Multi-dwelling Properties with Shared Facilities

Guidelines for coronavirus (COVID-19)

18 July 2020



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1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Victorians are being asked to play their part to keep one another safe – this includes maintaining a distance of at least 1.5 metres from each other, practising good hygiene and staying home even if slightly unwell.

1.2 Purpose

Residential multi-dwelling developments with shared facilities represent a risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission between neighbouring residents, compared to single dwelling or lower density residential buildings.

This document is intended to provide advice to managers and operators of multi dwelling buildings in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell on how to limit the potential for transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) between residents, staff and visitors, and comply with <u>directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer</u> under Stay at Home Restrictions.

'Multi dwelling buildings' includes, but is not limited to:

- · Low, mid and high-rise residential apartment buildings
- Student accommodation
- Long term accommodation rentals
- Townhouses with shared facilities
- Single room occupancy properties with shared facilities
- Mixed use properties where there is residential component with shared facilities

It does not replace Victorian legislation or regulations which seek to protect the health, safety and welfare of tenants of residential apartments or student accommodation and should be implemented only in alignment with existing legislation.

2. Coronavirus (COVID-19)

2.1 Development of property plans

Each property is unique and should develop a tailored plan based on the information contained in this guide.

This plan is in addition to complying with the advice regarding <u>cleaning and disinfecting for non-healthcare settings</u>.

The information, checklists and FAQs provided in these guidelines should assist managers and operators of residential multi-dwelling properties with shared facilities in creating a bespoke plan for each property to safely operate for residents and staff.

		_
ACTIONS	(Detailed checklist is provided in Appendix 1)	
	☐ Ensure the property is set up in a way that ensures compliance with Victoria's restriction levels for appropriate group gathering limits and physical distancing requirements.	
	☐ If in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire, close non-essential communal are including gyms, swimming pools, saunas, spas, playgrounds and BBQs.	eas
	☐ Establish hygiene stations (with hand sanitiser) at building entrance points and communal areas to encourage hand hygiene of residents and staff.	n
	□ Display signage and posters at entries and in common areas.	
What you need to do to?	□ Provide residents and staff with information and consider displaying coronavirus (COVID-19) information and signage provided in these guidelines.	,
	☐ Implement an environmental cleaning schedule for all high touch surface and communal areas that remain open to residents.	
	☐ Complete the <i>property plan</i> checklist attached to this guideline (Attachment 1)	
	$\hfill \Box$ Consider processes for deliveries, contractors and visitors attending the premise	es
	☐ Have a system to enable staff and contractors to complete the complete health questionnaire before starting any shift (Appendix 2)	
	□ Be ready to work with the Department of Health and Human Services in the eve of a case of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a staff member or resident, or an outbre affecting your property.	

2.2 Communal areas

2.2.1 Closing non-essential communal areas

Like facilities that are open to the public, communal areas within multi dwelling buildings represent a transmission risk coronavirus (COVID-19) between residents, guests and visitors to a multi-dwelling building.

Under current health directions, communal areas in residential accommodation in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire must be closed to occupants and the public unless they are considered essential for residents.

Non-essential communal areas and facilities within residential buildings, which must close in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, include:

- Gyms
- Spas
- Saunas
- Pools
- Indoor fitness studios
- Change rooms and showers (unless in shared accommodation where residents do not have access their own private shower)
- BBQs and surrounding dining areas
- Playground equipment
- Games rooms

Essential communal areas and facilities within residential buildings, that should remain open, include:

- Entry foyer, lifts and stairwells and pathways
- Bathrooms (where guests do not have access to their own bathroom facilities)
- Toilet facilities
- Laundry facilities
- Communal kitchens (where guests do not have access to their own cooking facilities)
- Dining areas (where residents do not have access to their own private dining space)
- Living areas (where residents do not have access to their own living space)
- Letter boxes
- Shared rubbish chutes and waste areas
- Car parking, storage facilities including bike racks

2.2.2 Safety and hygiene measures for open communal areas and facilities

Where essential communal areas remain open, building management should consider the following:

• Limiting the number of people using open communal areas at any given time and facilitating measures that allow users to maintain at least 1.5m distance from other users. A simple way that this can be done is by applying a density quotient and displaying signage to communicate the maximum number of people that should be in the communal area at any given time (see box below).

Applying the density quotient to all shared indoor spaces (such as kitchens, dining or living rooms) or outdoor spaces (such as gardens) to determine the maximum number people that can occupy a space at any given time will help to promote physical distancing between neighbouring residents.

The density quotient is determined by measuring the total area of a space (in square metres) then dividing by four. Guidance on how to calculate the number of people who may gather in a space at one time is available at: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace-covid-19#what-is-the-four-square-metre-rule.

