

# Outbreak Management: Preparedness Checklist

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Version 3 | July 2022

Checklist for use in high risk and priority settings - prevention, planning and preparedness stage.

## Prevention

- Encourage all staff to be up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccination; also encourage influenza vaccination when available, to help minimise the overall burden of illness in settings and workplaces.
- Optimise ventilation in your workplace - minimise recirculation of air and ensure the heating and air conditioning system is well-maintained (see Safe Work Australia information on indoor ventilation).
- Do not permit workers to enter the workplace if they have any symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19 and are still in their isolation period.
- Display signage to encourage people in the setting to take steps to protect themselves and others, including by maintaining physical distancing as feasible.
- Ensure close contacts in the setting wear a face mask indoors, unless exempt. It can be helpful to have a supply of masks available for people entering the premises.
- Encourage use of face masks, especially for:
  - people working indoors
  - people who cannot physically distance from others
  - people at risk of severe illness or providing services to people at risk of severe illness
  - during periods of increased rates of staff illness due to respiratory infections.

## Planning and preparedness

- Facilitate optimal hand hygiene and cleaning and maintain adequate hand hygiene and cleaning supplies, and a cleaning schedule that focuses on frequently touched surfaces.
- Check the definition of a COVID-19 outbreak for your high-risk or priority setting and liaise with Public Health about how to track the number of active cases and identify potential outbreaks.
- Comply with work health and safety requirements, including by doing a COVID-19 risk assessment and implementing appropriate risk controls, as per best practice public health guidance.
- For priority, high-risk and large workplaces, update your Outbreak Management Plan.  
  
Maintain situational awareness; check **[www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au)** regularly for updates to Public Health advice.
- Identify who will coordinate the response in your setting and be the main contact person for Public Health - if required - and the membership, roles and responsibilities of your internal outbreak response team. Inform staff of their roles and the workplace outbreak plan.
- Consider the needs of diverse groups within the setting, including people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and people whose preferred language is not English.
- Review existing health screening processes (as necessary).

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Prepare for staff to work from home (if possible / appropriate).

Consider having a supply of rapid antigen tests (RATs) available for staff, to enable rapid identification of cases.

Consider arrangements for staff who are close contacts, including under what circumstances close contacts can attend the workplace and the measures close contacts must take to protect other people in the workplace.

Consider how to continue business safely (or suspend activities) during outbreaks and high staff absenteeism; plan for absenteeism rates of 20-30 per cent over winter months when influenza and other respiratory illnesses may also be more prevalent, and minimise sole person dependency.

If your business provides or supports accommodation for staff or customers, identify appropriate premises where cases can isolate according to the guidelines at the time.

## **Additional preparedness activities for residential care facilities (residential aged care, residential disability care, residential correctional facilities (prisons) and hospitals.**

- Establish systems to identify people with symptoms of COVID-19 (and influenza) in your setting.
- Plan how resident cases and close contacts will be managed safely.
- Have facility information (size, layout, staff and resident numbers) ready to provide to Public Health to support risk assessment, if requested.