

Our reference: CFCFOI2020-001

via email:

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) REQUEST

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (the act), received by the Cultural Facilities Corporation (CFC) on 1 September 2020.

Specifically, you are seeking a copy of the Canberra Theatre Centre's COVIDSafe plan.

Authority

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer under section 18 of the Act to deal with access applications made under part 5 of the Act.

Timeframes

In accordance with section 40 of the Act, CFC is required to provide a decision on your access application by 29 September 2020.

Decision on access

I am providing you with the Canberra Theatre Centre – COVIDSafe Operations (plan) Version 1.5 (updated 28 August).

I have decided to grant full access to this document. The document released to you is provided as Attachment A to this letter.

Additional Charges

Pursuant to *Freedom of information (Fees) Determination 2017 (No 2)* processing charges are not applicable for this request because the total number of pages to be released to you is below the charging threshold of 50 pages.

On-line publishing – Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the Act, CFC maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. Details regarding your application, decision notes, and information released to you must be recorded in the disclosure log and be made publicly available between three and ten working days after the decision on access has been given to you. Please be aware that while an application for personal information will not be included in the published information, all other information will be included in the disclosure log and published on <http://www.culturalfacilities.act.gov.au/>.

Ombudsman Review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from my deemed decision, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at :

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
Canberra ACT 2601
Via email: actfoi@ombudsman.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) Review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at :

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Level 4, 1 Moore Street
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone : (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Should you have any queries in relation to your request please contact me by telephone on (02) 6205 2195 or email ian.tidy@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Ian Tidy
Chief Finance Officer
Cultural Facilities Corporation
28 September 2020

Attachment A

Canberra Theatre Centre – COVIDSafe Operations



OFFICIAL

Canberra Theatre Centre - COVIDSafe Operations

Version 1.5

Original document creation: June 2020

Current version updated: 28th August

At The Canberra Theatre Centre, the health and safety of staff and public attending our venue is the number one priority. The Canberra Theatre Centre is closely monitoring the evolving coronavirus situation to ensure we operate in line with government guidelines and the National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles.

The following are the individual Department Plans for COVID operations currently in place for August 2020

- Administration
- Technical
- Box office
- Front of House

These plans will be continually reviewed and updated as we progress through the easing of COVID restrictions.

Maximum Occupancy signage for venue, rooms and offices are displayed throughout the building

OFFICIAL

Canberra Theatre Centre Administration Covid -19

Operational Procedure

Staff:

Following the general Covid-19 separation guidelines of 4 sqm per person and 1.5m separation:

- Workspaces in the administration area may be occupied concurrently, particularly noting that the layout means that persons occupying the desks are facing away from each other as well as achieving the 1.5m separation.
- The round tables in the centre of the Education and Marketing work areas may be used for a maximum of three persons, evenly spaced.
- The Board Room may be used for a maximum of five persons, ensuring 1.5m separation between seats on each side of the table, and not facing anyone directly across the table.
- The lounge seats in the reception area may be used by a maximum of two persons – one on the couch and one on one of the two armchairs only.
- All single occupant offices can accommodate one to two persons – one at the desk, and one in a visitor's chair opposite providing both do not lean forward at the same time.
- Only one person is permitted in the administration lift at any one time.
- Only one person is permitted in the kitchen at any one time. Care should be taken not to crowd the corridor outside. Put used crockery, cutlery etc straight in the dishwasher yourself after use. Do not handle anyone else's dirty items.
- Before emptying the dishwasher, hands should be sanitised.
- Only two persons in the photocopy / file room at a time.
- Incidental proximity, e.g. passing in the corridor, walking past desks, is acceptable. Make every effort not to touch each other, or cough or breathe in the direction of another person. Note that there is insufficient separation to lean on a low partition and talk to occupants of a desk (e.g. Education, Venue Ops, Marketing, PA to the Director).
- If visiting anyone in an office that leads to a corridor, you must not linger and obstruct the path of others.
- In the toilets, use of both cubicles (female) or cubicle and urinal (male) concurrently is acceptable due to the high partitions. However, only one person at a time should occupy the open area at the hand basin. Care should be taken not to brush past another in the doorway, and not to crowd the corridor outside.
- Minimise sharing of equipment (e.g. phones - including mobiles – computer keyboards, car keys etc). If any equipment needs to be shared, sanitise before and after each use.
- Sanitising Spray and/or wipes will be provided throughout the office area, and in the car.

- When using the company car, you must sanitize all touch points (steering wheel, door handle, etc) after use.
- And remember the general recommendation – if you don't feel well, stay away.