- **Implementing an environmental cleaning schedule** to ensure routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces and communal areas. For further information on cleaning see '<u>Cleaning and disinfecting to</u> reduce COVID-19 transmission Tips for non-healthcare settings'. Cleaning schedule should consider:
 - · Regular cleaning and disinfection of communal facilities, such as lifts, shared bathrooms and laundries
 - Regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, such as door handles and rubbish chutes.

- Vacuuming of carpets
- Removing rubbish
- Maximising ventilation where possible.
- **Establishing hygiene stations** (with hand sanitiser) at building entrance points and in communal areas to encourage hand hygiene of residents and staff.
- **Displaying** signage and posters at entries and in common areas. Building managers should consider placing posters throughout the building:
 - instructing residents to avoid using communal areas and to quarantine at home if they are unwell or have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
 - encouraging people who feel unwell to get tested and to quarantine at home until they receive their test
 result.
 - promoting good hygiene practices, such as coughing and sneezing into your elbow and regular handwashing.
 - encouraging residents to maintain at least 1.5 meters distance from others when in communal areas or when entering and exiting the buildings.
 - informing residents that gathering limits of two people apply in all communal areas, unless all people are from the same household.
 - encouraging residents to wear a mask when they are outside and in areas where they are unable to maintain at least 1.5 meters from others.

The table below outlines safety and hygiene measures for communal areas typically located in a multi dwelling building.

Table 1: Safety and hygiene measures for specific communal areas in residential accommodation in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire

Area	Advice
Lifts and stairwells	Physical distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette are strongly encouraged when using lifts to reduce public health risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19).
	Residents should be encouraged to maintain 1.5 metre physical distancing while waiting for a lift and during use where practical. Floor markings at lift entrances may prompt users to maintain physical distancing while waiting for the lift and should promote unidirectional flow to avoid bottle necks occurring near lift entrance points.
	Four-square metre density quotients are not mandatory in lifts, but responsible use is encouraged. Building operators may choose to include signage at lift entrances recommending a sensible maximum number of people that should enter a lift in order to maintain 1.5m physical distancing.
	Residents should be instructed to avoid accessing lifts with others if they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
Kitchens	Where a shared kitchen remains open because it is essential for guests, you may wish to consider whether the following controls are feasible and appropriate in your setting: • Establishing a roster for the use of the kitchen or dining room. • Moving or removing furniture to facilitate physical distancing.
	 Removing communal supplies or equipment where practicable (e.g., salt, pepper, sugar, condiments, oils and sauces, coffee machines, ice makers, etc.), and encouraging occupants to provide their own supplies. Considering allocating designated spaces for storage of food for different household groups. Discouraging the sharing of meals and food between occupants, particularly "share
	plates" where more than one person helps themselves to the same food.
Bathrooms	Where possible, consider allocating bathrooms to specific household groups.
Laundry	Where shared laundries remain open, you should encourage residents not to shake dirty laundry as this may disperse the virus through the air.

Area	Advice
Indoor or outdoor gyms, fitness studios, swimming pools, spas and saunas	For shared sporting or leisure facilities, property managers should adhere to the restrictions that apply to the local area in which they are located. Under current health directions, non-essential communal areas such as indoor sports facilities, gyms (indoor and outdoor), fitness studios, swimming pools, spas and saunas are all required to close in the Melbourne metropolitan area and Mitchell Shire. The
	directions apply to shared facilities in residential properties.
Outdoor sporting facilities	For shared outdoor sporting facilities, property managers should adhere to the restrictions that apply to the local area in which they are located.
	Outdoor sporting facilities (such as tennis courts or basketball courts) can remain open in the Melbourne metropolitan area and Mitchell Shire. Participation must be limited to groups of no more than two people at any one time, unless all participants are members of the same household. These facilities have a total patron cap of 10 people, unless each group of two can maintain 100 meters distance from all other people.
	Equipment (such as tennis racquets or basketballs) cannot be made available for residents for communal or shared use.
Gardens and courtyards	Communal gardens should remain open as a place for building residents to exercise and get fresh air. Gathering limits of two people apply in garden areas under Stay at Home restrictions, unless all people are from the same household.
Building entry and exit points	Consider setting up separate exit and entry points at the building to minimise contact (where possible).
Entry foyer, waiting areas	Consider removing seats from lobbies or waiting areas to discourage people from congregating there. Where seating is required, spacing it at least 1.5 metres apart.
Rubbish chutes and waste areas	Consider placing hygiene stations with hand sanitiser near waste areas or rubbish chutes or encouraging patrons to wash and sanitise their hands after using waste facilities.
Car parking, storage facilities including bike racks	Consider placing hygiene stations with hand sanitiser near entry points to the building.
Entertainment and events	Property managers and residents must not organise events in communal areas that encourage people to come together.

