

Risk assessment: Impact of COVID-19 4 March 2022

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This risk assessment has been prepared for **Masula Compliance clients** to assist with the mitigation of the risks associated with COVID-19. This risk assessment has prepared as a guide only. You must consider your own operation, circumstances and potential for exposure to COVID-19 in order to mitigate your risk. Masula Compliance can assist you with the preparation of a **Vaccination policy and COVIDSafe management plan** tailored to address your specific COVID-19 risks.

New content HIGHLIGHTED

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	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
1.	Incorrect information about COVID-19 Workers not understanding risk controls	H 60	Check official Australian Government sources for current information and advice. Website: https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert Educate workers about risks and appropriate risk controls, including sneeze/cough etiquette and hand hygiene. Communicate promptly and regularly with workers and visitors, particularly when changes to the status require a change in workplace requirements.	M 44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
2.	Breaching jurisdictional restrictions imposed to control COVID-19	H 60	<p>In Queensland, from 6 pm Friday 4 March 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Masks will no longer be required indoors, except in healthcare settings, residential aged care, disability accommodation, prisons, public transport, airports and on planes. ▪ Masks will no longer be required in schools, including for staff, students and visitors. ▪ Masks will still be recommended whenever you can't physically distance (1.5metres). ▪ There will be no limit on the number of visitors you can have in your home at one time. ▪ Venues and events will no longer have density limits. <p>1.5 metres between persons should be maintained at all times when practical. When this is not practical, e.g., public transport, or within some workplaces, respiratory protection is recommended.</p> <p>Additionally, state and territory governments have different restrictions in place for COVID-19 control.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All businesses are required to lodge a COVID Safe plan in NT and Tasmania. ▪ COVID safe plans are recommended for all businesses in QLD, NSW, VIC, SA, WA and ACT ▪ COVID safe plans are required for certain designated business sectors in QLD, NSW, VIC, SA, WA and ACT <p>Please visit your state or territory website for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Queensland: https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/ ▪ NSW: https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19. ▪ ACT: https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/ ▪ Victoria: https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus ▪ Tasmania: https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/ ▪ South Australia: https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/ ▪ Western Australia: https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus ▪ Northern Territory: https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/ 	M 44
3.	Failure to meet PCBU duties under the WHS laws	H 60	It is not possible to eliminate the risk of workers contracting COVID-19 while carrying out work, however, a PCBU must do all that is reasonably practicable to minimise the risk of workers contracting COVID-19.	M 44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
			<p>What control measures will be reasonably practicable will depend on the work being carried out by workers and the type of workplace. Generally, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ determine appropriate control measures in consultation with workers taking account of official information sources ▪ implement those measures and clearly communicate them to workers ▪ provide information to workers, including changes to control measures, as the situation develops ▪ provide workers with appropriate personal protective equipment and facilities, and information and training on how and why they are required to use them ▪ require workers to practice good hygiene, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ frequent hand washing □ limiting contact with others, including through shaking hands, and □ covering their mouths while coughing or sneezing ▪ provide workers with a point of contact to discuss their concerns 	
4.	Failure to manage workers who become infected with COVID-19	H 68	<p>To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ require workers to stay away from the workplace if they are unwell and not fit for work. ▪ If a worker tests positive for COVID-19 they must immediately isolate for 7 days from the date of the test. ▪ If the worker is symptom-free on day 7 of the isolation they can end their isolation period. If symptoms persist the worker must stay in isolation until the symptoms have gone away. ▪ A COVID-19 test is not required to end the isolation period. ▪ A mild dry cough, mild fatigue or loss of taste or smell after being infected with COVID-19 is common and continuing isolation for these symptoms is not required. 	M 44
5.	Failure to manage workers who become close contacts of those infected with COVID-19	H 68	<p>A close contact is a person that has been with a person that has COVID-19 for more than four hours in a house or other accommodation, a care facility or similar.</p> <p>Usually, this means a worker that lives with a person that has COVID-19. If the worker has stayed away from them, they are not a close contact. For example, if they are in a separate</p>	M44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
			<p>part of the house that has a separate entrance and no shared common areas, and if the contact with them wasn't more than four hours.</p> <p>A worker is not a close contact if they have had COVID-19 in the past 4 weeks.</p> <p>A worker is not a close contact if they live with a close contact.</p> <p>Household contacts of a COVID-19 positive worker must isolate at home for 7 days and get tested on day 6 of their quarantine period.</p>	
6.	Failure to consult with workers resulting in Fair Work Commission ruling	H 60	When discussing health and safety matters with workers, a consultative approach should be taken to allow workers to express views before any decision is made. Consult with workers before decisions are made around COVID-19 risk controls, interactions with customers and clients, the effects of vaccination mandates (if applicable) and resulting redeployment or redundancy. Keep a record of the consultation process.	M 44
7.	Increased risk during periods of COVID-19 transmission within your community	E 76	<p>When COVID-19 is prevalent, or present in your community and community transmission is occurring, follow the health directives issued by state or local authorities. This may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate vaccination for the work team whilst respecting the personal choice of individuals; ▪ Consider monitoring temperature or rapid antigen testing ▪ Remind workers to stay home and get tested if they show 'flu-like' symptoms ▪ Carrying a face mask with you at all times when you leave home; ▪ Wear a mask in indoor spaces, including at work if you are unable to stay 1.5 metres from other people such as in lunchrooms, busy walkways or thoroughfares; and ▪ Displaying clear and appropriate signage that explains physical distancing requirements and states how many people can safely be in a space at any given time. 	M 52
8.	Workers fail to comply with the direction of a PCBU to stay away from their usual workplace	M 52	Workers are required under WHS laws to comply, so far as is reasonably able, with a reasonable instruction given to allow the PCBU to comply with the WHS laws. Workers are required to comply with a direction by a PCBU to remain away from their usual place of work, if they were reasonably able to and the instruction was reasonable in the circumstances.	L 28

