



Working with Agri Labour Australia During the Coronavirus Emergency

1st April 2020

Purpose

Agri Labour Australia has developed this guide to assist our partners to prepare for and manage the impacts of the developing coronavirus emergency. The intention is to provide clear and simple advice that is consistent with government guidance and direction and to promote cooperation between our organisations.

Disclaimer

All care has been taken in preparing this guide, however the coronavirus emergency is developing rapidly and consequently government directions, recommendations and advice are also subject to change. You must heed any advice and directions given by government or by public health officials. You must also ensure you are aware of current government directions and advice. We recommend visiting the following websites frequently to ensure you have current information.

Australian Government Department of Health

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Australian Capital Territory Department of Health

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>

New South Wales Department of Health

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

Northern Territory Department of Health

<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>

Queensland Department of Health

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19>

South Australia Department of Health

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+topics+a+-+z/COVID+2019>

Tasmania Department of Health

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>

Victoria Department of Health

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Western Australia Department of Health

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus

Where to go for more information

National Coronavirus Helpline

Phone: 1800 020 080

If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

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1. Stay informed

The coronavirus emergency continues to rapidly evolve and government advice, direction and even our laws are changing just as fast. To help us understand and respond to these changes, our governments have provided a comprehensive range of online public resources. In the age of fake news, business leaders must ensure their organisations actively monitor these official sources of public information and always follow current government directions and advice. To achieve this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Monitor the Federal and State Department of Health websites,
- Monitor the World Health Organisation website,
- Download and monitor the Australian Government Coronavirus App,
- Subscribe to ABC news alerts,
- Engage with regulators to advocate issues of importance for Australian agriculture,
- Engage with industry groups and our client network to identify examples of best practice, and
- Meet daily as a Management Team to discuss any changes and their implications.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Monitor the Australian Government Department of Health website,
- Monitor the State Department of Health websites in those states in which they operate,
- Download and monitor the Australian Government Coronavirus App,
- Subscribe to ABC news alerts, and
- Meet frequently as a Management Team to discuss developments and your response.

Super Helpful Resource

"There is so much information out there and yet I can't seem to find the answer I want."
Many of those questions were answered when a colleague suggested I check this website.
As comprehensive a resource as any we have come across.

<https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/covid/>

2. Communicate, A Lot!

This coronavirus emergency is affecting every single Australian and many people are concerned about their health and their livelihoods. In the absence of accurate information, fear and misinformation will spread quickly. Business leaders should communicate frequently with their staff and other stakeholders to ensure they are well informed about current government restrictions and your organisations response. To achieve this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Call our clients regularly to share information and to coordinate our activities,
- Ask our clients to explain the measures they are taking to protect our workers,
- Provide frequent written updates to our clients,
- Require all candidates to complete online video training in Coronavirus Prevention and Management,
- Provide frequent written updates to our candidates,
- Meet with all internal staff twice weekly to share developments and to seek feedback, and
- Meet daily as a Management Team to discuss developments and our response.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Provide to all staff and others working on your sites, regular briefings on current government restrictions and your organisations response,
- Provide training and instruction to all staff to ensure they understand and can follow the measures your organisation has taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus,
- Provide your staff with a method for raising concerns and suggestions, and
- Discuss with Agri Labour Australia the measures our organisations are taking so we can coordinate our response.

3. Implement Social Distancing

The priority of governments around the world is to slow the spread of the coronavirus through our communities, and *social distancing* is the primary method of achieving this. Closing non-essential businesses and limiting the number of people who can gather, are two examples of social distancing measures. Although essential businesses can continue operating, this does not mean social distancing does not need to be observed. Business leaders must ensure social distancing is observed in all workplaces, as much as possible. To achieve this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Require all internal staff to work from home,
- Defer all non-essential face-to face meetings, instead utilising videoconferencing, and
- Defer all non-essential travel.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Instruct all staff who can, to work from home (e.g. administration, payroll),
- Defer all nonessential meetings and travel,
- Prevent visitors from attending work sites,
- Consider ways to limit the number of close contacts each employee might be exposed to during their working day, for example by:
 - Breaking workforces into smaller teams and limiting intermingling between teams,
 - Grouping people who live or travel together in the same work team,
 - Breaking workforces into shifts and preventing intermingling at shift change over,
 - Requiring teams to wear different colours, to help identify team members,
 - Staggering break times so teams aren't taking breaks together,
 - Physically separating workstations to observe the 1.5m distance between people,
 - Installing physical barriers between workstations, and
 - Reducing the number of chairs in lunch and break rooms and spacing them at least 1.5m apart.

4. Practice and Promote Good Personal Hygiene

We can protect ourselves from the coronavirus by practicing high levels of personal hygiene at all times and by encouraging others to do the same. To achieve this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Require all candidates to complete online video training that includes hand washing procedures and other personal hygiene measures, and
- Provide clients with posters and other resources that can be displayed in the workplace to inform workers about good personal hygiene practices.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Ensure there are adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels at each work location,
- Provide personal hygiene instruction and training to all employees, and
- Clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces such as benchtops, controls, switches and door handles.



