

Protecting yourself and others from COVID-19

Getting ready for COVID-19 cases and outbreaks – information for COVID-19 priority settings

This information is for organisations responsible for COVID-19 priority settings in Tasmania, not general settings. For information about general settings, visit the [Department of Health website](#).

For information about how cases and outbreaks are controlled in COVID-19 priority settings, see:

- *Fact Sheet 2: Managing COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks – Information for COVID-19 Priority Settings*
- *the COVID-19 Case and Outbreak Management Framework for Tasmanian Settings.*

COVID-19 priority setting

It is important for all businesses and organisations to be ready to respond quickly to COVID-19 cases and outbreaks associated with their settings.

Preparedness is particularly important for COVID-19 priority settings where:

- people live in groups, including aged care facilities, shelters, boarding houses, boarding schools, remote industrial sites with accommodation and seasonal workers' accommodation
- we know COVID-19 can spread rapidly
- the management of outbreaks may be complex, including those in remote locations away from major health services.

If you're not sure if your setting is a COVID-19 priority setting, [click here](#).

A single case in a COVID-19 priority setting is likely to be considered an outbreak. If an outbreak of COVID-19 is linked to your priority setting, Public Health Services will work closely and quickly with you to stop the virus spreading.

This information outlines what you will be expected to do and how to prepare.

Why being prepared is important

A vigorous, rapid and effective response to a single or several cases is the most important way to prevent the spread of illness and protect lives and livelihoods.

The organisation responsible for the affected setting has an important role in controlling outbreaks as part of a coordinated response led by Public Health Services. Being prepared will support a rapid response and minimise disruption to your service/business. It will help people within your organisation understand their roles in outbreak management and the roles of others; minimise confusion and anxiety within the setting and protect the public reputation of your organisation.

Being prepared will also help protect others in your setting, minimise the need to quarantine staff and minimise the need for restrictive public health measures to protect the community.



For more information visit www.health.tas.gov.au

What happens when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

When someone is diagnosed with COVID-19, Public Health Services rapidly launches an investigation to work out where they might have caught the virus and who they may have passed it on to. The main purpose of this investigation is to stop the spread of illness.

If the confirmed case spent time in your setting while they may have been infectious, Public Health Services will contact you.

Public Health Services will tell you what to do. For example, they will:

- advise about activating your outbreak management plan
- advise about safely managing confirmed cases in your setting (for residential services)
- work with you to identify people who may have been exposed to the virus ('close contacts') in your setting
- advise on infection control, cleaning/disinfection requirements and limiting access to the setting
- advise on communications with people in or associated with your setting.

What you can do to prepare

The main steps for organisations to take in preparing for cases and outbreaks in COVID-19 priority settings are:

1. Become familiar with the planned, multi-agency approach to case and outbreak management described in the Case and Outbreak Management Framework for Tasmanian Settings.
2. Develop an outbreak management plan for the settings your organisation manages, using the COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan Template and related tools as a guide.
3. Educate and train staff in their role and responsibilities, including infection prevention and control.
4. Keep a record of people that spend time in the setting, to support contact tracing, if necessary.

Outbreak management plans are different to WorkSafe COVID-19 safety plans:

- **WorkSafe COVID-19 safety plans** document how your organisation complies with the minimum standards for managing the risks of COVID-19, to keep people within the setting safe. They include a brief description of the actions to take if there is a case linked to your setting (under the 'Responding to an incident of COVID-19 in the workplace' section). All workplaces are encouraged to have a COVID-19 safety plan to document how they meet legal requirements to protect workers and others in the workplace.
- **Outbreak management plans** provide detail about how organisations responsible for COVID-19 priority settings will manage cases and outbreaks associated with those settings, within a coordinated, multi-agency response led by Public Health Services. Outbreak management plans include:
 - the steps to take when notified of a COVID-19 case linked with the setting
 - the staff who will be involved in case and outbreak management in the setting, and their roles and responsibilities
 - how the organisation will communicate with and protect others within the setting
 - specific risks associated with the setting, and how those risks will be managed.

How can I stay updated?

Advice is updated frequently as the COVID-19 situation evolves in Tasmania. Please refer to the following for the latest information:

- Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au
- Australian Government Department of Health www.health.gov.au
- Tasmanian Public Health Hotline **1800 671 738**



Having a WorkSafe COVID-19 Safety Plan is the best way to document how you meet legal requirements to protect workers and others in the workplace from COVID-19.