

POLICY REGISTER

COVID – 19 POLICY

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

| Issue | Prepared/Revised By and Date | Action/Amendment Description | Approved By and Date |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| 1.0 | Sarah Godwin – WHS/RISK OFFICER | First Edition | Council Minute No. 202.9.20 (24th September 2020) |
| 2.0 | Darren Arthur - DIVISIONAL MANAGER FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION | Second Edition | Council Minute No. 236.10.21 (28th October 2021) |

I PURPOSE

Warren Shire Council takes the welfare and wellbeing of our workers and the community seriously. This policy outlines Councils COVID-19 response procedures for workers who remain in the workplace, or who are required to return to the workplace due to operational requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

II GOVERNMENT DIRECTIVES AND THE LAW

This policy represents Councils approach to ensuring the safety of workers and stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this policy is in all respects subject to any overriding Government directive or law. For example, if the Government mandates that you must remain at home, or that our workplace, or portions of our workplace, must close, then such directive overrides this policy. Council refers you to the various Government websites (both Federal and State) which contain up-to-the-minute information on Government policy on COVID-19 (see clause XXVIII References).

III COUNCILS OBJECTIVE

To promote the health and safety of those staff who are required to attend the workplace, Council will:

- Endeavour to provide and maintain a safe working environment for all stakeholders;
- Provide information, instruction and supervision to you so far as we can to promote your health and safety;
- Provide adequate facilities for you to practice good hygiene. This includes hand sanitiser, soap, disinfectant spray, tissues, and where relevant, face masks and disposable gloves;
- Consult with you about work health and safety issues relevant to this outbreak;
- Integrate work health and safety issues into all of our decision making;
- Put in place mechanisms for monitoring work health and safety issues; and
- Take any health concerns raised by you seriously.

IV WORKER RESPONSIBILITY

While performing your duties at our workplace, and travelling to and from work, workers must:

- Follow all aspects of this policy;
- Take reasonable care to ensure your own health and safety, and that of your colleagues and our customers;
- Not place others at risk or jeopardise the safety of our work environment by any act or omission. For example, coming to work while unwell;
- Follow any safe work procedures or protocols that we implement from time to time;
- Cooperate with us to meet our statutory work health and safety obligations;
- Adhere to social distancing at all times;
- Avoid unnecessary time in public places;
- Not attend work if you feel unwell or if you believe you may have come into contact with someone who is unwell;
- Regularly take steps to clean up or wipe down any surfaces that you have used;
- Practice cough etiquette (keep away from other people, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing); and
- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.

V REQUIREMENT TO ATTEND WORK

Council is actively reviewing and taking steps to ensure that our workplace remains safe and COVID-19 free. Taking into consideration the operational requirements of Council, and the nature of your role, and individual worker circumstances, we may form the view that you are either:

- Required to attend the workplace to be able to fulfil your duties and to meet the requirements of our business; or
- You must work remotely.

At times, Council may require a combination of both workplace and remote work to be undertaken. Council may, due to COVID-19, direct an employee to carry out suitable alternative duties, provided that such a direction shall not be unreasonable having regard to the employee's personal circumstances including any family and carer responsibilities.

VI HOW TO TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK

If you are required to attend the workplace, we urge you to travel to and from the workplace by means of private transport to limit the potential of contracting COVID-19. If you are unable to travel to and from the workplace by means of private transport, please always use appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices.

VII PRACTICING 'SOCIAL DISTANCING' AT WORK

Whilst at work, all workers are required to follow social distancing rules. Such steps include:

- Distancing yourself from other employees who may be required to attend the workplace;
- If you are working near other employees, ensuring that you are at least 1.5 metres away (preferably at opposite ends of the workplace or in different rooms);
- Not shaking hands to greet others;
- Cancelling non-essential meetings. If needed, holding meetings via video conferencing or phone call;
- Putting off large meetings to a later date;
- Holding any essential meetings outside in the open air;
- Promoting good hand, sneeze and cough hygiene;
- Using hand sanitiser frequently;
- Eating lunch at your desk or outside rather than in the lunch room;
- Regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that many people touch;
- Opening windows and avoiding the use of air conditioning;
- Limiting food handling and sharing of food in the workplace; and
- Avoiding non-essential travel.

Hand sanitiser, hand-washing liquid and face masks are readily available for your use throughout our workplace.

VIII HAND WASHING AND HYGIENE

When must you wash your hands while at work?

We urge you to wash your hands as frequently as possible. Some key times to wash your hands throughout the day at the workplace include:

- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, and monitors;
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, because that is how the germs enter our bodies;
- Before, during, and after preparing food;
- Before eating food;
- Before and after treating a cut or wound;
- After using the toilet;
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; and
- After touching garbage.