The Canberra Theatre Centre Technical Department

Covid-19 Operational Procedure

Technical Staff:

- Working in small groups
 - When safe and practical to do so, staff are rostered to work individually, in pairs or small groups
 - Rostered pairs or teams will be continually rostered together for contact tracing
- If feeling unwell
 - Contact department supervisor and work group immediately. Do not come into work.
 - Seek medical testing as soon as possible
 - Do not return to work without medical clearance in writing
 - In a confirmed Covid-19 infection scenario, the staff member is required to list staff they have been in contact with and all movements around the venue
- Hygiene standards
 - Use sanitizer stations at every opportunity
 - Cough into your elbow
 - Sneeze with a tissue. Dispose of tissues directly into a bin
 - Try not to touch your face, eyes, mouth
 - Use PPE masks and gloves when practical
- Distancing and contact
 - Face to face conversations for no longer than 15mins
 - Minimum distance of 1.5mtr with all close contact
 - No longer than 2 hours in a small room or confined space with another person
 - Any space must be limited to 1 person per 4 square meters
- Daily cleaning
 - Technical staff clean and wipe down surfaces with disinfectant and disposable cloths every morning
 - All door handles
 - Bathroom and kitchen taps
 - Common surface areas

Production operations:

Hirers/Clients/Touring:

Local back of house staff and production crew social distancing must be maintained wherever possible.

All productions/events are required to present a Risk and/or Covid-19 management plan for prior approval.

Visiting production crew and performers are presumed to have an agreed arrangement working closely together.

- **Back of House Venue Capacity**
 - Capacity limits in all Back of Houses areas are calculated to the 1 person per 4m² rule, inclusive of;
 - Dressing rooms
 - Production rooms
 - Wardrobe
 - Greenroom
 - Total capacity for visiting cast and crew in The Canberra Theatre is 62 pax
 - Total capacity for visiting cast and crew in the Playhouse is 44 pax
 - These calculations do not include;
 - Toilets
 - Corridors
 - The stages
 - Basements
 - Floor plans for each venue outlining capacity for each room will be made available to productions in advance
- **Pre-production**
 - In-house pre-rigs are encouraged to set up as much as possible before production arrival
 - Where possible equipment, scenery or gear to be delivered in advance to enable install and set up prior to bump-in
- **Bump In**
 - If no touring loaders available, third party crew hire used to unload trucks
 - If large numbers of crew are required for bump in, stagger department shifts for alternate stage time where possible
 - Always keep local and touring crew as separated as possible
 - Crew work alone or in pairs where possible
 - To minimize crew numbers sharing the stage, considerations to add an extra time for bump in/tech
 - Set construction, focus, plot, sound checks, and all touring communication be run over radios and comms
- **Tech/Rehearsal**
 - Limit crew to essential only during tech/rehearsals
 - No contact with performers. Any interaction with performers should only be by touring crew
 - Local Wardrobe staff cannot be used as dressers. Maintenance only

- Show
 - Local and touring crew must have separate entry and common areas
 - All touring production must enter and exit via stage door for tracking
 - Local crew to avoid dressing rooms/green rooms
 - Ops positions should limit to one operator per desk
 - Sound hold to be kept at maximum to allow distancing between operators and desks
 - No audience interaction or access to stage
 - All audio mics, headsets, comms and radio kits have a cleaning regime before and after use
 - Radio kits are to be fitted by performer or touring production crew
- Post show
 - Radio comms, production desks, radios, audio and lighting desks, follow spots and stage manager desks are to be cleaned with disinfectant post show

The Canberra Theatre Centre Box Office

Operational Procedure under Covid-19 restrictions

Staff:

- **Ensure you arrive well in advance of your rostered time**
 - Ensure your uniform is clean and presentable for every shift.
 - Upon arrival at the Box Office, please wash your hands prior to starting your shift or using any equipment.
 - Clock in for your shift using your own device (mobile phone) instead of the shared tablet.
 - Reduce hot desking where possible, use your assigned workstation.
Use alcohol swabs to clean the telephone, headset and computer prior to use.
 - Do not use the centre workstation on the front counter
 - Check hand sanitizer stations in the foyer are fully stocked and operational before opening entry doors.

During your shift:

- **Keep the Box Office clean and sanitized at all times**
 - Only serve customers from the stations set up behind sneeze guards.
 - No more than 2 people serving customers at the front counter at any time.
 - Do not keep pens and Eftpos machines on the front counter, provide them on an as necessary basis.
 - Encourage the use of etickets where possible to minimise contact and handling at all points of the event.
 - Ask for card payment if possible. If cash or cheque must be used, please wash your hands after handling.
 - Be conscious of serving the patrons quickly and efficiently so the time spent at the counter is kept to the minimum required.
 - Sneeze guards, benches, front counter, Eftpos machines, shared pens, workstations and door handles must be cleaned at regular intervals using disinfectant.
 - Ensure sanitization stations are always fully stocked and operational.
 - Wash your hands and use sanitizer on regular basis.
 - No more than 2 people in the lunchroom space at any time. Always clean and sanitize all surfaces in the lunchroom after use.

At the end of your shift:

- Clock out of your shift using your own device (mobile phone) instead of the shared tablet.
- Double check sanitization stations are stocked and prepared for the next shift.
- Take your uniform home with you to be cleaned and prepared for the next shift.
- Ensure tissues and masks are disposed of safely.
- Leave a note for your supervisor to advise if supplies are running low on sanitizer, tissues, masks or cleaning equipment.