2.2.3 FAQS

What powers do private strata, body corporates or owner corporations have to close common property and communal facilities?

Under the current health directions, a person who owns, controls or operates a physical recreation facility in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire must not operate that facility. This includes indoor recreations such as common property gyms, saunas spas and in residential properties.

Common property swimming pools in multi-dwelling apartments in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire must remain closed. Private swimming pools only apply to single family residences.

What does the 'four-square metre' rule mean?

To maintain physical distancing requirements, there must be enough space that equates to one person per four square metre.

This is used to calculate the total number of people you should aim to have in an area of the building at any one time. The size of your premises means you may provide advice to limit number of people occupying that area. For example, if your facility has a shared floor space of 20 square metres you can aim to have a maximum of five residents in that space at any one time.

What are the most important things I can do to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in my building?

Limiting access to non-essential communal areas and frequent cleaning of open communal areas will help to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) in the building. Communication to residents is also critical to reinforce the messages of good hand hygiene, stay home and do not use communal facilities when unwell, and maintaining physical distancing at all times where possible.

Are residential buildings required to apply the 'four square metre' rule to all communal areas?

Building managers for residential accommodation are not required to apply the 'four square metre' rule outlined in the restrictions. However, building managers are encouraged to apply this rule wherever possible for the health and safety of all residents, staff, visitors and contractors.

Will the Victorian Government provide downloadable signage that I can place at the facility on physical distancing and expected staff and resident behaviours?

Additional signage provided by the Victorian Government can be downloaded at:

- https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/promotional-material-coronavirus-covid-19
- https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-disease-covid-19

How often should surfaces be cleaned?

Cleaning and disinfecting common contact surfaces will help to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Where possible, this should be done twice daily for high-touch surfaces. Surfaces and fittings should also be cleaned immediately when visibly soiled and after any spillage.

Common contact surfaces include:

- Lift buttons
- Door and cupboard handles
- Handrails
- Switches
- Taps
- Tables and chairs (including underneath)
- Kitchen and food contact surfaces

How should surfaces be cleaned and disinfected?

You need to clean and disinfect surfaces; both steps are essential. The first step is cleaning, which means wiping dirt and germs off a surface. You can use common household detergent products for cleaning, they are stocked at supermarkets.

Cleaning alone does not kill germs. The next step is to disinfect the surface. Disinfection means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. Again, supermarkets stock common household disinfection products – it is important to use products that are labelled "disinfectant" and to follow the instructions on the label. You can find more information at www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/cleaning-and-disinfecting-reduce-covid-19-transmission.

I cannot restrict access to some non-essential facilities (e.g. an open-aired swimming pool or barbecue). How can I close this area off to residents?

If access to non-essential communal facilities cannot be restricted by locking them up or removing them, then property managers must use tape or signage to indicate that those facilities are closed.

2.3 Visitors and Deliveries

2.3.1 Visitors to the home and building

Under the current <u>Stay at Home restrictions</u>, residents of metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire cannot have any visitors in their home, unless it is to deliver care or essential services. Rules regarding visitors to the home also apply to neighbours or other residents in the same property.

2.3.2 Delivery drivers and contractors

In order to minimise the number of non-residents entering the building, residents who are receiving deliveries of goods, including groceries, home delivered food, or any other package, should be instructed pick up the package from the ground floor entry, unless they are under directions to self-isolate or guarantine at home.

Each property could also consider requesting that non-residents 'sign-in' to the building when attending for more than 15 minutes, providing their first name and a contact phone number, where non-residents consent to this. Where properties keep a record, personal details should be kept securely. Information collected should also include the date and time at which the person attended the facility and, if applicable, the room number they visited. Where records are kept, these records should be kept for 28 days and then destroyed. The record should include visitors or staff such as security, cleaning, concierge, maintenance workers and delivery drivers.

Visitors should be requested to maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres from others. This should be actively monitored by staff where possible. Signs could be installed at major queuing locations, like lifts, reminding visitors and staff to maintain 1.5 metres from one another.

2.3.3 FAQS

Does the visitors rule apply to short stay accommodation?