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
9.	Workers claim compensation for contracting COVID-19 at work	H 60	<p>Workers compensation authorities will assess COVID-19 related claims in the same way as other injury claims are assessed and will need to be satisfied the employee contracted COVID-19 in the course of their employment and that it was related to their work.</p> <p>In Queensland, the onus is on the employee to prove that the COVID-19 diagnosis was related to the employee's work. An employee must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a work capacity certificate from a doctor who can confirm the COVID-19 diagnosis; • prove that the employee's exposure to COVID-19 occurred within the employee's work environment or while travelling to, from or for work; and • have medical confirmation that the employee's diagnosis was related to the employee's work. 	M 44
10.	Vaccination mandates by either Government or clients require workers in some sectors to be vaccinated	E 80	<p>Develop a vaccination policy to navigate through the complexities of vaccination as a risk control for vaccine preventable diseases (VPD). As vaccination and immunisation rules change from time to time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify legal and other requirements for worker immunisation; ▪ identify roles where pre-employment vaccination requirements will need to be considered during recruitment; ▪ consult with workers when assessing the risk of illness and identify and implement reasonably practicable risk controls; ▪ communicate vaccination requirements to workers; and ▪ maintain evidence of vaccination status of workers as required by law or as reasonable in the circumstances. 	H 56
11.	Workforce reluctant to get vaccinated	H 60	<p>Consult with workers to determine how the business can comply with the requirements. Where workers choose not to be vaccinated, or not to disclose their vaccination status, or are unable to comply due to health reasons, consideration will be given to manage the risk in other ways by redeployment to another role. Where the risk to the worker is not able to be adequately minimised and the worker is unable to be redeployed, their employment may need to be terminated.</p>	M 44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
12.	Low levels of vaccination in the workgroup	H 60	Where a workgroup has an overall low level of vaccination against the national average vaccination rate additional risk controls may be required, e.g., use of respiratory protection, physical distancing and frequent hand sanitisation.	M 52
13.	Vaccination records are not subject to privacy protection	H 60	<p>Information collected about immunisation requirements is for the primary purpose of protecting workers from the risk of exposure or transmission due to the inherent requirements of their work. The information provided may be disclosed to the relevant health authority or other organisations where the disclosure is authorised or required by law e.g., to meet government or client mandates.</p> <p>Medical information, including proof of vaccination, is only collected with the consent of the individual. It will be stored securely and only accessible to those who are required to use or distribute the information. The vaccination status of individuals will not be shared with other workers.</p>	M 44
14.	Disclosure of vaccination status does not meet acceptable evidence standard	H 60	<p><u>Acceptable evidence</u> includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a COVID-19 digital certificate; ▪ an Immunisation history statement; or ▪ an International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate; <p>A foreign vaccination certificate must have been issued by a national or state or provincial-level authority or an accredited vaccination provider, written in English or accompanied by a certified translation and contain the person's name, either date of birth or passport number, and if vaccinated, the vaccine brand name, and the date of each dose or the date on which a full course of immunisation was completed. The vaccine brand name must be either approved by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) or Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).</p>	M 44
15.	Workers have concerns about the safety of COVID-19 vaccinations	H 60	<p>If workers have concerns about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines they should seek out information from reputable sources to answer their concerns. Sources may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 vaccine safety and side effects ▪ Therapeutic Goods Administration COVID-19 vaccine weekly safety report ▪ World Health Organisation Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Vaccine safety ▪ Peer-reviewed publications from recognised medical journals 	M 44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
16.	Improper ventilation and HVAC system maintenance	H 60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 020 080 <p>Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems need to be maintained according to the manufacturer’s recommendations, ensure that after a period of shutting down HVAC system goes through the correct start-up procedure. You should liaise with the building owner to ensure the system is maintained regularly.</p> <p>Considerations should be taken about adjusting your HVAC system to reduce the risk of recirculated air spreading COVID-19. Exhaust should be directed away from windows, doors and intake systems. If there is a concern for the level of ventilation, doors and windows can be opened to increase fresh airflow.</p> <p>Fans and portable air purifiers are safe to use in areas with only one worker but in areas with more than one worker fans should only be used in areas where the air is not directly blowing on another person.</p>	M 44
17.	Business continuity planning Disruption to business as a result of COVID-19	H 60	<p>Business continuity plan</p> <p>Develop a business continuity plan for use in the event of an outbreak in the workplace that causes mass absenteeism and/or closure. Consider all aspects of the business, including labour and the sourcing of supplies.</p> <p>Key person protection</p> <p>Consideration should specifically be given to leadership arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the strategy in place to protect the key people within the business ▪ Outline the alternative available to the business if key people are removed <p>Workforce continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the strategy in place to protect the workers within the business ▪ Outline the alternative available sources of labour if workers are affected <p>Supply arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the actions taken to protect your supply chain ▪ Outline the alternative suppliers that have been identified to ‘fill the gap’ if a shortage of materials occurs <p>Intellectual property (IP) and trade secret protections</p>	M 44

