

BULLETIN: 85/2021

FURTHER ADVICE ON COUNCIL CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

The Chief Health Officer recently announced changes to the [Mandatory Vaccination Directions](#). The Directions require that a construction site operator must ensure that all workers entering a construction site from Friday 24 September have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or has made a booking to receive a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by Saturday 2 October. All site operators must inform their workers that they will be requesting evidence of a worker's COVID-19 vaccination status by Friday 24 September 2021. For more details on vaccines, visit <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine>.

Additional information has now been added to the Victorian Coronavirus website and can be accessed at <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-sector-guidance-construction>.

What is construction activity?

Construction activity is any work done in connection with the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting out, commissioning, renovation, refurbishment, decommissioning or demolition of any building or structure, or any similar activity.

Examples of "structures" include:

- Concrete panels used as freeway sound-reduction barriers
- Transmission towers, pylons and power poles
- Trenches, tunnels and bulk excavations
- Roads, railways, bridges, wharves, jetties and reservoirs
- Scaffolds used to provide support, access or containment during other construction work.

Maintenance, testing and repair work of existing building, structures and fixed plants is also considered construction if it requires preparation work (such as replacing a roof, a commercial fit out, and renovation works requiring building permits).

The main sectors of construction are:

- housing (including construction of domestic houses, flats and associated outbuildings)
- commercial (including construction of office buildings, shops and shopping centres, public buildings, factories and medium to high rise apartment buildings)
- civil (including construction of roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, wharfs, reservoirs, dams and similar infrastructure works)
- engineering (including construction of power stations, chemical processing and storage facilities, major industrial processing plants and ship building).

What is not construction activity?

The assembly, disassembly, prefabrication or manufacturing of fixed plant is not considered construction activity. Routine or minor maintenance, testing or repair of utility services may not be considered a construction activity. Similarly, minor maintenance, testing or repair work on fixed plants, existing structures and existing buildings is not construction activity (for example, installing guttering, installing a hot water service, pool pump maintenance, garden and landscaping maintenance).

Please note that:

- testing, maintenance or repair work is usually minor if it can be safely performed with little or no pre-start preparation of the work area.
- the installation of fixed plant may be regarded as construction work if it involves: constructing, altering, converting; fitting out or commissioning; renovating or refurbishing; decommissioning or demolishing.

Further guidance for the construction sector is available in the WorkSafe Victoria [fact sheet](#).

In addition Construction workers must not travel between regional Victoria, metropolitan Melbourne and regional councils subject to lockdown orders except if they are working on a State Critical Infrastructure Project, or where there is a safety issue requiring timely assistance and workers cannot be sourced in a timely manner from within the same area. This means council construction staff who reside in metropolitan Melbourne and regional councils subject to lockdown orders are unable to attend work for councils in regional Victoria.

Regards,

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Authorised by Emily Phillips, Deputy Secretary
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