



CLEANING  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
FRAMEWORK

COVID-19:

# Information for cleaning contractors

Current as of 26 March 2020

## *Provide a safe work environment for cleaners*

- Ensuring that cleaners have access to the appropriate personal protective equipment (in particular disposable gloves) and adequate supplies of chemicals and other supplies has never been more critical.
- Many cleaners are requesting masks during the pandemic, even as global shortages mean that they are difficult to source: current advice from the [Department of Health](#) is that masks are not helpful in preventing uninfected workers from contracting the virus, they are only needed to prevent people who have coronavirus from spreading it to others. However, if you are asking a cleaner to clean an area where there is a known or suspected contamination of COVID-19, you should inform them of the contamination and provide them with additional personal protective equipment, including a mask.



- Where cleaning specifications have been increased in order to minimise the spread of COVID-19, ensure that cleaners have sufficient time in which to meet additional workloads.

## *Consulting with your employees about measures to minimise the risk of COVID-19*

- Cleaning contractors should discuss health and safety matters with cleaners, taking a consultative approach to allow cleaners to express views before any decision is made.
- Participation of cleaners in discussions about health and safety is important, as they are more likely to know about the risks of their work. Joint involvement in identifying hazards and assessing and controlling workplace risks will help build cleaners' commitment to this process and any changes that may result.

## *Paid personal leave*

- Cleaning contractors should ensure that cleaners have access to paid personal leave if they are unable to work due to ill health, mandated self-isolation or carers duties. Most cleaners have a paid personal leave entitlement, and yet frequently experience barriers to accessing it. Now is the time to relax evidentiary requirements relating to sick leave, e.g. not requiring cleaners to provide a medical certificate for a single day of absence. This is important to reduce the risk of cleaners turning up to work sick, which we know to be a problem, given the expense international students face to see a doctor.



## If you have no choice but to stand employees down as a result of any COVID-19-related site closures (last resort)

Under section [524 of the Fair Work Act](#), employers are able to stand employees down, without pay, during a period in which an employee cannot usefully be employed because of situations including “a stoppage of work for any cause for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible.”

If you stand down employees due to reduced or suspended contract requirements and you are unable to redeploy employees elsewhere, you should:

- Provide cleaners with a letter confirming their employment, hours of work and ordinary salary/ wage rate, plus confirmation that they have been stood down without pay – this will allow eligible cleaners to access government support.
- Provide cleaners with information on how to apply for the JobSeeker Payment and COVID-19 Supplement, e.g. by directing them to the CAF COVID-19 infosheet for cleaners. NB: temporary migrant workers are currently not able to access Centrelink payments.

*Note: CAF will update this section as additional guidance and income support measures are announced by the Australian Government.*

## For further guidance on COVID-10

- [Safe Work Australia](#) provides detailed information on how to keep your employees safe during COVID-19.
- Any cleaning contractors involved in CAF can contact their CAF file manager or [info@cleaningaccountability.org.au](mailto:info@cleaningaccountability.org.au) if you have any questions about how you can continue to meet the CAF 3 Star Standard in the context of COVID-19.
- Refer to the [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) or to [United Workers Union](#) if you are not involved in CAF.

- For employees on casual contracts, cleaning contractors may consider providing 14 days’ special paid leave to those affected by COVID-19, as many [employers have done](#).

## Keep cleaners informed about decisions that affect them

- Many cleaners are understandably anxious about not only about their health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also their livelihoods in the event that they may no longer be required to work as part of potential building closures.
- Employers have an obligation under the Fair Work Act to hold consultations with cleaners and United Workers Union prior to any changes to rosters, cuts to hours or in the event of shut down.

## If contract requirements are reduced

- In the first instance, attempt to redeploy cleaners to other sites.
- Offer the option of using annual leave or long service leave to employees with an accrued entitlement.
- Consult with United Workers Union.