

Information for cleaning contractors

Current as of 14 August 2020

Provide a safe work environment for cleaners

- Ensuring that cleaners have access to the appropriate personal protective equipment (including masks) and adequate supplies of chemicals and materials has never been more critical.
- If a cleaner is asked to clean an area that has been contaminated by a known or suspected case of COVID-19, you should inform them of the contamination and provide them with the appropriate personal protective equipment and training required.
- Where cleaning specifications have been increased or reallocated, ensure that cleaners have sufficient time in which to meet additional or changed workloads.

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



- 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

- Cleaners and other workers in Victoria may be eligible for [financial support](#) from the government in the event they need to get tested for COVID-19 and isolate (\$450 test isolation payment and a \$1500/fortnight worker support payment). Make sure you are providing up to date information to employees about these payments and how to access them.
- 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 documentation for a single day of absence. This is important to reduce the risk of cleaners turning up to work sick.
- Best practice: For employees who do not have access to the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment (i.e. those outside of Victoria), you may consider providing 14 days' special paid leave to those who need to self-isolate, 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.



- 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.

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

Consider that temporary migrant workers cannot access either the JobKeeper or JobSeeker payments and that standing them down without pay may force them into poverty.

If you do stand down employees due to reduced or suspended contract requirements and you are unable to redeploy employees elsewhere, ensure that JobKeeper is administered in such a way as to preserve migrant workers' income as much as possible.

Additional guidance in relation to stand downs and service reductions is available to CAF members and stakeholders at CAF certified buildings. Contact us at info@cleaningaccountability.org.au to receive this guidance.

For further information

- [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 at info@cleaningaccountability.org.au if they have any questions about how to 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.