Accommodation facilities including private holiday rental facilities (such as Airbnb) are not permitted in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire unless it is for one of the following reasons:

- 1) to a person whose place of residence is the accommodation facility
- 2) to a person who is ordinarily a resident of Victoria but has no permanent place of residence in Victoria
- 3) to a person who has a permanent place of residence in Victoria, but that place is temporarily unavailable
- 4) to a person, on a temporary basis, who has travelled to Victoria for work purposes
- 5) to a person who was already a temporary guest of the accommodation facility on 8 July 2020
- 6) to a person who requires emergency accommodation, including in relation to family violence and other vulnerable groups
- 7) to a person who requires accommodation for work purposes, where their work is for the purposes of responding to the state of emergency in existence under the PHW Act
- 8) to a person who is subject to a Direction and Detention Notice, the Diagnosed Persons and Close Contacts Direction or a Detention Direction

As of 11:59pm on July 8, holiday visitors are not permitted in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire. This includes short stay accommodation in these areas. Victorian Police are conducting routine enforcement of restrictions and can issue on the spot fines of up to \$1,652 for individuals.

Restriction levels across Victoria can change and this is to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and keep Victorians safe. Updates to any restrictions can be found here: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19

2.4 Resident welfare, isolation, quarantine and positive cases

2.4.1 FAQs

Will building managers be notified when there is a positive case in a multi dwelling building with shared facilities?

DHHS may contact building managers when residents of multi-dwelling buildings test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and there is an assessment made that more information is required to assess risk, or that additional public health actions are required.

Are building managers required to inform all building patrons when there is a positive case in the building?

DHHS will work closely with building managers in the event there is a positive case in the building and additional public health actions are required.

What is the advice for people who have been tested and are awaiting their test results?

People must quarantine at home while awaiting their test results.

If you have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) you must self-isolate.

People in isolation:

- should stay in a different room to other people as much as possible. Sleep in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom if available.
- must not allow other people into the home if they don't live there, unless they are there to provide medical, personal care or household assistance.
- ensure they stay maintain at least 1.5 metres from others in the home and wear a mask if this is not
 possible.
- are permitted to leave the property to exercise however must keep a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and other people.
- are permitted to leave your property to seek medical help or in an emergency.

People that are in quarantine or isolation should stay in regular contact with their close family and friends and ask them to get food, medicines or other necessities when required. People can also contact your local council to access services. Visit Know Your Council website to find your council.

Those who do not have nearby support to help them can call the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline on 1800 675 398. Delivery of a free emergency relief package can be arranged for people who are unable to access food themselves or do not have support available to them.

More information is available at: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/self-quarantine-coronavirus-covid-19

What support can building management offer residents who are required to isolate or quarantine?

Those who do not have nearby support or cannot safely isolate or quarantine should call the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline on 1800 675 398. DHHS can provide support on a case by case basis.

Are there special waste collection procedures that building management needs to follow for confirmed cases or people in isolation or under quarantine?

If residents are responsible for taking their own waste into collection bin(s) in an allocated area, then waste managers who roll out collection bins to the kerbside should wear gloves and wash their hands before and after moving bins. Information on how to handle waste for kerbside collection is available at: https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-community/environmental-information/waste

Is there a recommended plan that buildings should follow for when there is a confirmed case in a high-density residential facility?

The guidance above helps to slow the spread of spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). When there is a confirmed case in a high-density residential facility, DHHS will be involved and will provide further guidance and actions if this is required.

Is there mental health support available for residents?

Yes. Resources are available at: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19

2.5 Compliance and enforcement

2.5.1 FAQs

How will you enforce compliance?

Victoria Police may conduct spot checks at multi-dwelling residential buildings to ensure compliance with the directions of the Chief Health Officer.

What are the penalties for not complying?

Police can issue on the spot fines of up to \$1,652 for individuals and up to \$9,913 for businesses for:

- Refusing or failing to comply with the emergency directions
- Refusing or failing to comply with a public health risk power direction
- Refusing or failing to comply with a direction by the Chief Health Officer to provide information.

Bigger fines of up to \$20,000 for individuals and \$100,0000 for businesses are possible through the courts.