Patrons/Public:

Front Counter – CTC Foyer

- A permanent separation between patrons and box office counter staff is in place with the addition of Perspex sneeze guards at each of the ticketing terminals across the front counter.
- In order to socially distance between staff, a maximum of 2 counter staff will operate at any given time. Staff will not use terminal 2 to ensure they are 1.5m from the team member at any time.
- Floor decals will be installed on the floor adjacent to the counter to indicate to patrons where they should queue safely.
- Wherever possible, the use of electronic tickets will be encouraged to eliminate possible contact with the patron at the time of purchase or on event day upon presentation of ticket to usher staff.
- Cash and cheques will no longer be accepted, and contactless payments will be encouraged.
- POS terminals will be assigned for use by one staff member per shift and thoroughly cleaned and sanitized between shifts.
- Pens and Eftpos machines will not be stored on the front counter and will only be provided as required. Sneeze guards, benches, front counter, Eftpos machines, shared pens, workstations and door handles will be cleaned at regular intervals using disinfectant.
- Where Box Office ticketing operations are conducted away from the Front Desk, appropriate safety measures will be in place to create separation between patrons and staff, either using sneeze guards or tables.

Call Centre – Box Office

- Upon arrival at the Box Office, staff will be asked to wash their hands prior to starting a shift or using any equipment.
- Staff will be required to clock into their shift using their own device (mobile phone) instead of the shared tablet. Hot desking will be limited, and staff will use their assigned workstations. Where a workstation needs to be shared, alcohol disinfectant swabs will be used to clean equipment between shifts.
- No more than 2 people will be allowed in the lunchroom space at any time and the space will be cleaned and sanitized after use.

Patron Contact Tracing

- In order to effectively trace all patrons and visitors entering the venue, Canberra Theatre Centre will apply a new step in the online purchase path which will allow the names and contact details for every attendee in the booking to be recorded.
- If a customer purchases a ticket through the Call Centre, details for all attendees will be recorded at the time of booking.
- Where a ticket was purchased prior to the COVID-19 pandemic where less patron details were required, a reminder email will be sent to the purchaser prompting them to log into their Canberra Ticketing account to provide the details.
- This new patron contact tracing service provided by QPAC complies with all venue and Territory privacy laws relating to the collection and storage of data.
- For events in the Link Bar patrons will enter CTC through Link Foyer South, here they will be greeted and will have their bookings confirmed by a member of staff, they will then be directed to record their name

and contact details before receiving a wrist band which will be used to gain access to the venue and come in and out as required.

Warnings and Advice to Patrons

With new safety measures in place to protect staff and patrons against COVID-19, The Centre's terms and conditions of sale and entry have been reviewed and updated to include information and warnings about the spread of COVID-19

- Warnings for additional entry terms including check-in and screening will be displayed prominently on the website at the time of purchase, included in the electronic confirmation of purchase and verbally explained for any purchases made at the front counter.
- Prior to the day of performance, ticket purchasers will be sent an email and/or SMS reminding them of the new entry requirements and providing instructions on how to check-in upon arrival, if necessary, depending on the event.
- Patrons will be advised not to attend the theatre if they are feeling unwell or are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. With advanced notice and where possible, Box Office staff will provide an exchange or refund in accordance with Live Performance Australia's Ticketing Code of Practice.
- Customised warnings regarding the spread of COVID-19 can be added at the discretion of the venue and promoter

Ticket Sales and Venue Capacity

Ticket sales and capacity for each of the venue will be determined by the relevant restrictions in place at the time of the performance. Seating maps will be dynamic to allow for any changes in restrictions.

- All performances will require a pre-purchased ticket where the purchaser has recorded their contact details for tracing purposes.
- Seats will be sold using the "Checkerboard" method, leaving at least 3 seats in between patrons or groups in order to comply with social distancing measure. social distancing.

The Canberra Theatre Centre Front of House

Covid-19 Operational Procedure

Staff:

Rostering

- FOH has been rostering staff to work in small groups. 4 to 5 groups spread throughout the week (no weekends), for day and evening shifts.

Physical distance from contractors, tech team and cast where applicable

- Currently, with construction work inside CTC, FOH staff duties have been specifically designed to limit or/and avoid physical contact with each other.

Strict guidelines on staff briefing by Duty Manager at commencement of shift with a standard briefing procedure as below:

- Enquiring if staff are well/unwell. If unwell, staff are reminded to go home immediately
- If a Covid-19 test should be conducted, a written clearance must be supplied by Staff in order to be rostered again

Hygiene standards

- Wash hands before starting work and at every opportunity during the shift
- Cough into your elbow
- Sneeze with a tissue. Dispose of tissues directly into a bin
- Try not to touch your face, eyes, mouth

Physical distancing

- Reminding staff to keep a minimum distance of 1mtr with all close contact
- Avoid small room or confined space with another person for longer than 2 hours

Mental well being

Enquire about staff mental wellbeing at every shift

- Contact tracing of Staff are rostered using an online system, where names and contact details are on file and traceable.
- In a confirmed case scenario, contacting all team members will be an efficient task

Patrons/Public:

Entry/Exit

Separate Entry/ Exit at main entrances into venue

- A separate entry and exit area will be provided at both entrances of the CTC. Entry and exit will be clearly marked with signage and separated by bollards.

