

Department of Justice
WORKSAFE TASMANIA

WorkSafe Tasmania
30 Gordons Hill Road Rosny Park TAS 7018
PO Box 56, Rosny Park TAS 7018
Phone 03 6166 6736
Email worksafepolicy@justice.tas.gov.au Web www.justice.tas.gov.au

PAC/SUB # 9
Tabled 21/10/22



Ms Cassy O'Connor MP
Tasmanian Greens Leader, Member for Clark
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

By email: cassy.oconnor@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms O'Connor and Dr Woodruff

Thank you for your letter dated 7 October 2022 regarding the agreement of all states and territories at National Cabinet on 30 September 2022 to end mandatory isolation requirements for COVID-19, based on public health advice, with effect from 14 October 2022.

COVID-19 is a hazard that presents a risk to the health and safety of workers and other persons who may be affected by the carrying out of work in the workplace. As you point out, employers have duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (the Act) to manage the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace, just as they do any other workplace hazard. The risks in each workplace will vary depending on the nature of the business, for example a business that operates in a vulnerable setting such as aged care has different risks to consider than a business that is office-based. For this reason, it is important that each business assesses the risk in their context and mitigates those risks, so far as reasonably practicable. In determining what is reasonably practicable, businesses need to take into consideration a number of factors including what is known, or ought to be known, about the risk and ways of eliminating or mitigating the risk. Public health guidance assists businesses in making these decisions.

WorkSafe Tasmania has also relied on expert public health advice when developing COVID-19 workplace safety guidance materials and tools since the start of the pandemic. These materials have been continually reviewed and updated as public health settings and advice have changed. Yesterday we published our updated guidance materials, which encourage all businesses to review their COVID safety plans to mitigate any changes to their risks arising from the removal of mandatory isolation requirements. The advice strongly promotes the need for employees who have tested positive with COVID-19, or are displaying COVID-19 symptoms, to stay home.

In terms of the measures that businesses should consider when determining what is reasonably practicable, businesses should continue to consider longstanding measures such as: maintaining physical distancing; density limits; staying home and testing if the worker has COVID-19 symptoms; working from home; mask wearing in certain situations when the COVID risk in the community is high; hygiene; cleaning; providing information, training and instruction to workers; providing adequate supervision; vaccinations; ventilation and; outbreak management. In addition to these, businesses should consider the following measures as a result of the removal of the mandatory isolation period for workers who have tested positive for COVID-19:

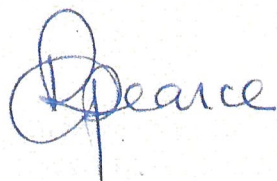
- staying home until acute symptoms have resolved;

- not attending residential aged or disability care facilities or hospitals, as workers or visitors, for at least seven days after their positive result;
- avoiding large gatherings and indoor crowded places for at least seven days;
- informing Public Health of a positive result and if a rapid antigen test (RAT) was used;
- advising the workplace about their positive result and follow any workplace policy that may be in place for the return to work of cases and close contacts of COVID-19; and
- if the worker must attend the workplace, wearing a mask when indoors and on public transport

In addition to these measures, workers who have respiratory symptoms, even if testing negative for COVID-19, should remain at home until their symptoms have mostly resolved as it is likely they may have another infectious illness.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me seeking information about how businesses can mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the workplace, and the guidance being provided by WorkSafe Tasmania.

Yours sincerely



Robyn Pearce
Executive Director

14 October 2022