

Coronavirus - What must Business consider?

March 2020

With COVID-19 causing mass disruption to business and daily life it is inevitable that most, if not all, businesses will be impacted in varying degrees by the virus.

Whilst our inboxes, newsfeed and media sources are filled with stories of panic buying, closures, cancellations and travel restrictions, it is important to remain informed of the Human, Safety and Industrial aspects of your business.

Employer Obligations

Workplace Health and Safety and Duty of Care to workers is currently difficult for Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). Remember that there is no 'one size fits all' approach, and your duty of care may differ depending on your industry or even per employee, for example, in the event you have an employee who has travelled overseas where additional precautions are required.

Communication and Consultation

Now is the time to communicate and notify your employees what your expectations are in terms of duty of care and what steps to take if they are feeling unwell. Importantly, you should be updating employees regarding risk assessment and workplace changes.

It is also the time to notify external contractors of your expectations in relation to site attendance or meetings.

Management of the workplace

Ensure employees are aware of who has authority to restrict entry and what the process should be if they have concerns about a colleague, contractor or visitor.

Employee Obligations

Communication should be provided to employees in relation to who has authority to act (or comment), their obligations for notification and what the business required in relation to their conduct.

Policies and Procedures

It is strongly recommended that a policy on managing the Coronavirus is implemented to ensure all employees are aware of their obligations.

If you are going to consider Working from Home options, then you should implement an appropriate policy and a workplace health and safety checklist.

Leave and Entitlements

Situation	Considerations
Employee is sick	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal leave (if accrued) • unpaid leave.
Employee's immediate family member is sick	Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers leave (if accrued) • unpaid leave.
Employee is not sick but refuses to come to work because of risk of infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no real risk of infection the employee is absent without authorisation and as such are not paid • At your discretion, you can allow the employee to take accrued Annual or Long service leave • If there is no agreement and the employee remains absent, then contact CAI for advice.
Employee is not sick but cannot attend workplace because they are stuck overseas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they work remotely? • Do they have accrued Annual or Long Service Leave; or • unpaid leave.
Employee is not sick but has self-isolated due to Government guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they work remotely? • Do they have accrued Annual or Long Service Leave; or • unpaid leave.
Employee is not sick, but the employer requires the employee remain away as a precautionary measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they work remotely? • Where the employer is directing the employee not to attend work then the employer must pay the employee their ordinary rate of pay for the shifts they would have done in that timeframe. In this situation the employee does not use accrued entitlements. <p>Contact CAI before proceeding</p>
Employer temporarily closes workplace due to actual or suspected case of coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can they work remotely? • Review your industrial instrument to determine whether you can place employees on either unpaid leave or accrued leave. <p>Contact CAI before proceeding</p>

Additional Resources

- [Department of Health: Coronavirus Resources](#)
- [Department of Health: Information Sheet for Employers](#)
- [Fair Work Ombudsman: Coronavirus and Australian Workplace Laws](#)
- [WorkSafe Tasmania: Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Safe Work Australia: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Advice for PCBU's](#)

The National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

Please contact CAI who can assist in answering your questions and draft policies suitable and relevant to your business.