



COVIDSafe Plan

Yarriambiack Shire Council

(version 1)

COVIDSafe Plan

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

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1 Objective

The Yarriambiack Shire Council COVIDSafe Plan has been developed to protect our workers, customers and visitors from the spread of COVID-19 and to demonstrate how Yarriambiack Shire Council meets the requirements set out by the Victorian Government.

2 Scope

This plan outlines the procedures to minimise and mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 into Council workplaces during current restrictions set out by the Victorian Government for all staff, contractors and visitors.

The COVID Safe Plan outlines:

- Preventative measure to reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19
- The process Council has in place to keep records of all staff, contractors and visitors that attend Council workplaces.
- Actions required to mitigate the introduction of COVID-19 into a Council workplace.
- The level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for our workforce.
- The process in place to prepare and respond to, a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Council workplace.

3 Responsibility

Council's Management Team is responsible for the implementation of this COVIDSafe Plan. All employees, contractors and volunteers are responsible for compliance with the COVIDSafe settings prescribed in this Plan.

4 Preventative measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace:

General measures

- If staff can work from home, they must work from home.
- If employees are unwell, they must stay at home or work remotely.
- Any staff member that arrives to work and is experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, however mild, will be sent home as this is a reasonable management instruction.
- Consideration will be made regarding work-related travel by staff is on a case by case basis and this will be delayed where possible.
- Managers will need to plan contingencies for a potential increase of staff absences because people are self-isolating, self-quarantining or staying home because they are unwell to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Consult with Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and keep staff informed of the actions Council is taking.
- Council staff will cease all non-essential activities, where appropriate, when 1.5m social distancing cannot be maintained. This includes group meal breaks, smoking breaks and carpooling.
- Where possible, staff will not share offices for periods exceeding two hours.
- Council will follow appropriate Risk Management processes if a confirmed case has been identified and attempt to further reduce any risk where practicable to provide a safe working environment for employees.

Mandatory Vaccination

Council's Management Team will enforce all mandatory vaccination requirements as prescribed in the applicable directions, as authorised by the Victorian Chief Health Officer. In the interest of ensuring a safe workplace for all staff, Council has also made determinations regarding vaccination in our COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination Policy.

Measures to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Provide and promote hand sanitisers, including at building entrances, in vehicles etc.
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection to occur daily in our office, Kindergartens and in communal areas at all depots.
- Regularly clean with disinfectant high-touch surfaces - at least twice daily - including main counter, shared desks and keyboards, doors and door handles, handrails and toilets.
- Employees will be encouraged to refrain from working in their declared secondary employment, only where possible, to limit the potential risk of spread between organisations.

Physical distancing in the workplace

- Plan work environments to allow for appropriate physical distancing. This will include staff within an enclosed work space being seated at least 1.5m away from colleagues. This may be assisted by using tape or other appropriate means on floors as a way of maintaining appropriate distances.
- For outdoor staff travel, activities must comply with Council's travel guidelines:
 - Council will focus on not having any employees travel together in the same vehicle.
 - Where this cannot be avoided, a 5-seater vehicle may carry a maximum of one passenger, sitting in the backseat diagonally opposite the driver.
 - Where travel occurs for more than 15 minutes, ACs must be set to fresh air and windows should remain open for the duration of the trip.
 - Prohibit passengers in single cab vehicles. (where this is not practical, the passenger and driver must wear a mask for the duration of travel)
 - Vehicles are cleaned daily or when driver/passengers change using the alcohol wipes provided.
- In an enclosed workspace, regard will be had to the density quotient applicable as per current restrictions. For further information regarding this rule, please access <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace-covid-19#what-venues-does-the-four-square-metre-rule-apply-to>
- Council will avoid indoor meetings and utilise online platforms such as Microsoft Teams.
- Provide a clearly visible sign for customers stating how many people are allowed in the foyer/service desk area. For signage templates refer to <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/hospitality-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

Cleaning and disinfection

Council will continue to **clean and disinfect** surfaces as both steps are essential.

The first step is cleaning, which means wiping dirt and germs off a surface. You can use common household detergent products for cleaning, they are available from local supermarkets. However, cleaning alone does not kill viruses and germs.

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The next step is to disinfect the surface. Disinfection means using chemicals to kill viruses and germs on surfaces. Common household disinfection products, such as bleach, are readily available at all supermarkets and are suitable for this purpose. It is important to use products that are labelled “disinfectant” and to follow the instructions on the label. **If household bleach (with 4% available chlorine) is used for disinfection, please refer to Appendix A for guidance on correct procedure.**

High touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily.