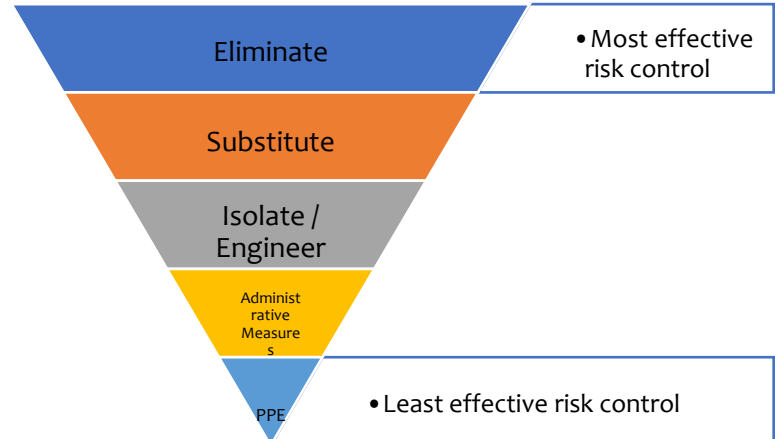
	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify processes to protect IP and trade secret ▪ Identify a strategy for IT continuity ▪ Remind employees of their obligations under relevant IT/data protection policies; ▪ Prohibit the use of public Wi-Fi (i.e. working in a café); ▪ Encourage the use of VPNs; ▪ Ensure company information is not saved on personal computers; and ▪ Limit access to non-essential databases 	
18.	Failure to plan for or respond to regulatory changes	H 60	Prepare a COVID Safe management plan and review it when regulatory changes occur. Delegate the responsibility for the implementation of the COVID Safe management plan to a responsible officer of the entity.	M 44
19.	Policies in place may not meet the needs of the organisation throughout the pandemic	H 60	Review policies and procedures to ensure that they are appropriate for a pandemic situation and amend them temporarily where necessary. For example, leave policies need to encourage people to stay home when they are unwell. Ensure workers are consulted when making any changes that may affect their health and safety in the workplace. Ensure any changes are communicated to all workers.	M 44
20.	Emergency Response Plan is compromised due to COVID-19 restrictions	H 60	Review your emergency management plan to identify if it will be impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions. Consider if there will be an impact on the availability of key role holders such as emergency wardens and first aiders. Consider if staggering shifts and start times will impact the availability of key role holders. Determine if physical distancing measures can be maintained during an emergency evacuation. Consider designating a secondary emergency evacuation point to assist with physical distancing measures.	M 44
21.	Risks associated with restructuring and redundancy	H 60	Employers need to have regard to the legal requirements of a 'genuine redundancy'. If an employee's termination is found not to be a 'genuine redundancy', employers could be liable for an unfair dismissal claim. The legal requirements of a 'genuine redundancy' are defined in Section 389 Fair Work Act and sets out three requirements, as follows:	M 44

Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The job is no longer required to be performed because of changes in operational requirements The employer has complied with any obligation in a modern award or enterprise agreement to consult with the employee about the redundancy There are no reasonable redeployment options within the employer's entity or any associated enterprise. 	
22.	<p>Workers needing time off for illness or to self-isolate</p> <p>Workers choosing to self-isolate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">H 68</p>	<p>Industrial relations</p> <p>Review employment contracts/agreements and the relevant awards to confirm requirements relating to leave entitlements and stand-down provisions. Further information can be found here.</p> <p>Understand the leave entitlements available under the relevant awards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full-time/part-time permanent employees who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ are sick and not able to work. These workers are entitled to paid leave if they have not exceeded their entitlement. They are also eligible for unpaid leave. □ are not sick but must self-isolate. These workers are entitled to annual leave if they have not exceeded their entitlement. They are also eligible for unpaid leave. □ Need to care for the family. These workers are entitled to carers leave if they have not exceeded their entitlement. They are also eligible for unpaid leave. ▪ Casual employees who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ are sick and not able to work – are not entitled to paid leave but may take leave as unpaid. □ are not sick but must self-isolate - they are not entitled to paid leave but may take leave as unpaid. ▪ Contract workers – are not entitled to paid leave. <p>Decide as to how you will manage workers that do not have paid leave entitlements.</p> <p>To calculate leave entitlements based on a particular award utilise the leave calculator on the Fair Work Ombudsman website. This can be found here https://calculate.fairwork.gov.au/Leave.</p> <p>More information can be found by following the link below.</p>	M 44

Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
23.	Impact on the well-being of workers whilst working in isolation	<p>https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/</p> <p>Communicate clearly to workers the plan for business continuity.</p> <p>The risk of isolation and serious illness of self and loved ones is challenging for employees and increased stress levels will result. Employees may feel quite isolated in this type of situation especially where they live alone, do not have close family nearby or already suffering from health issues.</p> <p>Provide employees with details of mental health services available to them. Details can be found here.</p> <p>Consider providing staff with time to undertake online mental health awareness training. Free online training resources can be found at https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19</p> <p>Consider a daily telephone calling tree to ensure quarantined employees are safe and adequately supported during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>If workers are working from home have a plan to encourage inclusivity, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily (or more frequent) phone check-in with remote workers ▪ Periodic team gatherings using technology e.g., phone conferencing, skype, ZOOM or another technological platform. <p>Encourage workers to notify their supervisor if they or someone in their household is high risk so that working from home arrangements can be made.</p> <p>Conduct a risk assessment for any worker deemed high risk who is not able to work from home.</p> <p>Consider adapting performance management policies to better fit with working from home. Set clear productivity expectations for staff working from home for extended periods. Include strategies for stress management in performance management conversations. Encourage the use of timesheets to enable the staff member to record start and finish time and breaks taken away from work to attend to other personal responsibilities.</p>	E 72
24.	Detrimental effects on the business where workers are performing their tasks remotely from home	<p>Where a decision is made for workers to work from home, employers should develop a suitable working from home policy and procedure to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WHS legislative requirements; 	H 60

Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Privacy and confidentiality protocols; ▪ Equipment use including the accessing of company servers and sensitive information; ▪ Document and data control requirements; and ▪ Any additional requirements deemed necessary at the time. <p>Working from home agreements should be agreed to and signed by the employer and worker before remote work commences.</p>	
25.	H 60	<p>Request workers to self-identify risk factors before presenting for work particularly if they have recently returned from overseas or interstate.</p> <p>Separate the person by placing them in a dedicated area away from others. Provide them with tissues, a hand sanitiser and a face mask.</p> <p>Clean and disinfect their workstation and other areas they have been.</p>	M 44
26.	H 60	<p>Surfaces in the workplace that have potentially been contaminated by people, whether workers or members of the public, are to be cleaned with a disinfectant or alcohol-based cleaning product at the beginning and end of each shift and more frequently in areas with frequent touch contact.</p> <p>Ensure that alcohol-based hand sanitiser is readily available for use by workers and visitors.</p> <p>Ensure that handwashing facilities are kept adequately stocked with soap and disposable paper handtowel.</p> <p>Develop methods of tracking the supply of critical items such as PPE, hand sanitiser and disinfectant cleaning products.</p> <p>Consider splitting up workgroups within a workplace to avoid any physical contact. Ensure all surfaces are cleaned before a new workgroup enters a work area.</p> <p>Ensure separate workgroups have access to their lunchroom, storage area and amenities. If this is not possible ensure these areas are cleaned between each use.</p> <p>Conduct a risk assessment on any work tasks which require close physical contact.</p> <p>Consider reconfiguring work area layout to increase physical distancing.</p> <p>Consider rescheduling activities such as deliveries and maintenance to facilitate physical distancing.</p> <p>If possible, hold meetings via Zoom or a phone call.</p>	M 44

	Hazards and risks	Risk score before	Control measures	Risk score after
			<p>Open windows or adjust air-conditioning to provide more ventilation if possible. Limit food handling or sharing food at work.</p>	
27.	Exposure to environmental pathogens from other workplaces	H 60	<p>Before entering other workplaces determine if there have been any confirmed cases of COVID-19. If travel is required, ensure that alcohol-based hand sanitisers are made available to anyone travelling for work. Workers to wash their hands regularly according to World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines or use hand sanitiser where washing facilities are not available. Maintain a 1.5-metre distance from other people where possible. Maintain at least 3 metres distance from people with <i>flu-like</i> symptoms. Avoid sharing equipment where possible. Where possible, make arrangements for only 1 worker to travel in a vehicle at a time. If sharing vehicles, wipe down surfaces before and after each user.</p>	M 44

Risk matrix											Hierarchy of controls	
Likelihood	Consequence											
	1. Insignificant	2. Minor	3. Moderate	4. Major	5. Catastrophic							
A. Almost certain	M	52	H	64	E	76	E	88	E	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most effective risk control 	
B. Likely	M	44	H	56	H	68	E	80	E	92		
C. Possible	L	36	M	48	H	60	E	72	E	84		
D. Unlikely	L	28	L	40	M	52	H	64	E	76		
E. Rare	L	20	L	32	M	44	H	56	H	68		

Score indicator		
Score	Level of danger	Required action
72 – 100	Extreme	NO WORK SHOULD COMMENCE AT THIS LEVEL! This is an unacceptable level of risk. Action must be taken to eliminate or minimise the risk immediately. Report this risk immediately to management.
56 – 68	High	WORK CAN COMMENCE AT THIS LEVEL IF THE CONTROL MEASURES ARE APPROVED BY THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OR DELEGATE The Managing Director or delegate will review existing controls to ensure that the risk is reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable.
44 – 52	Moderate	Work can continue with controls in place. Management must continually monitor and review the controls and aim to reduce the risk further.
20 - 40	Low	Some control may be necessary, or the risk is acceptable.