Requirement of entry:

- Contact details for contact tracing will be required at the door if not already obtained via ticket purchase.

Sanitizing Stations

- Free standing sanitizing stations with touch free sanitizer will be provided at all points of entry, exit and other essential areas. All areas will be well-marked with signage.

Auditorium Entrance Queues

- In order to maintain physical distancing, clear lines and markers will be drawn or decal stuck on the floor to indicate safe distance. Bollards will be placed to direct traffic and assist in containing a smooth flow of crowd.

Signage

Various signage in accordance with and as recommended by ACT Health to be placed in clear vision to patrons.

Information on signage at main entrances will include:

- *Stay 1.5m apart*
- *Sanitize your Hands*
- *Inform the staff if you are unwell*

Capacity

Signage indicating capacity in various areas including toilets will be displayed.

Signs will be placed at all main entrances into the theatre, entrances into the auditoriums and other targeted traffic areas.

Foyers

Link Bar– Link Bar Live Band Events

- Tables and chairs arranged 1.5m apart.
- Patrons will be seated at allocated tables.
- Patrons advised to return to their seat before consuming any purchases from the bar and remain at their allocated table throughout the evening.
- Patrons advised to remain in their seats, at their tables and are encouraged not mingle with another group.
- Staff will manage physical distancing and ensure patrons keep a 1.5m apart.
- CTC will provide touch free bins throughout the venue.
- CTC will provide accessible hand sanitizing stations.

- CTC will provide masks and gloves as an option to patrons.
- Staff will wipe down 'high touch areas' such as cocktail tables, coffee tables, bar countertop and door handle before and after.

Link Bar– Canberra Theatre and Playhouse events

- Link foyer sofas will be removed and replaced with chairs arranged 1.5m apart.
- Patrons will be allowed to purchase drinks at the bar to be consumed inside the venue, once seated.

Foyer announcement

Announcements by Duty Managers to remind patrons of restrictions.

The content of these announcements will include:

- *CTC is a Covid Safe responsible venue and we ask that you please always maintain physical distancing and practise good hand hygiene.*

Bar

- Patron distancing will be preserved by opening limited operating point of sale (POS) stations and providing floor marking (decals) for appropriate queuing distances.
- CTC will offer contactless pay-and-go payment method only.
- POS terminals will be assigned to one staff only.
- Terminals will be sanitized between each user and before and after each shift.
- Workers who handle money may wear gloves or sanitize hands between customers.
- Sneeze Guards will be provided at each POS machine at Link Bar, South Bar and Cloaks.
- Provide staff and patrons with optional face masks and gloves.

Cloaking

- CTC FOH will not be cloaking items during this period.
- If a patron should attend the venue with a large bag that cannot be taken into the venue due to WH & S reasons, staff will wear gloves to handle the bag.

Seat Drops & Programs

- CTC FOH will not be seat dropping any flyers or programs during this period.

Cleaning & Sanitising

Cleaning and disinfecting common contact surfaces will help to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). General cleaning and sanitisation will be carried out by staff during a show. Deep cleaning will be done by professional cleaners each morning (refer to CTC Chief Operating Officer for our FOH Cleaning contractor requirements and detailed CTC cleaning procedures during COVID).

- All 'high-touch areas' of the venue where there is regular human contact with surfaces will be cleaned and sanitised by staff preshow, pre interval, post interval and after each public event / performance.
- Every professional, deep clean carried out by cleaners, will be documented utilising a venue Cleaning Check List. The check list will itemise all venue areas and its key surfaces for quick reference and cross-checking.
- The Check List will include a clear identification of both Cleaning and Disinfecting techniques and products to be used.
- Staff have been trained on how to dispose of cleaning products including PPE and other items safely after use.
- All metal and wooden seats, tabletops, and benches will be cleaned before and after each performance.
- Arms of chairs that are hard wooden surfaces and 'high-touch areas' will be cleaned and sanitised more frequently before and after each performance. Fabric will be wiped down with damp cloth at the end of the night and sprayed with a sanitiser.
- Booster seat covers have been washed and will be washed continuously following the next children's show.
- Staff have been trained in cleaning process and steps to ensure the cleanliness and sanitization of the venue.

Managing Restricted Capacity Inside Auditoriums

- Auditorium doors will be open at least 30 minutes prior to the performance to enable load in of patrons within the controlled allocated seating environment.
- In order to maintain physical distancing, clear lines and markers (decals) will be placed on the floor to indicate safe distance. Bollards will be placed to direct traffic and assist in containing crowd where needed.
- Free standing sanitizing stations with touch free sanitizer will be provided at all points of entry, exit and other essential areas. All areas will be well-marked with signage.
- If a patron needs to exit the auditorium during a performance for any reason, they can move past other patrons seated in their aisle as long as there is no sustained contact. The same applies to re-entering.
- Patrons will be encouraged to adhere to the physical distancing rules.
- Patrons will be reminded by staff to remain seated in their allocated seats at all times.
- At the conclusion of a performance, patrons will be encouraged to leave immediately via the closest exit doors with ushers reminding them about the physical distancing rule. Mingling will not be encouraged.