All cleaning staff will be required to wear appropriate PPE, including gloves, masks and eye protection. Detailed instructions on how to correctly put on and remove PPE may be found at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-covid-19>

Instructions on how to clean correctly and the process that will be undertaken **specifically for Local Government buildings** may be found at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace-covid-19#how-to-clean-and-disinfect-after-a-covid-19-case-in-the-workplace>

5 Person Protection Equipment (PPE)

Advice surrounding the mandatory and best practice use of PPE remains ever-changing. Council also delivers vast and varied community services, many with their own specific PPE requirements. Therefore to ensure accurate and up-to-date PPE advice is provided to staff, tailored information will be provided directly from management as the pandemic evolves.

6 Measures to help prepare for a case or outbreak at a Council work site:

Readiness to respond

In the event of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) being associated with a Council workplace, the following has been considered in advance in order to be ready to respond:

1. Council has implemented an electronic QR record keeping procedure to document any staff member, contractor or visitor that enters any Council office, site or works depot. This will help support the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) with contact tracing if needed.
2. At the point in time when active cases are increasing in the region, Council will decide on the maximum number of staff that will be permitted inside the main office, technical services and at each works depots. This will limit the requirement for contact tracing and the number of staff that will be required to self-isolate.

7 What to expect if a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) is confirmed at your workplace:

Notification of a confirmed case

DHHS receives all notifications of confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19). Following notification, contact tracing is undertaken to understand where the person may have acquired their infection and where they have been while they were infectious. DHHS will notify Council when an employee has been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) and has been infectious while within one of Councils workplace settings. DHHS will provide guidance on any public health actions required. DHHS does not routinely notify employers of cases if there has been no assessed risk to the workplace, for example, when someone has not attended the workplace while infectious.

Management of a confirmed case or outbreak at your workplace

If the person with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) is deemed to have attended a Council workplace while infectious, or could possibly have acquired coronavirus while at work, the following steps will need to be undertaken:

1. Determine what areas of the workplace were visited or used by the confirmed case by referring to record of attendance at all workplaces. The more accurate these details are and the more readily available, the more confident DHHS can be about which areas of the workplace need to be closed and for how long.
2. Consult with DHHS on whether the workplace or part of the workplace is required to close for a short period to facilitate cleaning and enable contact tracing. DHHS will determine whether to assign an outbreak management team and deploy DHHS staff to attend the workplace to perform a risk assessment and provide advice.
3. Work with DHHS to provide details that will assist in contact tracing such as records of staff attendance and up-to-date contact details for staff should they be required. DHHS may contact anyone who is identified as a close contact of the case. In some circumstances, DHHS will ask the employers to make first contact with relevant staff members with agreed messaging. It is important to note that meeting the definition of close contact, in the absence of symptoms, will not necessarily require individuals to get tested. However, advice should be sought from DHHS on a case by case basis. Close contact is defined as:
 - Being in an enclosed space with the case for more than two hours; and/or
 - Having more than 15min face to face contact with the case.
4. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation and close off the affected area before commencing cleaning and disinfection.
5. Organise for the cleaning and disinfecting of all areas that were used by the confirmed case. Given the small size of the Council offices and works depots, Council will opt for full closure of each site rather than partial closures to ensure any potential viruses are completely removed. DHHS can provide further advice specific to the degree of risk associated with transmission.
6. Wider cleaning and disinfection of the site, paying particular attention to high-touch areas as may also be advised by DHHS.
7. Any Council employee who tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) should remain at home in self-isolation until they have been notified by DHHS that they have met the criteria for release. The employee should follow DHHS guidance and Council policy with regards to returning to work. Council will support employees in isolation by providing them with special COVID-19 leave if their absence from work will result in any financial disadvantage.
8. Ensure employees who are identified to be close contacts of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19) by DHHS do not come to work for 14 days after their last close contact with the positive case, as they must self-quarantine for this period. During self-quarantine, the staff member should watch for symptoms and seek medical assessment and testing if they develop symptoms such as fever, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath or a loss of their sense of taste or smell.
9. If the case or cases are deemed an outbreak, DHHS will maintain active involvement throughout the course of the outbreak including providing advice on when the workplace can re-open or when the outbreak is considered resolved.
10. The workplace should work with DHHS to ensure that all appropriate preventative measures have been taken prior to reopening the business.
11. Following a coronavirus (COVID-19) case at a workplace, risk management controls and infection prevention measures should be reviewed in order to reduce risk of further coronavirus (COVID-19) exposures.

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8 Collaboration with Agencies

Food Security

Council will endeavour to support our communities in the event that large scale shutdowns impede access to food supplies from local businesses, such as supermarkets. In this event, Council may be required by Red Cross to set up and prepare a suitable distribution facility. The facility is required to be secure, permit 24hr forklift access and provide undercover shelter for food packs. The following location will be the distribution centre for food relief packs:

- Warracknabeal Depot – 1 Pyers St, Warracknabeal.

