering and/or required PPE.</p> <p>Ensure availability of adequate face masks and PPE available for patients and staff in case required.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identifying and ensuring availability of face coverings and PPE required for the workplace and describe when and how they need to be worn</i> • <i>Monitoring use of face coverings in all staff and patients, unless a lawful exception applies</i> • <i>Review Optometry Australia's advice regarding facemasks and PPE</i> | |
| <p>Provide training to staff on the correct use and disposal of face coverings and PPE, and on good hygiene practices and slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Educating staff on hand and cough hygiene, including how to wash and sanitise their hands correctly</i> • <i>Reinforcing the importance of not attending work if unwell</i> • <i>Ensuring staff have access to appropriate information on the use of face coverings and PPE</i> • <i>Review Optometry Australia's advice regarding facemasks and PPE</i> | |
| <p>Replace high-touch communal items with alternatives.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Swapping shared coffee and condiments for single serve sachets</i> • <i>Installing no touch amenities such as contactless taps, rubbish bins and soap dispensers</i> • <i>Avoid sharing of equipment such as phones, desks, headsets, offices, tools or other equipment</i> • <i>Provide staff with their own personal equipment, labelled with their name</i> | |

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| <p>Increase environmental cleaning (including between patients), ensure high touch surfaces are cleaned and disinfected regularly (at least twice daily).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify high touch surfaces (lift buttons, door and cupboard handles, kitchen counters, touch screens, shared work equipment)</i> • <i>Provide staff with information about workplace cleaning schedule and how to use cleaning products</i> • Note: <i>according to WorkSafe, shared staff spaces such a kitchenettes and bathrooms must be cleaned at regular intervals</i> • <i>Review Australian Government Department of Health's environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols for health and residential care facilities</i> • <i>Review Optometry Australia's advice regarding Cleaning requirements</i> • <i>Review Optometry Australia's advice regarding COVID-19 infection control, as it pertains to disinfection of optometry equipment used in testing</i> | |
| <p>Ensure adequate supplies of cleaning products, including detergent and disinfectant.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify which products are required for thorough cleaning</i> • <i>Monitor supplies of cleaning products and regularly restock</i> | |
| <p>Ensure that waste is categorized and disposed of correctly.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure sharps container for foreign body removal needles</i> • <i>Ensure there are lids on bins where possible</i> • <i>Ensure any disposable items are disposed of correctly after use</i> | |

| Requirements | Actions to consider | Agreed practice actions |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| Physical distancing and limiting workplace attendance | | |
| Ensure that all staff that can work from home, do work from home. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the roles that can be adapted to be performed from home</i> • <i>Adapt working arrangements to enable working from home</i> • Note: <i>Current guidelines require that employers must not require employees to work onsite if their work can be performed from home.</i> | |
| Establish a system to screen staff and visitors before accessing the workplace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consider implementing temperature checking.</i> • <i>Asking workers to complete a health questionnaire before starting their shift</i> • Note: <i>Current guidelines require that employers must not require employees to work when unwell. Employees must not attend their workplace if they are being tested for coronavirus and must notify employers if they are a positive case. Employees who test positive must not work.</i> | |
| Establish a system that ensures staff are not working across multiple practices. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicate the requirement for employees not to work across multiple practices</i> • <i>Adjust rosters and developing procedures to ensure employees do not work across multiple practices</i> • <i>Develop a form for employees to declare that they have not worked across multiple practices</i> • Note: <i>Current guidelines require that employers must ensure staff are not working across multiple practice settings. Employees must declare if they are working across multiple practices.</i> | |

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| <p>Configure all communal practice spaces so that there is no more than one person per four square meters of enclosed workspace, and all individuals are spaced at least 1.5m apart.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider installing screens or barriers as required • Rearrange, remove or cordon off furniture or stagger seating in common areas to ensure physical distancing • Consider implementing a density quotient or cap in each area (i.e. one person per 4sqm) and put up signage or posters to reflect the new limit • Note Optometry Australia's practice posters and social media tiles | |
| <p>Use floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides in communal areas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas that require floor marking | |
| <p>Minimise the build-up of patients waiting to enter and exit the workplace.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate different doors for entry and exit if possible. • Use an entry and exit system to the site that is as contactless as possible and quick to enter and exit • Use floor markings to provide minimum physical distancing guides at entrances and exits • Stagger appointment times to limit the number of patients on-site at any given time | |
| <p>Provide training to staff on physical distancing expectations while working and socialising (e.g. during lunchbreaks).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and educate staff on strategies and work practice changes to maintain physical distancing • Reinforce messaging to staff that physical distancing needs to be maintained during work and during social interactions | |
| <p>Review delivery protocols to limit contact between delivery drivers and staff.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish contactless delivery or invoicing. • Display signage for delivery drivers. • Identify designated drop off areas. | |
| <p>Review and update work rosters and timetables where possible to ensure temporal as well as physical distancing.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagger start and finish times, shifts and break times, to reduce usage of common areas at the same time • Encourage staff to minimise time on breaks in shared facilities with others. • Consider cohorting of staff (during shift work). Ensure there is no contamination (mixing) of staff across different shifts | |