Pre-Show

Mask distribution by FOH concierge at front and rear entrance doors. Entrance into Link Bar, Link South and auditorium foyers restricted to specific numbers determined by CTC in accordance with government regulations.

Interval - During relevant shows

- Patrons choosing to leave the auditorium will need to observe the '*closest to exit leaves first*' protocol to avoid aisle congestion.
- Patrons use of restrooms and foyer bars will be managed by ushers. Limiting the number of patrons entering restrooms and managing physical distancing in the queues.

Post-Show

Patrons to be informed prior to the commencement of the performance that post-show exit will be managed in an orderly manner.

- Patrons in disability access seating and their companions may be requested to leave first.
- FOH staff to manage numbers and queuing for restrooms post show.
- Patrons to be directed to the nearest exit unless requiring restrooms.

Merchandise

If the production wishes to offer Merchandise post-show the following will apply:

- Merchandise sellers/company must provide the CTC FOH Manager with their COVID Safe Plan.
- Merchandise sellers must ensure that physical distancing is always adhered to. Queues to be managed according to current government regulations with clear signage visible to patrons.
- Merchandise cannot be handled by patrons in any way prior to purchase.
- Contactless payment only.
- No returns or exchanges would be allowed and all sales to be final.
- Merchandise sellers must be located where they do not block safe distancing for other patrons in the foyer areas looking to exit or use amenities.
- An invoice for sales commission will be sent to the company where payment can be made via bank transfer.

Food & Beverage

Any third-party contractors, such as external caterers, must provide the CTC FOH Manager with a COVID Safe Plan which is compliant with the relevant industry body code of practice. They must be provided with and acknowledge receipt of the venue's own COVID Safe plan and provide written acceptance of the health and safety measures in place on site.

Link Bar

- Sneeze guards positioned in front of the point of sale units.
- Floor markers (decals) to indicate physical distancing.
- Staff have been trained and provided with appropriate PPE and reminded to keep high standards of personal hygiene at all times.
- Any pre-ordered interval drinks in glassware to be covered with disposable tops for pick up (where relevant).
- Bar transactions will be contactless pay-and-go only.

Lifts

- Priority should be given to patrons with accessibility requirements and other patrons requiring assistance.
- Clear signage on lift capacity.
- Venue will instruct only patrons with mobility or other needs should use lifts.
- All control panels / buttons will be cleaned and sanitised regularly.

Toilets/ Restrooms

- Signage on capacity of restroom amenity according to current physical distancing requirements.
- In addition to signage, during high demand times – pre-show, interval, post-show – CTC will need to actively monitor and control occupancy with front of house staff.
- Provide signage, floor decals and bollards to indicate distancing requirements in the foyers where queuing takes place to enter amenities.

Disability Access

CTC will continue to provide full accessibility for all patrons including those with disabilities. This includes:

- wayfinding and accessing new entries, egress points and emergency exits;
- communicating new programs and procedures;

- food and beverage access;
- sitting in different parts of the theatre, sometimes with companions;
- sightlines, captioning, Auslan interpretation, audio-description;
- access to backstage as artists and workers with disabilities.

Procedure Accessibility

All communications must take into account accessibility, ensuring CTC message is able to be understood by everyone in our diverse community. This will include:

- Hearing Impaired.
- Sight Impaired.

Emergency Evacuation.

The need for physical distancing creates significant challenges when planning to evacuate a crowd during an emergency. External emergency evacuation assembly points will need to be able to accommodate the patrons / performers while maintaining distancing between unrelated groups.

NB: The goal of maintaining distancing between people becomes a secondary consideration if there is a clear and imminent danger requiring an emergency evacuation. Emergency exit plans should reflect that moving patrons away from the most urgent hazard is the priority.

Patron Compliance

- It is the responsibility of the individual patron to ensure they observe physical distancing protocols as directed by the Australian, State and Territory Governments. Individuals are liable for fines if they do not comply with restrictions placed by the appropriate Chief Health Officer.
- CTC should have the right to refuse entry or ask a patron to leave if they are not complying with the published terms and conditions of venue entry including safety regulations. *Venue terms and conditions with specific COVID related terms can be found on the CTC website.*

GUIDANCE FOR POTENTIAL, SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

(UPDATED AS AT 3 August 2020)

The purpose of this document is to describe the immediate actions that a workplace needs to reduce the risk of exposure to, or transmission of, the virus in the event that a worker in the workplace develops COVID-19 symptoms, is diagnosed with COVID-19, or are directed to quarantine.

This guidance needs to be considered in conjunction with directorate COVID safe plans and workplace risk assessments.