How should you wash your hands while at work?

Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs spreading from one person to another. You must ensure that you wash your hands properly. This can be done by following the following protocol:

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap;
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails;
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice;
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water; and
- Dry your hands using a clean paper towel or air dry them.

IX WORKERS TO BE TESTED FOR COVID-19

If an employee is required by a Public Health Order to isolate, get tested and/or stay at home and Council cannot provide them with alternative duties (“useful work”) to work from home; in these circumstances if the employee is actually sick (proof required) then they are entitled to use their accrued sick leave entitlements. If such employees are not sick, they must apply for other forms of paid leave eg. Annual or Long Service Leave or choose Leave Without Pay.

If an employee is instructed by Warren Shire Council to get tested for COVID-19 and stay home until a negative test is received, the employee can access Special Paid Leave.

X WORKERS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you must

- Immediately inform us via email or a telephone call;
- **NOT ATTEND THE WORKPLACE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES;** and
- Follow the advice of your medical practitioner.

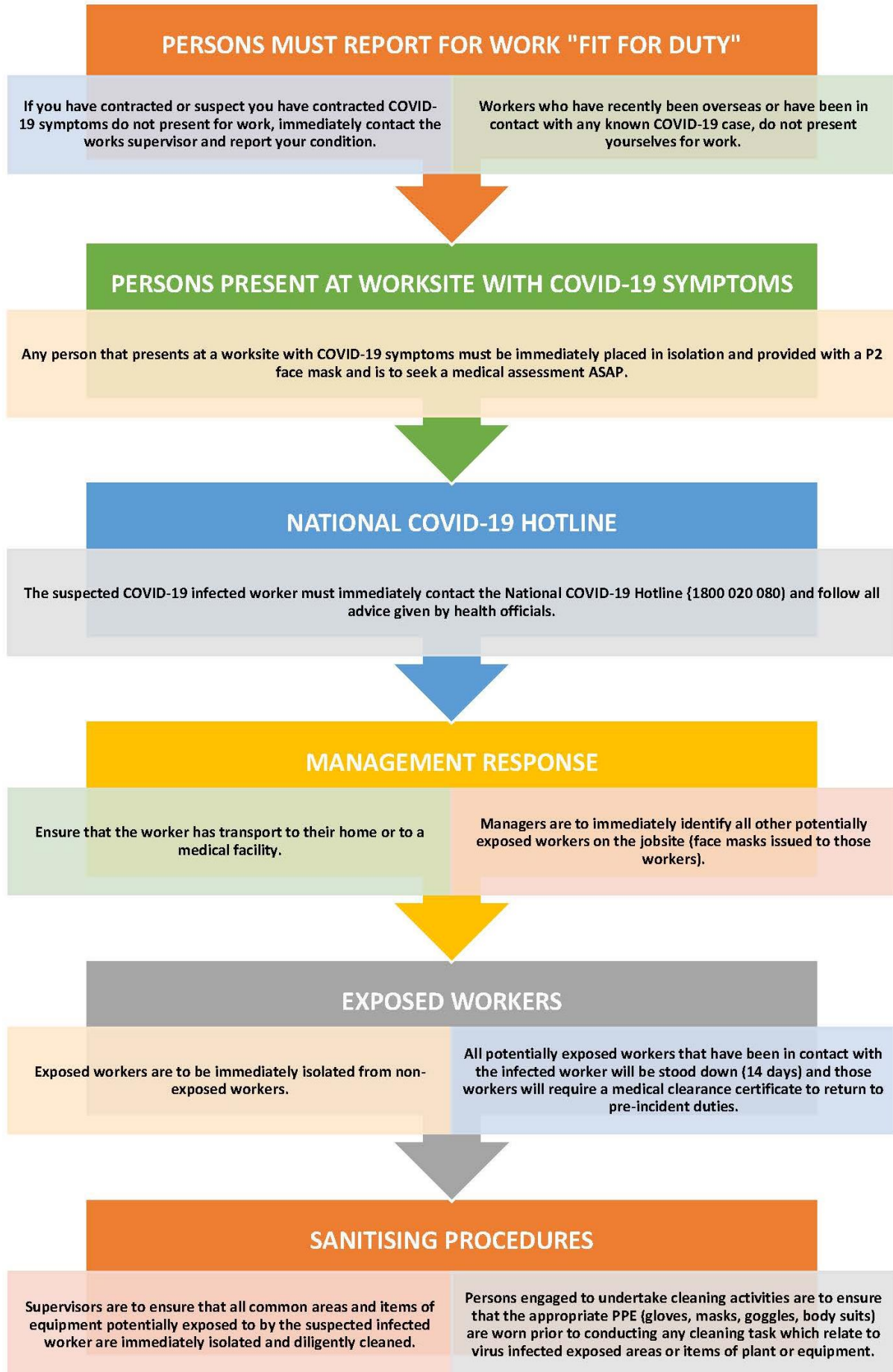
Should I attend work if I think that I may be diagnosed with covid-19?