5. Identify and Isolate Anyone Displaying Symptoms

Given the traditional flu season is about to commence, it is likely at some time over the coming months that someone attending work will present with flu like symptoms and until that person is tested, we won't know if they have the coronavirus. Our response at this time will determine if others are placed at risk of exposure. If business leaders are to prevent contamination and panic from spreading within their workforces, our organisations must identify potential cases and respond quickly and effectively. To achieve this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Provide all our supervisors and candidates with online video training that includes the symptoms to be aware of and the requirement to immediately report flu like symptoms,
- Require all newly placed candidates to complete a signed declaration indicating if they currently have flu symptoms,
- Conduct pre-start temperature testing of our workers on sites where mutually agreed with our clients (subject to the availability of non-contact thermometers),
- Direct our employees who exhibit flu like symptoms to self-isolate in their home,
- Provide instructions to our employees who are directed to self-isolate on how to effectively self-isolate,
- Arrange self-isolating employees with an outside contact who can bring groceries and supplies,
- Make regular contact with those who are self-isolating to check on their welfare and ensure they are following instructions,
- Keep our clients informed of candidates who have been directed to self-isolate, and
- Consult our clients about the arrangements for our workers to return to work once they receive a medical clearance to return to work.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Provide training and instruction to all employees requiring them to report the onset of any flu like symptoms,
- Establish a method for detecting employees who are exhibiting flu like symptoms and have not self-reported,
- Prepare clear instructions so employees who have to self-isolate know what to do,
- Ensure employees who have to self-isolate are provide with practical and emotional support, including by arranging for groceries and supplies to be delivered to their home, and
- Prepare clear guidance regarding when a person who has been required to self-isolate, may return to the workplace.

6. How To Self-Isolate

HOW TO SELF-ISOLATE



STAY AT HOME

(this means no work or quick trips to the shops and **no visitors**)

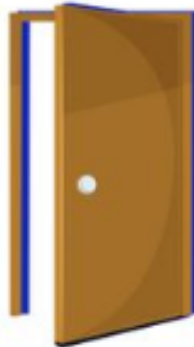
GET ESSENTIALS DELIVERED OR ENLIST HELP OF FRIENDS OR FAMILY

(supplies should be **left at the door** to avoid contact with others)



WEAR A MASK

(if you are in a shared space)



AVOID SHARING ROOMS

(where possible **stay in a well-ventilated room** away from housemates or family members)



DON'T SHARE HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

(This includes towels and toiletries. High-touch surfaces like doorknobs and remote controls should be **cleaned at least once a day**)



(9News)

7. Prepare for a Positive Coronavirus Diagnosis

Despite our best efforts, the risk of someone from our work force being diagnosed with Covid-19 (the disease caused by the coronavirus) will remain very real until an effective vaccine becomes available. When this happens, the decisions we take could potentially have mammoth financial and reputational consequences. Business leaders will not want to be in this position and wondering what they should do. To avoid this, our organisations must have a clear plan in place that prioritises isolation, decontamination and contact tracing.

In preparation for a positive coronavirus diagnosis:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Maintain a register of accommodation and travel arrangements for all our workers, so we can quickly identify other workers who are likely to have had close contact with an ill worker, and
- Prepare instruction and guidance for workers confirmed to have the coronavirus so they are clear about what they must do and the help and support they have available to them.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Have a clear plan for making the workplace safe through cleaning and decontaminating and potentially by shutting all or part of their operation, and
- Communicate this plan to your workforce and to other stakeholders including labour hire providers, contractors, suppliers and customers.

In response to a positive coronavirus diagnosis:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Ensure our client is informed,
- Direct the affected employee to self-isolate in their home, if they are not already,
- Where possible and if necessary, arrange for a private car to be driven directly home by the employee,
- Once home, ensure the affected employee has access to appropriate medical care,
- Provide instructions to affected employees on how to effectively self-isolate,
- Arrange a person to bring groceries and supplies to the affected employee's home,
- Verify that public health officials have been in touch with the affected person,
- Identify other workers who may have had close contact, including those living or travelling with the affected employee and direct them to self-isolate,

- Make regular contact with affected employees to check on their welfare and ensure they are following instructions,
- Keep our clients informed of candidates who have been directed to self-isolate, and
- Consult our clients about the arrangements for our workers to return to work once they receive a medical clearance to return to work.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Enact their plan for responding to a positive coronavirus diagnosis. At a minimum, this plan should include,
 - Immediately ceasing all work in the areas where the affected employee was working until it can be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated,
 - Identifying close contacts within the workforce and directing them to immediately self-isolate,
 - Immediately ceasing all work in the areas where the close contacts were working until they can be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated,
 - Contacting public health authorities in your state to ensure you have their current advice, and
 - Communicating with your workforce and to other stakeholders including labour hire providers, contractors, suppliers and customers.

8. Travelling Interstate

All states and territories except New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT are now enforcing border closures and 14-day self-isolation orders for all non-essential interstate travel. Agriculture and food production are essential services and travelling to work in these industries can be considered *essential travel*, however employees may be need support to demonstrate they have a genuine need to cross borders, and to assist with this:

Agri Labour Australia Will

- Provide individual workers with letters confirming they are employed by Agri Labour Australia and providing details of the job they are travelling to commence, and
- Liaise with state and territory public health authorities to facilitate the travel of large groups of workers being redeployed across borders.

We Recommend Our Clients

- Monitor the website highlighted below to remain up to date with state and territory border controls, and
- Identify if any elements of your future workforce may have to demonstrate a genuine to cross state or territory borders.

Super Helpful Resource

The National Farmers' Federation is maintaining up-to-date Australian border control information by state and territory on this helpful public webpage:

www.farmhub.org.au/covid-19-border-controls-information/



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