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| <p>Where relevant, ensure clear and visible signage in areas that are open to the general public that specifies maximum occupancy of that space, as determined by the <u>'four square metre' rule</u>.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Outlining the maximum occupancy of areas that are open to the general public, and information about signage</i> • <i>Note Optometry Australia's practice posters and social media tiles</i> | |
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| Requirements | Actions to consider | Agreed practice actions |
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| Record keeping | | |
| <p>Establish a process to record the attendance of staff, patients, workplace inspectors, and delivery drivers to assist in identifying close contacts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide information on protocols for collecting and storing information for all people who enter the practice, including staff, patients, carers workplace inspectors, and delivery drivers. Where possible, consider implementing a contactless system</i> • <i>Review processes to maintain up-to-date contact details for all staff.</i> • Note: <i>Workplaces are required to establish and maintain a register of attendance for all staff, locums, subcontractors, patients, carers and any other visitors (including workplace inspectors) to the worksite, who are present for 15 minutes or longer. Records are only to be used for tracing COVID-19 infections, and must be stored confidentially and securely.</i> | |
| <p>Provide guidance to staff on the effective use of the workplace OHS reporting system (where available).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Educating staff on how to meet OHS requirements, including recording information about any incidents</i> | |

| Requirements | Actions to consider | Agreed practice actions |
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| Preparing your response to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case | | |
| Prepare or update your business continuity plan to consider the impacts of an outbreak and potential closure of the workplace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the roles and responsibilities of employer and employees.</i> • <i>Prepare for absenteeism of staff members required to quarantine or isolate</i> • <i>Describe key dependencies (e.g. third-party providers)</i> • <i>Describe how you will continue to deliver essential services</i> • <i>Describe your plans to communicate with staff, patients, suppliers, stakeholders in the event of a positive case</i> • <i>Establish processes for managing perishable stock</i> | |
| Prepare to assist DHHS with contact tracing and providing staff and visitor records to support contact tracing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish a process and ensure readiness to provide records to DHHS and contact relevant staff members, including rosters and employee details</i> • <i>Outline key responsibilities and process for engaging with DHHS and undertaking employer-led contact tracing</i> • Note: <i>The practice owner/manager is required to prepare records from the period of 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms in the suspected case that include all rosters and employee details, along with customers, clients, visitors and workplace inspectors. This will assist in contact tracing should be employee test positive.</i> | |
| Prepare to undertake cleaning and disinfection at your business premises. Assess whether the workplace or part of the workplace must be closed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implement a process for the cleaning and disinfection of workspaces and high touch surfaces, including use of service providers</i> • <i>Establish a process for determining whether closure or part closure of the business and/or implementation of other control measures are required to manage risk</i> • Note: <i>Where a case is confirmed to have been in the workplace, cleaning must be undertaken in accordance with DHHS guidance.</i> | |

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| | <p><i>Employers must undertake a risk assessment to determine whether the worksite (or part of the worksite) should be closed. Where a suspected case is present at the workplace in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms or while symptomatic, employers must take all practicable steps to manage the risks posed by the suspected case, including cleaning the affected employee's workspace, areas where they attended and high-touch surfaces.</i></p> | |
| <p>Prepare for how you will manage a suspected or confirmed case in an employee during work hours.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify an appropriate area to isolate staff members</i> • <i>Communicate with the employee about the requirement to self-isolate and be tested</i> • <i>Describing arrangements to isolate and transfer an unwell staff member from the premises to go home or get tested</i> • <i>Outlining responsibility and process for entering details into relevant OHS system</i> • Note: <i>An employee suspected to have COVID-19 is to be supported to travel home immediately OR to isolate at work if unable to travel home immediately. If isolating at work, the employee must wear a mask and be physically distancing from all other staff persons. An employer must request that an employee undergo a COVID-19 test and self-isolate.</i> | |
| <p>Prepare to notify workforce and site visitors of a confirmed or suspected case.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regularly update and manage a list with the contact details and date of attendance of visitors to the workplace, including staff and patients</i> • <i>Establish an effective way of quickly communicating with visitors to a workplace where there is or has been a suspected or confirmed case</i> • Note: <i>For a confirmed case, employers must inform staff, customers, clients, visitors and workplace inspectors who are close contacts and direct them to stay in self-isolation. For a suspected case, employers must inform all staff at the workplace to be vigilant about the onset of COVID-19 symptoms, and to self-isolate at symptom onset and be tested as soon as reasonably practicable.</i> | |

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| <p>Prepare to immediately notify WorkSafe Victoria on 13 23 60 if you have a confirmed COVID-19 case at your workplace.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish a process and responsibility for notifying WorkSafe</i> • Note: <i>Employers must immediately notify WorkSafe of a confirmed case: Immediately calling the mandatory incident notification hotline, and providing formal written notification within 48 hours.</i> | |
| <p>Confirm that your workplace can safely reopen and workers can return to work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish a process for confirming that a workplace is safe to reopen, in line with advice from DHHS</i> • <i>Establish a process for confirming a worker (with a suspected or confirmed case) does not have COVID-19 before returning to physical practice</i> • <i>Establish a process for notifying DHHS and Worksafe that the site is reopening</i> • Note: <i>Employers may reopen the worksite once they have assessed that all required measures within the directions have been completed (unless in a high-risk workplace setting). DHHS and WorkSafe must be notified that the workplace is reopening.</i> | |