



AMIEU
NEWCASTLE & NORTHERN

COVID-19

27/03/2020

Critical Information

Page 1
Essential Checklist



Page 2
Workplace Information



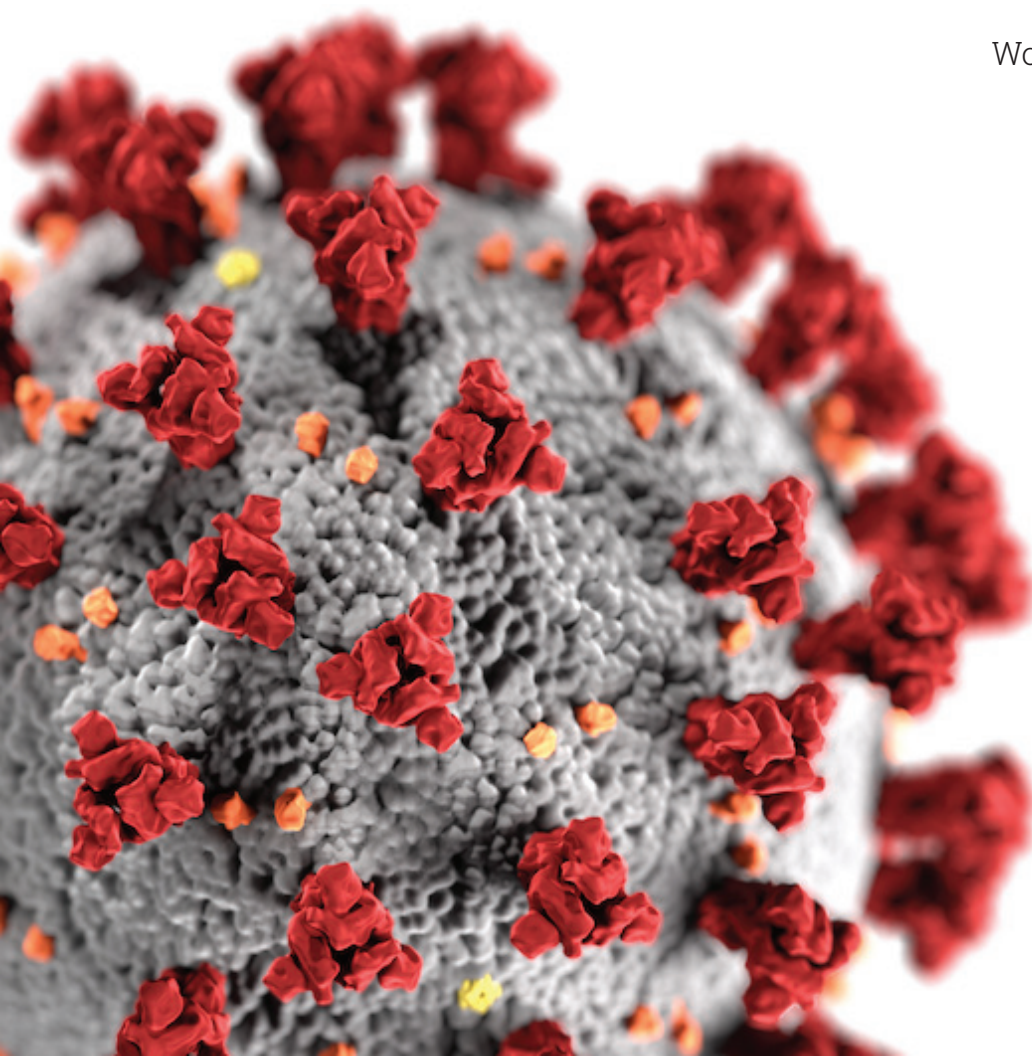
Page 3
Supporting Workers



Page 4
Safety Information



Page 5
Virus Information





COVID-19

27/03/2020

Essential Checklist

yes no

Pay and conditions

- Is paid special leave available to all workers who are sick and/or need to self-isolate?
- Is there an easy and available process for taking leave and applying for workers' compensation?

Workplace cleanliness and hygiene

- Is management providing information in the workplace about COVID-19 and safe hygiene practices?
- Are workers being provided with hand washing facilities and hand sanitizer?
- Is the workplace being cleaned and sanitized regularly and to an appropriate standard?
- Are workers engaging in social distancing, avoiding close contact and gathering in large groups?
- Are workers required to keep a 1.5m radius from others during work and breaks?

Management and plans to control risks and support the workplace

- Is there a plan in place if someone in the workplace is exposed to COVID-19?
- Is there an adequate procedure in place for workers to report if they're feeling unwell, have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 or to update their employer on their condition if they're unwell?
- Do workers feel comfortable reporting they are unwell?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and first aid

Are workers being supplied with:

- PPE
- Hand Sanitiser
- Face Masks

- Are shared tools and workplace equipment being regularly cleaned and disinfected?

Consultation

- Has the employer consulted with union representatives, including HSRs and delegates, about their plan to manage and support workers?
- Is all information and updates related to COVID-19 in the workplace made available to all workers? For example, workers who speak different languages and workers with disabilities.
- Are arrangements being made for free Influenza vaccines?

