

BULLETIN: 3/2022

COVID-19 UPDATE: KEEPING WORKERS IN KEY SECTORS SAFE

The [Victorian Government has announced](#) a number of changes to further protect our highest-risk health care and hospitality settings – and key workforces – from the risk of outbreaks and super-spreader events.

Under new pandemic orders coming into place at 11:59pm on Wednesday 12 January 2022:

Vaccination Requirements in Key Sectors

Workers in key sectors who are already required to be fully vaccinated must get their third dose before being permitted to work onsite.

This applies to workers in:

- healthcare
- aged care
- disability services
- emergency services
- correctional facilities
- quarantine accommodation
- food distribution.

Workplaces must sight and record proof of vaccination.

Workers eligible for a third dose on or before Wednesday 12 January 2022 will have until Saturday 12 February 2022 to get their third dose.

Workers not yet eligible for a third dose will be required to get it within three months and two weeks of the deadline to receiving their second mandatory dose.

This means:

- residential aged care workers must receive their third dose by 1 March
- disability, quarantine accommodation, correctional facilities, emergency services, and food distribution workers will need to receive their third dose by 12 March
- health care workers must receive their third dose by 29 March.

Food distribution includes manufacturing, warehousing and transport (freight/port) workers involved in food distribution. Retail supermarket staff are not included in the mandate.

Dancefloors to close

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading, indoor dancefloors within hospitality and entertainment venues must close from 11:59pm 12 January 2022.

Venues can still operate and there are no changes to the density settings currently in place.

This change reflects settings already in place in other states, including New South Wales.



Indoor dancefloors at weddings will be permitted, but wedding hosts and guests should still consider the risks of dancefloors and choose to locate them outdoors if possible.

The strong recommendations to work and study from home (for adult education) if you can, and that patrons in hospitality and entertainment venues opt for seated service, will continue. It is recommended that people visiting these venues who can access Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) should use them before attending.

Food manufacturing, distribution and packaging exemption

To ensure Victorians can continue to access essential food supplies, workers in the manufacturing, distribution or packaging of food and beverages, including retail supermarket workers, may be exempted from close contact isolation requirements in order to attend work from 11.59pm Wednesday 12 January 2022, if it is necessary for continuity of operations and other options have been exhausted.

To mitigate risks, exempted workers must be asymptomatic, undertake daily rapid antigen tests for five days and return a negative result prior to attending work. They can't enter shared break areas, and employers are asked to facilitate solo break time.

In addition, face coverings must be worn, using N95/P2 respirators if possible. Both the worker and workplace must consent to the worker's return.

This new close contact isolation exemption for asymptomatic food distribution workers is similar to the arrangements already in place for critical healthcare workers.

Get your booster

All Victorians continue to be encouraged to get their third dose as soon as they become eligible. Bookings can be made www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine.

Information on updated COVIDSafe settings and third dose vaccination requirements will be published at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au when the orders come into effect at 11:59pm Wednesday 12 January 2022.