If you think that you may have symptoms of Covid-19, you should immediately do the following:

- Inform us via email or a telephone call;
- **NOT ATTEND THE WORKPLACE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES;** and
- Immediately seek medical advice.

If you have been away for more than 2 days, you must provide us with a medical certificate. You should not return to work until you have received medical advice that you are not ill, and that it is safe and appropriate for you to return to work.

XI EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT PLAN RESPONSE TO PERSON UNFIT FOR DUTY REPORTING TO WORK



XII FEELING ILL WHILE AT WORK

If you are feeling unwell while at work, you must immediately notify your direct supervisor or manager. If we form a reasonable view that you are unwell, you will be directed to go home.

XIII SPECIAL LEAVE PROVISIONS

Where an employee has exhausted all accrued leave entitlements, special leave provision are available under the Local Government (State) Award and can be used to assist staff in times of illness, to support their family or due to changes that prevent an employee from being able to attend work, as a direct result of Covid-19.

Council will consider requests for special leave up to (two) 2 weeks. Special leave may be granted with or without pay. Special leave provisions can only be approved by the General Manager.

XIV WORKING FROM HOME

If you are suffering from the symptoms of Covid-19, you may work from home if your job role allows you to carry out your duties remotely and your condition is such that working will not compromise your health.

It should be noted that work from home approval must be approved by the General Manager (or Acting General Manager) only and the staff member and their Manager must detail how this can occur, the IT resources required and how staff may interact to ensure work can continue.

Council recognises that working from home may result in less productive work or reduced hours especially where a person is ill. In supporting work from home, we will ask these staff to support a change to remove flexi leave arrangements whilst working from home. All other leave (annual and long service) will continue as per the Award without penalty.

If an employee is directed to self-isolate, Council will attempt to provide work from home arrangements if possible that reflect the health and ability of the employee. The employee shall be paid as normal during the isolation up to a period of two (2) weeks.

Where working from home, an employee shall not be entitled to shift or weekend penalties, unless directed to work outside their ordinary spread or span of hours. Ordinary hours of work shall not exceed twelve (12) hours in any one day exclusive of unpaid meal breaks.

If you are working from home due to COVID-19 symptoms, you must not have direct contact with us, your colleagues, customers or clients, or suppliers.

If it is not practicable for you to work from home, then you must not undertake any active duties and you will be on leave.

XV RETURNING TO WORK AFTER ILLNESS

If you wish to return to work, you must provide us with a medical certificate confirming that you are fit to return to work, which may (at our discretion, acting reasonably) include confirmation that you tested negative for Covid-19.

XVI USEFUL WORK

Where, due to COVID-19, Council has no useful work for employees, Council may temporarily stand down (or partially stand down) the employees, subject to provisions provided for within the Local Government (Covid-19) Splinter (Interim) Award (Splinter Awards shall remain in force until otherwise notified).

XVII Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Council employees are encouraged to access Council's EAP for confidential counselling if they require assistance. EAP counselling services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Council's EAP provider is the Interact Group and can be contacted on 1300 851 300.

XVIII Leave for COVID-19 Vaccinations

As per Clause 12 of the Splinter (Interim) Award:

1. Employees shall be entitled to leave, without loss of pay, for the time reasonably required to receive a Therapeutic Goods Administration approved vaccination for COVID-19. (Council has deemed that a three (3) hour period to obtain a vaccination is reasonable however, if the time period extends beyond three (3) hours Council will require evidence in accordance with subclause 12.2 of the Splinter Award)
2. The employer may require proof to justify payments under this clause

The Payroll/HR Officer must sight and record all vaccination certificates.

RELATED POLICY

- WHS Policy
- Working from Home Procedure
- Employee Assistance Program Policy

XIX REFERENCES

- Local Government (State) Award
- Local Government (Covid-19) Splinter (Interim) Award (Splinter Awards shall remain in force until otherwise notified)
- Australian Government Department of Health
- NSW Health
- Work Health and Safety Act
- SafeWork NSW
- SafeWork Australia