

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Factsheet & Workplace Guidelines

What is a coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new coronavirus originated in Hubei Province, China and the disease caused by the virus is named COVID-19.

General Information for the Greenlife Industry

80% of people who contract the virus will experience mild symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath and a sore throat. More severe symptoms include pneumonia and severe acute respiratory distress.

Coronavirus is expected to affect Australian businesses for at least the next 10 months. It has been estimated that between 20-50% of the workforce may be affected at any given time, particularly as we head into Winter.

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Direct close contact with an infected person, including 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
- Contact with an infected person who coughs or sneezes.
- Contact with objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze by an infected person and then touching your mouth or face.

The length of time the virus can remain on surfaces is unconfirmed so, having regard for the surface and environmental conditions, regular use of disinfectant is critical.

Planning

As the situation is rapidly changing, planning is difficult during this time, but plans are more easily adapted when regular conversations are occurring:

- Contact your customers and suppliers to identify and discuss any areas of potential risk.
- Develop a plan to reduce the risk of infection, and contingency plans for an on-site infection and supply chain impacts.
- Ensure your plan has longevity and is sustainable.
- Continue to communicate.

For additional tips for greenlife industry businesses, please read *Tips for managing employees, contractors and customers*.

Infection Prevention and Control

- Hand hygiene: wash your hands frequently with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds: before and after eating; after going to the toilet and after smoking; and before and after stock handling.
- Cover your cough and sneeze using a tissue and dispose of tissues immediately; then wash your hands.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Avoid touching faces particularly eyes, noses and mouths and avoid traditional greetings including handshaking and hugging.
- Stay more than 1.5 metres from people.
- If unwell, avoid contact with others.
- Be aware of travel and employment history of your staff, particularly for the last three months. Comply with self-Isolation practices as required.
- Instruct employees to advise you if they develop symptoms while at work or during an isolation period, particularly if they have been in the workplace.

Be aware of your obligations and duty of care

Under the Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act 2011, as an employer you are legally obliged to contain the risks to health and safety, in your business operations, presented by COVID-19 infection. You need to seek to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of:

- your workers (employees, contractors, volunteers); and
- third parties exposed to your business operations (clients, customers, patrons, bystanders).

In some instances, criminal penalties apply for breach of those obligations. Civil liabilities might also arise to your workers and third parties who are infected, or affected/damaged as the result of infection, caused by your failure to take reasonable care to prevent the risk of infection (negligence).

You should review the COVID-19 risks within your workplace and put contingency plans in place and address them via an internal policy document, to protect you and your workers. Contact Greenlife Industry Australia for a 'Contingency Plan' template to be emailed to you.

More information is available at the Fairwork Australia Office website. <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws>

If you require additional information, please seek professional advice for your specific circumstances.

Emergency management - what to do if you identify a person with infection

- Identify the source and quarantine all the people (whole team) that have been near the source.
- Advise the relevant health authority in your state.
- Immediately disinfect all equipment that the entire team was using including any shared facilities such as lunchrooms & toilets.
- Obtain as many details about the original source person as possible to provide to health authorities with traceability details including living arrangements, travel, shopping, networks and community involvement.
- Inform Greenlife Industry Australia via 1300 780 643 or email peter.vaughan@greenlifeindustry.com.au to advise of any support you immediately require.
- Inform your other employees, contractors, customers where appropriate and as required.
- Enact your contingency plans.

Additional Resources

Greenlife Industry Workplace Poster: https://www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/Story?Action=View&Story_id=2756

Growcom: Coronavirus and the workplace: www.greenlifeindustry.com.au/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder_id=207&File=Coronavirus_and_the_workplace_Growcom.pdf

For current health information and fact sheets including printable resources: www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

For workplace expectations and case study examples: www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media-releases/website-news/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws

Garden Centres of Australia: at leigh.siebler@bigpond.com



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