The situation in the ACT

The expanded testing criteria outlined by ACT Health means that the majority of people now being tested for COVID-19 have a low probability of returning a positive test result. This is because people with relevant symptoms but no epidemiological risk factors (such as close contact with a known case or travel to a COVID-19 hotspot) are being routinely tested.

Workplaces must ensure that work areas are cleaned daily and reinforce the requirement for workers to clean their personal work areas regularly.

Case definitions

Confirmed case: According to the national COVID-19 guideline, a confirmed case of COVID-19 is person who tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) on a specific validated test.

Suspect case: According to the national COVID-19 guideline, a suspect case of COVID-19 is someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 (such as fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of smell or loss of taste) and at least one epidemiological risk factor for COVID-19 exposure (including recent overseas or interstate travel, close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case, or work in a healthcare setting with direct patient contact).

Potential case: For the purposes of this document, a "potential COVID-19 case" is defined as someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 (such as fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of smell or loss of taste) but no epidemiological risk factors for COVID-19 exposure (see above).

Person in quarantine: A person in quarantine is someone who has potentially been exposed to COVID-19 and is required to stay isolated at home for 14 days to see if they develop symptoms. Quarantine in the ACT is mandatory for people who have recently returned from overseas, recently been to an interstate hot spot, or had close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

COVID-19 in the workplace

If a worker is unwell or has symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. dry cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste), they must not attend the workplace. Workers must notify their manager *immediately*.

Regardless of the circumstances, workers who are being tested for COVID-19 due to having relevant symptoms must stay at home until their symptoms resolve and follow the advice given to them by ACT Health.

The ACT Public Service needs to be ready to respond to the following scenarios:

- A worker develops COVID-19 symptoms but has no known risk factors for COVID-19 exposure (i.e. the worker is a **potential case**);
- A worker develops COVID-19 symptoms and has a risk factor for COVID-19 exposure (i.e. the worker is a **suspect case**);
- A worker is directed to quarantine; or
- A worker is diagnosed with COVID-19 (i.e. the worker is a **confirmed case**).

Risk assessments

To reduce the risk of exposure to, or transmission of, the virus at work, when a workplace is notified of any of the above scenarios, they must consider the risk to the workplace and other workers through a risk assessment, and take reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risk.

Managers need to consider where the worker is currently working, whether they have been in contact with others at work, and the individual circumstances of the situation.

For further advice or if a workplace is unsure of the level of risk or the type of case that has been reported by a worker, the workplace should consult with the ACT COVID-19 helpline (8am-8pm) on 02 6207 7244. Where ACT Health provides advice to a workplace, this advice must be documented in the workplace risk assessment and followed.

Where a worker is diagnosed with COVID-19

Where a worker advises that they are a **confirmed case of COVID-19**, managers must speak with the worker and with ACT Health using the COVID-19 helpline, to understand the level of risk to others in the workplace, and the response required by the workplace. If the individual attended work while they were infectious, ACT Health will liaise directly with the workplace to identify details for contact tracing and to advise on any follow-up required such as cleaning or the management of close contacts.

Any advice received from ACT Health or Worksafe ACT must be included within the assessment and followed in the workplace.

The worker must follow the advice of, and cooperate with, ACT Health. This includes instructions to self-isolate and to not attend their workplace or any other public locations. The worker must keep the manager regularly updated on the advice given to them to reduce the exposure to or transmission of the virus to others at work. If a worker is working onsite at an ACTPS premise at the time of being informed of their diagnosis, or worked at an ACTPS premise in the 72 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, the manager should:

- Isolate the worker from others and arrange for the worker to immediately leave the workplace safely, preferably using a personal mode of transport. If the employee is reluctant to leave the

workplace, they can be directed to do so (authority provided under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and section 9(1)(c) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*).

- quarantine any areas used by the worker until advice is received from ACT Health on cleaning requirements
- ask the worker to seek advice from ACT Health or their medical practitioner, to follow this advice, and to regularly keep in touch with their manager.

Once the worker has safely left the workplace, the manager must contact relevant directorate/agency Human Resources (HR)/Corporate areas to notify them of the confirmed case, consider the risks, and arrange appropriate actions based on the level of risk, such as recording close contacts, quarantining areas of the workplace and arranging cleaning. The actions required to reduce the risk will be dependent on the advice received by ACT Health, the workplace risk assessment and the circumstances of the case (e.g. size of potential contamination, contact with others). The workplace must follow any instructions given to them by ACT Health.

Cleaning must be conducted in accordance with the SafeWork Australia COVID-19 cleaning guidelines and with any advice provided by ACT Health. The manager or worker must complete and submit an online work incident report if the worker has been working in a location out of their home during their infectious period (defined as while they were experiencing symptoms, or in the 48 hours prior to developing symptoms).

HR/Corporate must consider whether a notification to WorkSafe ACT is required. If the incident is notifiable, a notification must be made immediately after the workplace becomes aware of the incident by submitting the online incident notification template and identifying the incident as a 'notifiable incident' or by calling the ACT Government call centre on 13 22 81. During COVID-19, incidents are notifiable if:

- it is suspected that a person may have contracted COVID-19 and requires treatment in hospital; or
- meets the prescribed serious illness from within the workplace.

