

COVID-19 Labour Hire Contractors Guide – 14 March 2020

Purpose of this Labour Hire Contractors Guide

This guide has been prepared for people working under face2face Recruitment as a Labour Hire Contractor.

Coronavirus Health Information Line

The Australian Government operates a coronavirus (COVID-19) health information line 24 hours a day, seven days a week—1800 020 080. If you have serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call Triple Zero (000).

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 a pandemic.

A pandemic is defined as “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”. Being a pandemic doesn’t mean that the characteristics of COVID-19 have changed. It means that the virus is showing up in most countries in the world.

Symptoms of COVID-19

According to WHO, the most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

Current situation

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Australia is constantly changing. The Department of Health has the most [up-to-date information](#) online.

Within the workplace

The Australian Government is saying to be alert and prepared in the workplace, but not alarmed.

As at 16 March, there is no need for broad isolation of workers. This could change.

People under face2face Recruitment as a Labour Hire Contractor should monitor the Australian Government’s [Department of Health’s](#) website for up-to-date information about:

- travel restrictions
- situations in which isolation is recommended
- specific resources for workplaces
- specific information for employees.

The [WHO website](#) also has up-to-date information. So does the official state and territory government websites. See list of resources below.

As a contractor, you should also follow instructions provided by, and preventative measures outlined by, the agency or organisation you're working on-site for.

If you're unsure about what to do in your workplace, please contact your face2face Consultant on (02) 6199 5750.

Latest facts and myth busters

Here are the [latest facts and myth busters](#) about COVID-19 from WHO.

Who is most at risk

In Australia, the people most at risk of getting COVID-19 are those who have:

- recently been in mainland China, Iran, Italy and South Korea
- been in close contact with someone who is a confirmed case of coronavirus.

The Department of Health has identified these groups as most at risk:

- the elderly
- those with chronic medical conditions
- young children and babies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- those with compromised immune systems.

How it spreads

The virus can spread from person-to-person. It will most likely spread through:

- close contact with an infected person
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face.

Managing and controlling the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace

As a Labour Hire Contractor, the agency or organisation you're working in should be taking measures to control health risks by providing adequate facilities to enable good hygiene practices (for example, soap, hand sanitiser, signage and reminders).

Workplace hygiene steps

- [Social distancing recommendations](#) by the Australian Government are now in place.
- Clean your hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, or with an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not touch your face with your hands as the virus can be transferred from your hands to the mouth and increase risk of contamination.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or a flexed elbow.
- Do not cover your nose or mouth with your hands. If this cannot be avoided, wash your hands as above as soon as possible.
- Avoid close contact with people exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms. Move away from people coughing or sneezing.
- Ensure workstations and common areas are cleaned regularly with antiseptic products.
- Do not use other people's workstations and other people should not use yours.
- Ensure tissues, hand sanitiser and cleaning products are readily available in the workplace (if they're not, provide your own supply to be safe).
- Limit or ban non-essential work travel.
- Comply with the advice and policies provided by the agency or organisation you're on-site with.

Other steps to take

- Monitor official advice, such as updates from the Department of Health and WHO (see list of resources below).
- Follow the isolation and quarantine period recommendations as advised by the Department of Health (see list of resources below).
- If you feel unwell or think you may have coronavirus symptoms, call your GP ahead of a visit and let them know you're worried you may have COVID-19. Follow their advice.
- If you don't have a GP or are unable to contact your GP, check online for a walk-in centre near you that is available to assess concerned they have COVID-19. The best place to start is on your state or territory's official government website (see list of resources below).
- Monitor the latest travel advice on the [Smart Traveller](#) government website if you're planning to travel for work (see list of resources below).

You also have a duty to take care for your own and others' health and safety. This includes ensuring good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing, to protect against infections.

The Department of Health has published an information sheet on what to do. As the situation and corresponding medical advice is constantly changing, it is critical to keep up-to-date with the latest information (see list of resources below).

Your responsibilities to advise

You must be diligent about advising both face2face and your agency or organisation if you:

- have recently travelled to countries listed under the travel restrictions ([Smartraveller](#))
- are returning from a trip outside Australia—whether you feel well or not, you'll be required to self-isolate for 14 days. It is an offense not to (see list of resources below and this [fact sheet](#) on isolation guidance)
- are planning to travel overseas in the next two months and where you'll be travelling to (at this stage you'll be required to self-isolate on your return)
- are feeling unwell and think you may have COVID-19 symptoms.

Travel restrictions and self-isolation

The Australian Government recommends you reconsider all international travel. It has placed '[do not travel](#)' restrictions to and from China, Iran and several other countries.

If you're returning to Australia from overseas, you're required to wear a surgical mask while travelling to a hotel or your home.

Here is [information on self-isolation](#). You can be fined several thousand dollars if you're caught not self-isolating. The amount varies from state-to-state.

Sending labour hire staff home

There is no clear-cut rule in the Australian Government's *Fair Work Act (2009)* on sending labour hire staff home if they're sick.

If they're obviously sick and feel they may have COVID-19, they should call their GP and discuss their concerns.

Medical clearance and financial impact of COVID-19

If you're sick, you'll need a medical certificate or a clearance to return to work. If you're not cleared to return to work, your absence will be treated as unpaid leave until such time as you're cleared to return to work.

The Australian Government is concerned about the financial impact of self-isolation for casual and contract workers who receive a casual loading on their salary in lieu of paid sick leave. You can check if you're eligible for the Sickness Allowance on the [Services Australia](#) website.

Forced stand downs

If the situation becomes increasingly serious in Australia, the Fair Work Act states that (most) employers can stand down employees and labour hire staff without pay when there are circumstances beyond the employer's control which means there is no useful work to do. This action would cover pandemics and cases when staff are quarantined and cannot work from home.

This provision is rarely enacted and should only be enacted after careful assessment.

Many agencies and organisations are examining working from home. While the agency or organisation may be willing to have some contractors work from home during a stand down, face2face's insurances may not cover these situations because there is no control over the work situation in a home environment. We're working with our insurance companies to see what is possible in the event of a forced shut-down and will provide an update as soon as we have the information.

In the meantime, while you're working on-site you're covered by the face2face worker's compensation and public and professional indemnity insurance. These do not automatically carry over if you're working from home.

We're discussing the idea of 'work-from-home sign-off forms' with our insurance companies and will update you as soon as possible.

Updating this guide

face2face will update this guide online as often as required and post notices on updates on our social media pages ([LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)). **You're advised to follow us on at least one social media platform.**

We also encourage you to stay abreast of the information being supplied by your agency or organisation, as well as through the resources we've listed below.

If you have questions or concerns please email: face2face@f2frecruitment.com.au or call your Recruitment Consultant on 02 6199 5750.

Resources

Important note: Only rely on authoritative sources of information on COVID-19, not on unauthoritative information popping up on social media.

[Health Department – coronavirus information and resources](#)

[World Health Organization – coronavirus information and resources](#)

[Smart Traveller – DFAT travel advice](#)

[Fair Work Ombudsman – Coronavirus and Australian Workplace Laws](#)

[ACT Government](#)

[Northern Territory Government](#)

[NSW Government](#)

[Queensland Government](#)

[South Australia Government](#)

[Tasmania Government](#)

[Western Australia Government](#)

[Victoria Government](#)

[face2face Recruitment – Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

health.gov.au also has translated resources for COVID-19, including in Simplified or Traditional Chinese, Farsi, Italian and Korean.