



# Coronavirus (COVID-19) information for remote industrial sites

## Background

Remote industrial sites are high risk environments for transmission of infections that are spread via coughing and sneezing, given that workers live and work in close quarters and there is regular turnover of workforce.

In addition, remote industrial sites have limited access to medical services and there are often challenges in transporting people to a health facility if they require medical support beyond what can be provided on-site.

Remote industrial sites will need to plan for management of:

- a suspected case of COVID-19
- a confirmed case of COVID-19
- contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Travel of staff to and from remote industrial sites may increase the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection to other people, including to people living in remote communities, so care needs to be taken to decrease this risk.

The following information is provided to assist remote industrial sites reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection associated with travel to and from sites and within remote industrial sites.

## Travel restrictions

The Commonwealth and Western Australian governments have introduced restrictions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections associated with travel into and within Western Australia (WA). Restrictions are in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections:

- entering Australia
- spreading from other jurisdictions into WA
- spreading within WA, and
- spreading into remote Aboriginal communities.

As these restrictions and associated exemptions are subject to change, information will need to be continually reviewed to ensure compliance with current restrictions.

Further information is available regarding:

- [travel to Australia](#)
- [WA state border closure](#)
- [regional travel](#)
- [travel to remote Aboriginal communities](#) or [remote designated areas](#)
- [travel between local districts in the Kimberley](#).

Sites with staff travelling under work exemptions should provide clear guidance outlining measures that staff should take to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This could include:

- maintaining good social distancing while travelling and on-site
- maintaining good personal hygiene
- restricting travel to only that essential for work
- self-monitoring and not-travelling if they have any fever or respiratory symptoms.

## Workplace entry recommendations

To prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 on remote industrial sites, the following people should NOT enter a remote industrial site. They should not board a flight or other form of transport to take them to a remote industrial site.

- those who have entered Australia from overseas within the previous 14 days. When the quarantine period has been completed (14 days since entering Australia) and the person remains well, they may return to work on a remote industrial site.
- those who have been identified as a 'close contact' of a confirmed case of COVID-19 by public health officials in the previous 14 days.

To further reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections, remote industrial sites should advise people not to visit remote industrial sites if they have any respiratory symptoms.

## Management of people who develop symptoms of a respiratory infection after arriving at a remote industrial site

People who develop symptoms of a respiratory infection, e.g. fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, after arriving at a remote site need to do the following until symptoms have resolved:

1. If COVID-19 is suspected by the industrial site's health service, according to the [case definition for COVID-19](#), droplet and contact precautions should be used, and a surgical mask should be used by the worker (suspect case) during assessment.
2. In some instances, it may be possible to arrange for swab collection for testing for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses on site, or at a nearby town medical facility, provided this can be done using appropriate precautions and there is a mechanism to transport specimens to Perth, in a reasonably timely way.
3. If COVID-19 is suspected, the local [Public Health Unit \(PHU\)](#) will be able to provide further advice on management of a suspected case.

If the person is assessed as being medically well enough to remain on-site, the following is recommended for the person while they are symptomatic and/or awaiting test results for COVID-19 and/or other viruses:

1. Self-quarantine by eating and sleeping alone in their own bedroom or donga, and not sharing bathroom facilities.
2. Avoid being with other people indoors, e.g. office, meeting room or dining room, or any other enclosed spaces, e.g. motor vehicle. If this is necessary, the ill person should wear a surgical mask. They should maintain a distance of at least 1.5 m from other people.
3. Take extra care to practise good personal hand hygiene and sneeze/cough hygiene.
4. Environmental cleaning and disinfection should be undertaken of rooms used by the person as per [national recommendations](#).

Further information on [self-isolation for people undergoing testing](#) is available from WA Health.

## Management of a confirmed case of COVID-19

Remote industrial sites will need to have a plan for whether COVID-19 cases could remain on-site. If a confirmed COVID-19 case has mild respiratory symptoms and the site can provide them with the support and facilities to isolate them from other people, they could remain on site until their infection has cleared.

Local PHUs will follow-up COVID-19 cases and work with remote industrial sites to determine close contacts of cases and provide advice on the management of close contacts. Close contacts will be required to self-isolate as described above.

Remote industrial sites will need to plan for the possibility that cases, or contacts may need to remain on-site beyond a planned time period or liaise with PHUs for advice on maintaining appropriate infection control during transport. The Public Health Operations team from the WA Department of Health will determine when a confirmed case is cleared of infection and no longer requires isolation for public health purposes.

## Management of people with suspected COVID-19 who require transfer to a medical facility

Repatriation should be in accordance with any existing remote site's occupational health and safety policies.

All emergency services need to be informed of the potential risk of COVID-19 prior to attending the site.

## Adherence to public gatherings and social distancing advice

Remote industrial sites may have a large on-site population. Measures must be taken to follow the Australian Government advice regarding social distancing during non-work time for the on-site population. The WA government has also published State of Emergency [directions](#) that must be adhered to. The social distancing rules include:

- allowing 4m<sup>2</sup> per person in any environment.
- staying at least 1.5 metres away from other people
- limits on the size of gatherings i.e.no more than 2 people together indoors or outdoors at any time
- advising against hand shaking and other physical contact.

## Websites where you can find more information

[health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus](https://health.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)

[healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)

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**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.**

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