



Department of Health and Human Services

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Dear Chief Executive Officer,

Thank you for your cooperation and support of the coronavirus (COVID-19) response. Victorian local councils are vital in protecting public health and supporting those most vulnerable in our community.

The efforts of local councils and all Victorians have kept the rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) community transmission low. This is why the Victorian Government has announced gradual easing of restrictions throughout the state. These changes will impact council operations, and it will be important a consistent approach is taken wherever possible. This consistency will help ensure Victoria can re-establish some activities in a manner that continues to keep transmission levels low.

Key changes to restrictions

Since Monday 25 May 2020 11.59 PM

- Public playgrounds, outdoor gyms and skateparks are open. There is no limit on the number of people that can utilise these facilities at any one time. People should not gather in groups of more than 20 and should stay 1.5 metres apart from others where possible.

We recommend that each of these facilities is cleaned to remove any leaf litter, twigs and dirt, but otherwise no ongoing cleaning or disinfection is required other than normal maintenance. The risk of transmission from outdoor surfaces will be low due to wind exposure, rain and sunshine (i.e. UV light), with coronavirus unlikely to last for very long periods on outdoor surfaces. Place signage nearby advising the public to follow hand and respiratory hygiene and physical distancing principles.

For public barbecues we recommend maintaining usual cleaning and disinfection practices and provide advice to users of public barbecues to clean before and after use. Public toilets should be cleaned and disinfected at least once per day and there should be a mechanism for the public to report issues with cleanliness.

Further information about cleaning and disinfecting to reduce coronavirus transmission can be found at: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/cleaning-and-disinfecting-reduce-covid-19-transmission

Since Sunday 31 May 2020 at 11.59 PM:

- People in Victoria can attend **public gatherings** in a public space of no more than 20 people.

- Up to 20 people can participate in group **sport and exercise** activities but it must be outside, non-contact, non-competitive, and able to maintain physical distancing (at least 1.5 metres apart). Communal change and shower facilities should remain closed. Toilets can be open. Guidance on the return to plan for sport is available at www.sport.vic.gov.au/our-work/return-to-play
- **Libraries, community centres, halls and community clubs** can open and have up to 20 people per separate space, plus the minimum number of people reasonably required to operate the facility. The four-square metre rule applies to each space. Guidance relevant for libraries is available at: www.creative.vic.gov.au/coronavirus
- **Indoor and outdoor swimming pools** can open with a maximum of 20 patrons per swimming pool, with a limit of three persons per lane in each pool. Activity in the pool should remain non-contact, non-competitive, and able to maintain physical distancing (at least 1.5 metres apart). Safety of course takes precedence. The four-square metre rule applies to the publicly accessible area excluding the pool. Communal change and shower facilities should remain closed. Toilets can be open.
- **Restaurants, cafes and pubs** can open to serve dine-in food, with a limit of up to 20 customers at a time in each separate space. The four-square metre rule applies to each space. It would be appreciated if councils would actively engage with food businesses to ensure food safety as they re-establish their dine-in operations. While local council environmental health officers are not asked to undertake compliance activities against the Restricted Activities Direction made to food and drink facilities, the department would be grateful for their support with educating food businesses about the requirements. Industry guidelines are available at: www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/hospitality-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19
- **Beauty therapy, tanning, waxing, nail salons, spas, tattoo parlours and massage parlours** can open with up to 20 clients in their premises at any one time. The four-square metre rule applies to each space. Guidance to the beauty and personal care industries is available at: www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-business-support
- **Tourist accommodation, including caravan parks and camping grounds** can be offered where there are no shared communal facilities (e.g. kitchens and bathrooms). Further guidance is available at: www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-business-support

For many facilities that are subject to restricted activities, there are requirements to:

- request and record the first name and contact phone number of people that attend for more than 15 minutes, and the time and date of their attendance. This record should be kept and produced on request by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to assist with any required contact tracing;
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces accessible to members of the public; and
- have signage to advise people of the numbers of people allowed in each separate space of the facility subject to the direction.

Please review the *Restricted Activities Directions* available at: www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19 for details.

In addition to these requirements under the Restricted Activities Directions, we'd appreciate any support from councils to promote and support physical distancing behaviours in their facilities and communities. A range of communication products are available at: www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/hospitality-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19

Further easing of restrictions is planned from 22 June including allowing the restricted operation of indoor physical recreation facilities, with up to 20 people per separate enclosed space, and groups of up to 10 taking a class together. Under the proposed changes, concert venues and theatres will be allowed up to 50 seated people per separate space, subject to the four-square metre rule. Galleries and museums will be allowed up to 50 visitors per separate space, while ensuring that density requirements of one person per four square metres is applied. Councils are also encouraged to plan for these changes. All eased restrictions and the proposed dates are subject to up-to-date advice and the continued and effective management of the spread of coronavirus.

Public health action

The department appreciates councils' continued attention to their regulatory obligations under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)* and *Food Act 1984 (Vic)* during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As the coronavirus (COVID-19) response remains dynamic, we suggest you regularly engage with information on the department's dedicated website (www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus).

The department will continue to support councils and their environmental health officers to maintain core public health functions, as well as their contribution to the coronavirus (COVID-19) response. Councils play a critical role in disseminating messages across regulated entities and their communities.

Should you have concerns or queries regarding your council's public health functions, please address them to the following regional health protection email addresses, based on the region your council is based in. Officers will be able to assist or redirect as necessary. We will keep you updated of any changes.

- HealthProtection.EastMetro@dhhs.vic.gov.au
- HealthProtection.NorthMetro@dhhs.vic.gov.au
- HealthProtection.SouthMetro@dhhs.vic.gov.au
- HealthProtection.WestDiv@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brett Sutton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adj Clin Prof Brett Sutton
Victorian Chief Health Officer
Health Protection Branch

/ /2020