Alternative Meal Options

Additional capacity for emergency meal options may also be provided on short notice from Rural Northwest Health, where it is estimated that approximately 100 (50 fresh/50 frozen) meals can be prepared for delivery within 3-4 hours. A weekend kitchen team could also be assembled for emergencies.

Mass COVID Testing Locations

If requested by the Ballarat Public Health Unit, Council can avail the following facilities for testing personnel. Locations highlighted are not managed by Council, but identified as potential suitable locations pending property owner approval.

Township	Location
Warracknabeal	Wheatlands Museum, 34 Henty HWY, Warracknabeal
Rupanyup	Senior Citizens Building, Dyer St, Rupanyup
Murtoa	Murtoa Racecourse, Murtoa
Minyip	Caravan Park, Petering St, Minyip
Hopetoun	Recreation Reserve, Strachan St / Caravan Park, Austin St, Hopetoun
Beulah	Recreation Reserve, Deakin St, Beulah
Brim	Recreation Reserve, Simson St, Brim
Woomelang	Memorial Hall, Brook St, Woomelang

Council will undertake traffic management operations at any designated COVID testing location, if requested by the Public Health Unit.

9 Media

As per Councils Media Policy the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor will speak to the media about any confirmed case related to the workplace and adhere to our privacy requirements

10 Roles of Council and Worksafe Victoria

Role of Council

Employers have specific duties to their employees, but also those who visit the workplace such as customers, patrons and visitors. Under 'The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004' (OHS Act), where a risk to health is identified at a workplace, employers must eliminate the risk so far as is reasonably practicable and when elimination is not possible,

reduce the risk so far as reasonably practicable. <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/exposure-coronavirus-workplaces>

Council has a duty to eliminate or reduce risks of coronavirus (COVID-19) exposure for those who work on or attend the workplace. Employers should ensure:

- the workplace is cleaned regularly and thoroughly
- that staff are required to practice physical distancing
- the layout of the workplace promotes physical distancing where possible
- staff are required to practice good hand hygiene (and that hand washing facilities are well stocked and in good functioning order)
- ensure staff who are identified to be close contacts of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19) by DHHS do not attend work until told by DHHS that their quarantine period has ended
- staff are required to stay home when unwell, particularly if they are awaiting a coronavirus (COVID-19) test result or have been confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19)
- visitors to the workplace who are not staff and not essential to its functioning are limited
- the number of people on site at a workplace at any given time is limited
- staff are provided with clear information and appropriate training and instruction on measures that will reduce their risk of contracting coronavirus (COVID-19) which could include hand washing, how to clean and disinfect surfaces, and when to stay at home.
- employees know what to do if they feel unwell or suspect they've been infected, according to the information provided by DHHS (<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>)

Role of Employees

Note that under 'The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004' (OHS Act), employees also have duties including:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of persons who may be affected by the employee's acts or omissions at a workplace
- Co-operate with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with a requirement imposed by or under the OHS Act.

Staff who are identified to be close contacts of a person with coronavirus (COVID-19) by DHHS must stay home and not attend work until told by DHHS that their quarantine period has ended.

If an employee develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) they should isolate themselves immediately, call the coronavirus information line on 1800 675 398 and follow the self-isolation guidance available on DHHS website.

Staff must be directed to stay home if they are sick or go home immediately if they become unwell. Any staff member showing coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, however mild, must be asked not to come into work or attend any worksite and be asked to leave immediately if they attend while unwell.

The employee should tell Council as soon as possible if they are a positive case or a close contact of a positive case, follow the procedures Council has implemented and update their Manger, Director or CEO if their situation changes. For example, if they receive a positive coronavirus result.

Role of Worksafe

In Victoria, duty holders or persons conducting a business or undertaking must notify WorkSafe Victoria when they become aware of a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) where it is the cause (or one of the suspected causes) of a death at a workplace.

Incident notification procedures are detailed on the [WorkSafe Victoria website](#).

Notification must be made regardless of whether the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is already aware of the case.

Worksafe Victoria *may* also become involved if otherwise consulted or if the workplace notifies them that there has been a coronavirus (COVID-19) diagnosis in the workplace.

Further information that may be useful to Council is available here:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace-covid-19>

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/planning-and-responding-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-business-support>

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

11 Review of Plan

A review of this Plan will be undertaken as required.

CEO Approved Policy

Adopted:	CEO Approved Date	CEO Name	CEO Signature
Reviewed:	19 October 2021	Jessie Holmes	