HR/Corporate should also consider what other actions required, such as the need to notify building management and co-tenants of a confirmed case of COVID-19 when located in a shared building.

The worker must not return to work at an ACTPS premise without advice from ACT Health that they can be safely released from isolation. ACT Health will provide all confirmed cases with a clearance letter stating that they have recovered from COVID-19 and have been released from isolation. The worker must speak with their manager prior to returning to work at an ACTPS premise.

Where a worker advises that they have symptoms of COVID-19

Where a worker advises that they have developed symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19, the workplace should assess whether they have any epidemiological risk factors for COVID-19 (making them a **suspect case**) or not (making them a **potential case**).

If a worker is a suspect case

Where a worker advises of circumstances that indicate they are a **suspect case of COVID-19**, they must get tested for COVID-19 and isolate at home until they receive their test result. Their manager should speak with the worker to understand the level of risk and the response required by the workplace.

Any advice received from ACT Health or WorkSafe ACT included within the assessment and followed. The ACT COVID-19 Helpline (8am-8pm) on 02 6207 7244 should be contacted where further advice is required to manage the risk.

Where a worker is working onsite at an ACTPS premise, the manager must:

- isolate the worker from others and ask them to immediately leave the workplace safely, preferably using a personal mode of transport. If the worker is reluctant to leave the workplace, they can be directed to do so (authority provided under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and section 9(1)(c) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994).
- consider whether the area used by the worker needs to be quarantined until the daily workplace clean, an immediate routine clean should take place, or further cleaning should be requested
- ask the worker to seek advice from ACT Health or their medical practitioner, to follow this advice, and to stay in touch with their manager about the advice regarding staying at home or returning to the workplace.

Once the worker has safely left the workplace, the manager must contact relevant HR/Corporate areas to notify them of the suspected case, consider the risks, and arrange appropriate actions to reduce the risks based on the documented risk assessment.

HR/Corporate must consider whether a notification to WorkSafe ACT is required. If the incident is notifiable, a notification must be made immediately after the workplace becomes aware of the incident by submitting the online Incident notification template and identifying the incident as a 'notifiable incident' or by calling the ACT Government call centre on 13 22 81. During COVID-19, incidents are notifiable if:

- it is suspected that a person may have contracted COVID-19 and requires treatment in hospital; or
- where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 that is reliably attributable to a worker carrying out work that involves of providing care or treatment to a person; or contact with human blood or bodily substances.

Whether cleaning or other actions are required will be dependent on the advice provided by ACT Health, WorkSafe ACT, the workplace risk assessment and the circumstances of the case (e.g. size of potential contamination, contact with others). Cleaning must be conducted in accordance with the SafeWork Australia COVID-19 cleaning guidelines and with any advice provided by ACT Health.

If a worker is a potential case

Where a worker advises of circumstances that indicate they are a **potential case of COVID-19**, they must seek testing for COVID-19 and ensure that they follow any advice from the testing centre or their general practitioner.

Workers who are awaiting test results must stay at home until their symptoms have resolved and they receive a negative test result.

Workers must keep their manager regularly updated and follow any instructions in relation to work arrangements. Where a worker has recovered from their symptoms *and* received a negative test result, they must speak to their manager before attending the workplace so the manager can assess the risk for the workplace and other workers.

Managers should speak with the worker to understand the level of risk and the response required by the workplace including:

- whether the work area used by the worker needs to be quarantined until the next daily clean or whether an immediate routine clean should be conducted to reduce the risk
- any other factors that may change the risk, such as the presence of vulnerable workers in the workplace.

Where a worker is directed to quarantine

Where a worker advises that they have been directed to quarantine by ACT Health or another authority (e.g. NSW Health), but are asymptomatic, they must follow all advice provided by the health authority. Workers must keep their manager regularly updated about the advice given to them about their quarantine period.

Where a worker is working onsite at an ACTPS premise, the manager must:

- isolate the worker from others and ask them to immediately leave the workplace safely, preferably using a personal mode of transport. If the worker is reluctant to leave the workplace, they can be directed to do so (authority provided under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and section 9(1)(c) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*).

If the worker subsequently develops symptoms, they must get tested for COVID-19. If they attended the workplace within 72 hours prior to developing symptoms, they should notify their workplace and the workplace should follow the advice detailed above under "Where a worker is a suspect case".

If the worker is then diagnosed with COVID-19, they must notify their workplace, who must follow the advice detailed above under "Where a worker is diagnosed with COVID-19".

Working from home arrangements

Where a worker is already working from home and develops symptoms, gets directed to quarantine, or is diagnosed with COVID-19, the manager must speak with the worker to understand the level of risk and the response required by the workplace. Managers must also consider other risks such as the safety of the home environment for work and supporting the mental health of the worker.

