
MEMBERS' UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2021



COVID UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

- This presentation is designed to prompt you to revise, update and monitor your COVID Safe Plans now.
- Shepparton is not very far way, if COVID makes it to Cobram how well you manage your own business COVID plans will make a big difference to the impact.
- You are responsible – do your absolute best. Remember that the rules change all the time, so always refer to the current restrictions and guidelines.

THE DELTA DIFFERENCE

- The original strain of COVID did not spread as easily as the current DELTA strain.
- DELTA is easily spread through the most fleeting contact – even simply from particles in the air around an infected person.
- If DELTA gets into a household, all members will get it. DELTA is caught and transferred by young, old, everyone.
- Based on last year's virus we know what we need to do to minimise risk, but we need to be even more vigilant this time around.

MUST DO'S – ALL THE TIME

- You must follow the appropriate COVID restrictions, and you need to stay up to date with the changes.
- You must have a current Covid Safety Plan – remember that the plans need to change according to restrictions.
- Recording attendance of all people on your site is crucial for Contact Tracing
- Maintaining social distancing is crucial
- Wearing a mask when required is crucial
- Hand washing as well as sanitising is crucial
- Appropriate cleaning and disinfecting activities must be undertaken and recorded

BORDER CONTROL AND WORK PERMITS

- The changes to worker permits, travel permits, border control, etc are constantly changing.
- One constant has been the recognition of horticultural workers as essential, (or specified or authorised), enabling most of them to travel to the horticultural areas for work.
- Which permit workers need to travel to work depends of a number of variables; where they are coming from, why they are travelling, whether they have Covid/ Covid symptoms, are the crossing the border, etc.
- Sorry, there is no 'one size fits all' answer to what is required. Workers or employers should check what is required and apply accordingly.

BUSINESS SITE ACTIVITIES - VISITORS

- Visitors to your site should be minimised to absolute emergency needs
- External contractors should only be used when essential.
- All visitors to your site must be recorded in an Attendance Register. You can use the Service Vic QR code if you wish or paper records. You need a paper record or log in procedure to record people without a smart phone.
- These records are used for CONTACT TRACING and are an essential part of your emergency response.
- **In the case of an outbreak expect a world of pain if you cannot produce current records of attendance.**
- You are responsible for Visitors on your site and they must follow COVID rules.

BUSINESS SITE ACTIVITIES - CLEANING

- You must maintain a strict cleaning schedule of all communal areas.
- You must provide all necessary cleaning equipment and supplies.
- You must ensure that people are rostered to do the cleaning and are actually doing it, and doing it correctly.
- DELTA survives on some surfaces for some time, so greater vigilance than last year is required.
- Special vigilance to cleaning of washroom and toilet areas is recommended. It is even recommended that toilets are flushed with the lid closed to minimise air born spread of germs when flushing.
- Cleaning is not simply a tick the box activity, it is a front line defence against the spread of the virus...take it seriously
- Remember to clean all shared or high touch surfaces, including shared vehicles, door handles, furniture, tools, etc.
- PPE should be provided on an individual basis with instructions for appropriate cleaning.

CLEANING RESOURCES

- The Department of Health has comprehensive guidelines on workplace cleaning, including templates and fact sheets. Before the season gets busy previewing eth information would be very useful/
- This link goes to the Corona Virus Cleaning Guideline for Workplaces
- <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-cleaning-guidelines-for-workplaces-doc>
- This link goes to the Therapeutic Goods Administration which determines which disinfectants are suitable for deep cleaning. Perhaps it is smart to use a compliant one all the time.
- <https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-use-against-covid-19-artg-legal-supply-australia>

BUSINESS SITE ACTIVITIES – WORKFORCE BUBBLES

- As well as being safer, strong and appropriate workforce bubbles make good economic sense. They will determine how quickly your business can resume full production should you experience an outbreak.
- When setting up bubbles keep people who live or travel together in the same bubble.
- Keep the size of your bubbles relevant to your workplace size and work layout.
- Create variable rosters and shift times that enable bubbles to stay physically distant. Do not all start at once.
- Monitor that people are staying in their bubbles. Stress that workers cannot change roles, jobs, bubbles without management approval.
- Maintain clear records of your bubbles and check for unexpected cross bubble interaction, like lighting a cigarette for someone in passing
- Risk areas for bubbles are shift start and end, smoko and meal breaks, and normal friendly interaction in the workplace.
- Educate workers to understand and adhere to their bubbles. Discuss the social and living implications where sensible.

COVID MARSHALS

- It is simply not practical for the manager or growers to monitor all covid compliance on their own.
- Train and authorise other people to drive Covid compliance. Use team leaders, OHS Reps, shift supervisors, etc to help control social distancing, the movement or gathering of people, hand washing, cleaning rosters, etc.
- You may want to select people to act as Covid Marshals. These are people who are tasked with understanding and monitoring the Covid rules which apply in your business. Workers may take more notice of their instructions if they are given by a nominated marshal.

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

- www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus - for information on preventing infection and **what to do when you have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace**
- Horticulture growers and seasonal workersafe **authorised providers and workers** and need a **work permit**
- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/authorised-provider-and-authorised-worker-permit>
- www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au – has information on updates, signs/posters and template plans for your workplace, Authorised Worker Permit, primary close contact advice, financial and other support for COVID-19
- <https://www.vff.org.au/2021/08/27/help-support-the-goulburn-valley-and-surrounds/> **Victorian Farmers Federation** is providing support and information
- www.fgv.com.au and <http://www.cdfga.com.au> **Fruit Growers Victoria and Cobram & District Fruit Growers Association** is providing support and information to growers.
- www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus - for information on preventing infection and what to do when you have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace
- AV Case Management for farmers impacted by COVID19 to support and make connections with the right people to get the right advice

COVID CASE – TO DO SUMMARY

As an employer, when you become aware of a confirmed case of COVID-19 at your workplace, you must respond quickly to limit further exposure and contain potential outbreaks.

- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at your workplace, you must:

Immediately

1. Direct the worker to return home and isolate immediately, whether or not they have symptoms. Once home, the worker must wait for further instructions from the Victorian Department of Health.
2. Notify the department by completing the [Employer COVID-19 notification form](#) DOCX 86.82 KB
3. and [emailing covidemployernotifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:covidemployernotifications@dhhs.vic.gov.au). If the Department of Health has not contacted you within 24 hours of notification please call [1300 651 160](tel:1300651160).
4. Notify your workers, suppliers and customers that there is a confirmed positive case.
5. Notify [WorkSafe](#) and other relevant industry bodies.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET A CONFIRMED CASE - RESOURCES

These links take you to the section of the Victorian Government which tell you what to do and also provide the documents that you will need to use.

NOTE: All confirmed cases must be reported immediately.

- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace>
- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace#what-employers-need-to-do-if-there-is-a-confirmed-case-of-covid-19-in-the-workplace>
- <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-05/Confirmed-case-in-workplace-information-pack.zip>

VACCINATIONS

- It is becoming clear that being fully vaccinated will get you more freedom and better control of the virus.
- Encourage your workers to vaccinate.
- During the season I will work with NCN Health, our local agency, to make access to vaccination and testing for workers as convenient as possible.
- If your business has specific needs let Karen know by email to cdfga@cobramgrowers.com.au

NEED HELP

- There are lots of agencies willing to help. Use the resources that are provided.
- The Association will do its best to assist, but remember, we are not scientists or health providers, so you must use any advice provided with care and at your own risk.