Contact

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COVID-19

27/03/2020

Workplace Information

Employer Obligations

Employers have a legal obligation to ensure the health and safety of workers at all times, especially during this COVID-19 pandemic. Your employer should be supplying all workers with the following:

- Clear health and safety Information. For multicultural workplaces this may require information in multiple languages.
- A clean and regularly sanitised workplace. shared tools, equipment and surfaces should be frequently disinfected.
- Easy access to water, soap and hand sanitiser (60% alcohol).
- Easy access to rubbish disposal for tissues and disposable hand towels.
- Social distancing. This means avoiding close contact with others, avoiding large gatherings and maintaining a 1.5m radius at all times.
- An easy way to report concerns.
- A plan to protect and support workers. HSR and Union reps must be consulted on this plan.

Protecting Workers Through Isolation

The best way to protect workers and the public is to ensure employers identify and isolate potentially infected workers. These workers should isolate for a minimum of 14 days until they are no longer contagious.

It is crucial that workers feel comfortable to report they are feeling unwell. If workers avoid reporting themselves because they cannot financially afford to miss 2 weeks of work they are creating a huge safety risk for others.

For this reasons it is crucial that workers are **SUPPORTED** by their employer during isolation. (see more next page).

Immediately contact AMIEU if a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in the workplace

In this event a deep clean of the contact area and equipment must be performed before workers return to the area.

Workers in *close and direct contact* with the individual may be required to isolate and should seek medical assistance.

Workers with *casual contact* (less than 15 minutes face to face or less than 2 hours in a shared closed space) may keep working and closely monitor their health.

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■ Supporting Workers

Why Employers Must Support Isolated Workers

The AMIEU and other Unions are calling for 2 weeks special leave for all employees who have to isolate due to COVID-19.

If workers don't have special leave they may feel unable to report feeling unwell. For many workers it is not financially viable to miss 2 weeks of work.

Workers must feel they can report their sickness and enter isolation. If they are feeling unwell and continue coming to work they may infect others and cause a mass outbreak.

If the Federal Government will not provide 2 weeks special leave employees should encourage their employer to do so.

Casual Workers

Casual workers, and others without access to leave, are more likely to attend work whilst sick for fear of a loss of income or future shifts.

Workers with Children and Supporting Others

At the time of this report schools remain open. This is to ensure the children of essential service workers are properly supervised.

Schools are considered a safe place for your children. However, if you must keep your children at home and they require supervision you should receive support.

Cleaning Staff

Cleaning staff should minimise the risk of being infected by wearing gloves and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.

If cleaning rooms or areas of the workplace where a person with a confirmed or suspected case has been, staff should wear a face mask.

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■ Safety Information

The main way COVID-19 spreads is by contamination when someone carrying the virus coughs or sneezes. The air droplets are then breathed in by another person.

This can also occur by touching surfaces and equipment which an infected person has been in contact with. The virus can survive up to 72 hours on surfaces.

Over 80% of people infected with COVID 19 will experience only mild symptoms similar to the common cold and may not be aware they have the virus. For this reason it is crucial that EVERYONE practice preventative measures.

How to Prevent Spread

- Frequently wash and sanitise your hands. Especially after close contact with others or using shared equipment.
- Cough and sneeze into a fresh tissue or your elbow
- Practice social distancing including:
 - Maintain a 1.5m radius from others at all times
 - Avoid gathering in large groups
 - Avoid all close contact with others
- Don't touch your face
- Maintain a clean and regularly sanitised work environment
- Drink plenty of water and regularly. The virus hates heat so hot beverages are encouraged.

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Flu Season

We are now entering regular flu season. We STRONGLY RECOMMEND that everyone make arrangements for influenza vaccine which is likely to become available during April 2020.

It is important to take this precaution as COVID-19 can be easily confused with the common cold and influenza. By getting yourself vaccinated against influenza you lower the risk of having to isolate yourself from work.

Employers should be making arrangements to provide flu vaccine free of charge for all employees.

First Aiders and First Aid Kits

First Aiders should be provided with updated information and supplies from their employer and should ensure they are practicing infection control measures when giving first aid.



COVID-19

27/03/2020

■ Virus Information

What is COVID-19 or Corona Virus?

Corona virus is a group of viruses which normally cause mild illness, with symptoms similar to a common cold. A new strain, COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 in Hubei Province, China.

It is very different from, and more serious than, the usual seasonal influenza outbreaks that happen every year.

Symptoms

Symptoms take on average 5 days to being and include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Dry cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore Throat

The virus is typically first installs in the throat causing inflammation and a feeling of dryness.

The virus typically then travels through the moisture present in the airways, goes down to the trachea and installs in the lungs, causing pneumonia with high fever and difficulty breathing that lasts about 5 or 6 days.

Runny nose and sneezing are not usually associated with COVID-19.

Only 15% of infected people will experience more severe symptoms. A minority of 5% will suffer from pneumonia and its related symptoms.

See your doctor if you begin to develop symptoms. If you begin to experience serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing you should immediately call 000.

High Risk Individuals

The illness is more severe in older people (over 65 years) or people who have chronic diseases such as heart and lung conditions. People with compromised immune systems are also at higher risk.

Babies, very young children, recent overseas travellers and people living in group residential settings are higher risk individuals.

As this is a new virus the health information is continually being updated.

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