The manager should consider whether establishing a working from home arrangement is reasonably practicable if the worker is feeling well during a period of being directed by ACT Health to quarantine or isolate at home. Where it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to be provided with a working from home arrangement, the manager and the worker should discuss appropriate leave arrangements. Where a manager is unsure what leave is appropriate, they should liaise with their relevant HR/Corporate area for further advice.

Where the situation is unclear

For situations where the actions required to reduce the risk are not clear, workplaces must:

- conduct and document a risk assessment, including other factors that impact on the level of risk;

- seek advice from ACT Health by calling the ACT COVID-19 Helpline (8am-8pm) on 02 6207 7244 if they are unsure how to manage the risk;
- document and follow any advice from ACT Health on managing the case;
- regularly review their risk assessment and amend controls as required.

Leave arrangements

Workplaces should review the COVID leave arrangements to determine what type of leave should be accessed by workers in those scenarios listed above.

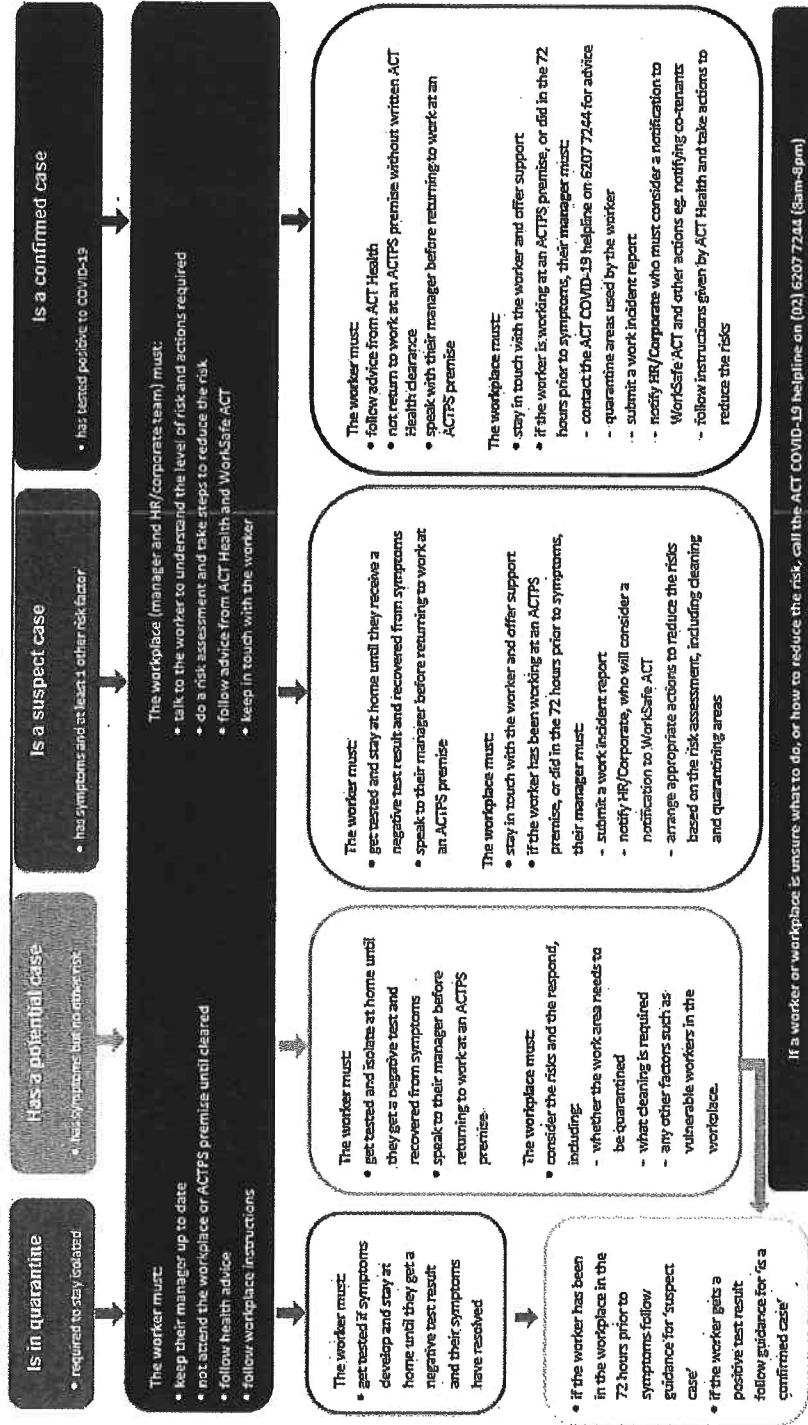
Further resources and information:

- ACT COVID-19 helpline (8am-8pm) on 02 6207 7244
- ACT Health COVID-19 website
- Chief Health Officer alerts page
- WorkSafe ACT
- WorkSafe ACT Workplace Cleaning checklist
- Safe Work Australia – Risk Assessments
- Safe Work Australia – Cleaning
- Safe Work Australia
- Department of Health
- ACTPS working from home checklist
- ACTPS leave entitlements during COVID-19
- CDNA National Guidelines

GUIDANCE FOR POTENTIAL, SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE



If the worker:



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