

COVID-19: Information for cleaners

Current as of 11 February 2022



Cleaners have been frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, working hard to keep buildings clean and safe for members of the public. You play an important role in helping to reduce the spread of the virus.

CAF exists to uphold cleaners' labour rights. Cleaning contractors, building managers, and building owners at CAF-certified buildings are committed to providing fair pay and safe working conditions to cleaners.

This factsheet provides information about questions you may have about your job and your rights in the context of COVID-19, what options you have if you are affected by COVID-19, and where to go for assistance.

Financial help for workers during the COVID-19 pandemic

The [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#) is available for workers who are unable to earn income because they have to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 or care for someone subject to these requirements.

All workers with an eligible working visa, including migrant workers on temporary visas, in all states and territories across Australia, can now access these disaster payments. To apply, visit the [Services Australia website](#).

Some states and territories also have hardship payments for workers, such as those who cannot earn income whilst awaiting their COVID-19 test results.

Your employer should be able to provide more information if you have any questions about what financial support you can access. Your union, [United Workers Union](#), can also provide more detailed guidance on how to apply for different payments.

If you are a migrant worker in financial distress, check out our page on [financial resources for migrant workers](#). (Note: local workers are also eligible for the supports listed on the page.)

Personal leave

If you are unable to work due to COVID-19, for example if you have to self-isolate or care for someone who has COVID-19, you are entitled to take paid personal (sick) leave if you are permanent or fixed term and you have accrued personal leave.

You are entitled to take unpaid personal leave if you are a casual.

You cannot be fired because of a [temporary absence from work due to illness](#).

Check with your employer and your [union](#) if you have any questions about taking paid or unpaid leave if you or someone you care for has COVID-19 or you are required to self-isolate.

For further information check out the Fair Work Ombudsman's [resource](#) on taking leave during the pandemic.

Safe working conditions

Your employer must ensure that you always have a safe work environment.

This includes providing you with the personal protective equipment (PPE) you need to do your job safely, including:

- disposable gloves,
- masks,
- easy access to water and soap and hand sanitisers,
- supplies of chemicals and cleaning materials including regularly washed or disposable cloths, disinfectant.

You are also entitled to a safe and sustainable workload. This is especially important as Australia transitions to 'living with COVID-19' and your colleagues will likely be absent due to COVID-19 at some point. You are also entitled to quality training on how to do your job safely.

If you believe your safety is at risk, talk to your employer and/or your [union](#). You are legally protected from adverse action due to raising health and safety concerns. For more information see [here](#).

What is CAF doing to protect cleaners at this time?

- Monitoring workplace health and safety conditions at CAF-certified buildings
- Advising your employer to provide a safe work environment, to consult with you on any planned changes to working conditions.
- Consulting with your union, United Workers Union, on measures to support you during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you want to report any workplace issues to CAF relating to COVID-19

Complete the CAF Coronavirus [survey](#). We will leave this survey open throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide regular reports to your employer, the building manager, and the building owner. Your response to the survey will be treated confidentially. You can complete the survey more than once, if your working conditions change.

You can also contact [United Workers Union](#) if you have any questions or concerns.

For more information

The Fair Work Ombudsman has provided some [guidance](#) around your workplace rights regarding COVID-19.

United Workers Union has a factsheet on [supports and services](#) during COVID-19.

Contact [United Workers Union](#) if you have any questions about your rights during COVID-19 and for assistance with legal matters.

If COVID-19 is creating issues with your visa conditions, you can access free immigration advice and visa service from Unions NSW and the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre [here](#).

SBS has information about COVID-19 in Australia in 63 different languages, you can stay up to date [here](#).