APPENDIX 1. PROPERTY PLAN CHECKLIST

Property set up for appropriate number of people and physical distancing requirements			
		If in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire, close non-essential communal areas such as gyms, spas saunas, pools, playgrounds, barbecues.	
		Consider establishing a roster for communal areas that are essential for residents such as shared kitchens and dining areas.	
		Ensure your property is set up to adhere to physical distancing and a density quotient of one person per four square metres of the floor space in all open communal areas.	
	Optimise physical distancing in the layout by reviewing entry and exit points, flow of residents and staff, location of hand sanitiser.		
	If practicable, set up separate exit and entry points to minimise contact.		
	Ensure social distancing by placing floor or wall markings or signs to identify 1.5 metres distance between persons for queues and waiting areas.		
	Remove	Remove waiting area furniture or space seating at least 1.5 metres apart.	
	Conside	er using physical barriers where practical, such as plexiglass around counters in lobbies.	
	Display signage for residents and staff and install in appropriate, high visibility locations. Signage shou include:		
		a sign at the entrance to the area that advises residents and visitors of the maximum number of people allowed in a communal space at any time	
		information about the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the need to stay home when unwell	
		hygiene and physical distancing practices.	
	and time approac contact	er setting up a system for recording contractor contact details (first name, contact phone number, e of visit) to support contact tracing. Whether this is a paper-based approach or electronic the your system needs to minimise the number of people who touch the surface; and retain details securely for at least 28 days after the contractor has visited your premises. Contact must be destroyed securely after this time.	
Staff an	d manag	gement policies, and practices	
	Distribut	te these guidelines to staff and residents so that they are familiar with the guidance information.	
	Ensure you as the operator or manager understand your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and have reviewed the coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance from WorkSafe Victoria available awww.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/preparing-pandemic-guide-employers.		
	Establish new processes and schedules for cleaning and sanitising to maintain good hygiene at your premises, including regular cleaning of high touch points such as doors, handles, chairs and benches. If possible, this should be done at least twice daily.		
	education practice obligation	with staff on measures you have put in place and provide them with the information and on necessary for them to perform their work in a safe manner including on changes to work is such as cleaning and sanitising. The Occupational Health and Safety Act places certain one on employers regarding when and how to consult with staff about the identification of or risks and determining how they will be controlled (refer to WorkSafe for more information)	
	would b	er appointing a staff member to be your coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Officer. This person e responsible for ensuring that your policies and practices are being followed, that staff are well-d, and records are being kept appropriately.	
Residents and staff			
		with your staff and residents that they are aware of, and understand, the resources and support savailable to them.	

	Direct staff to stay at home if they have a fever (a temperature of 37.5°C or greater), or if they have any symptoms.			
	Encourage staff who are unwell to be tested for coronavirus (COVID-19). Staff must remain in isolation at home until they get the result and it is negative for coronavirus (COVID-19).			
	Require your staff to contact a manager if they notice a co-worker or manager with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).			
	Encourage all staff and residents to download the CovidSafe App to assist contact tracing.			
	Ensure residents and staff are provided with hand washing facilities or appropriate alcohol-based hand sanitisers.			
Record-keeping				
	Remember to minimise the number of people who touch your record keeping surface and securely store contact details for 28 days.			
	Securely destroy contact details after 28 days.			
Enviror	nment and cleaning			
	Ensure cleaning and sanitising procedures are thoroughly implemented.			
	Ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products are available to effectively clean and disinfect all surfaces.			
	Conduct a deep clean of all contact surfaces and objects, e.g. counters, tables, doors, handles, taps, chairs, tables, handrails, tills, phones, any reusable instrument or equipment.			
	Have air conditioning systems serviced according to manufacturer's instructions and ensure they are fully functional. Where possible fresh air flow should be maximised in indoor premises.			
Deliveries, contractors and visitors attending the premises				
	Where practical, require delivery drivers or other contractors visiting the premises to limit physical interaction with workers.			
	Use electronic paperwork where practical. If a signature is required, discuss providing a confirmation email instead, or take a photo of the goods onsite as proof of delivery.			

APPENDIX 2. STAFF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

We encourage each staff member to complete this questionnaire before starting any shift and give your completed questionnaire to the manager to keep as a record.

Staff name:			
Date: Time of shift:			
Are you currently required to be in isolation because you have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19)?	□ YES □ NO		
Have you been directed to a period of 14-day quarantine by the Department of Health and Human Services as a result of being a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19)?	□ YES □ NO		
If you answered YES to either of the above questions you should not attend work until advised by the Department of Health and Human Services that you are released from isolation or until your 14-day quarantine period is complete.			
If you answered NO to the above questions, proceed to the symptom checklist below. Are you experiencing these symptoms?			
Fever (If you have a thermometer, take your own temperature. You are considered to have a fever if above 37.5°C)	□ YES □ NO		
Chills	□ YES □ NO		
Cough	□ YES □ NO		
Sore throat	□ YES □ NO		
Shortness of breath	□ YES □ NO		
Runny nose	□ YES □ NO		
Loss of sense of smell	□ YES □ NO		

If you answered **YES** to any of the above questions you should **not** enter your workplace (or should leave your workplace). Tell your employer, go home, and get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you answered NO to all the above questions, you can enter your workplace.

If you develop symptoms, stay at home and seek further advice from the 24-hour coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline 1800 675 398 or your general practitioner.