

FACT SHEET

COVID-19: Information for industry involved in the Cladding Rectification Program

This Fact Sheet provides information about how coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions affect the Cladding Rectification Program (**the Program**) and the precautions to keep building occupants and workers safe.

The information provided in this Fact Sheet is current as of 6 November 2020 and is subject to change at any time.

The information provided in this Fact Sheet is **not** a substitute for reading and understanding the Directions.

All employers undertaking cladding rectification activities as part of the Program are required to read and understand all relevant directions (**the Directions**) made under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* available at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19> and updated from time to time.

Obligations arising from the Directions are additional to employers' other legal obligations, including those arising under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

Is the work of Cladding Safety Victoria (CSV) still permitted?

Yes. The Program has been classified as a State Critical Infrastructure Project by the Victorian Government. All activities associated with the Program must comply with all relevant Directions.

More information about what works are permitted can be found on the [Coronavirus Victoria website](#).

Who is responsible for ensuring that cladding rectification activities comply with the safety requirements in the Directions?

We all have an important role in keeping each other safe.

The site manager is the party responsible for rectification activities onsite – whether for preparatory inspections, or for works related to the removal and replacement of cladding.

Sometimes the site manager will have been engaged by Cladding Safety Victoria. In other cases the site manager will have been engaged by the owners corporation.

Whichever the case, the site manager must have developed and implemented a *High Risk COVIDSafe Plan* to reduce the risks of transmission to and amongst people onsite.

Cladding Safety Victoria will provide oversight and support to site managers.

Are cladding rectification sites subject to reductions in worker numbers?

No. Cladding rectification sites are not subject to the restrictions on worker numbers which are applicable at other construction sites.

Site managers must also comply with all physical distancing and density requirements as outlined in the Directions.

Are cladding rectification sites subject to restrictions in worker movements?

No. Architects, surveyors, building inspectors and engineers must work from home where possible, except where necessary to meet a minimum statutory obligation or requirement.

Specialist contractors such as carpenters, plasterers, sprinkler fitters, electricians, plumbers and scaffolders can move between construction sites.

Information about specialist contractors can be found on the [Coronavirus Victoria website](#).

What protocols do you need to put in place to protect workers and residents on sites?

All site managers must implement a range of protective measures to protect workers and residents, including the following:

Requirement	Implementation
1. Masks	All workers are required to wear masks, with very limited exceptions
2. <i>High Risk COVIDSafe Plan</i>	See below heading 'What is a <i>High Risk COVIDSafe Plan</i> '
3. Record-keeping	Site attendance register for all workers and visitors attending site for longer than 15 minutes
4. Density quotient	Divide each publicly accessible area or shared space by 4
5. Signage	State the maximum number of people permitted in each publicly accessible area
6. Cleaning	Employer must take all reasonable steps – frequently touched surfaces cleaned regularly

Table 1 - Protective Measures

There are additional practical measures that can be implemented to protect workers and residents living in apartment buildings where rectification works are being undertaken over an extended period. Cladding Safety Victoria will require builders to address each of these measures in their *High Risk COVIDSafe Plan*. These include:

- Communicating with residents through the owners corporation about when and where you will be working
- Asking residents to avoid contact with workers for safety reasons
- Asking residents to wear masks and making extra masks available if residents are seen not wearing one in a common area
- Making hand sanitiser available in common areas of the apartment complex
- Regularly cleaning frequently used areas and frequently touched surfaces
- Displaying required density quotient signs and other signs to support safe practices
- Displaying safety signage in areas that residents frequent, for example common areas and entrances, exits and main thoroughfares, elevators, and lifts
- This poster [resource](#) outlining safety measures for residents should be downloaded, printed and displayed in common areas of the apartment complex:

A range of preventative measures can be found on the [Coronavirus Victoria website](#).

What is a *High Risk COVIDSafe Plan*?

A *High Risk COVIDSafe Plan* is a mandatory document which supports employers to comply with the above requirements.

All site managers involved in cladding rectification activities must have a *COVIDSafe Plan* which addresses all health and safety concerns including the following:

Requirement	Implementation
1. Preventing unwell people from accessing the site	For example, temperature checks and mandatory symptom declarations
2. Limiting workers' movements between sites	Roster management
3. Record-keeping for all site attendances	Attendance register
4. Understanding who is attending site	Control entry to site and ask visitors where else they have attended
5. Clear and established hygiene processes	Cleaning, personal hygiene requirements, with accessible and multi-lingual information for all workers
6. Masks and training	Correct use and disposal
7. Physical distancing	Divide accessible spaces by 4 and provide clear signage of maximum persons
8. Planning for addressing suspected or confirmed cases	Isolating symptomatic workers, sending home if safe
9. Processes for using and cleaning shared spaces, tools, plant, equipment, and first-aid kits	Cleaning frequently touched areas with anti-viral disinfectant 3 times per day
10. Travelling to and from site	Do not travel to site together
11. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Plan PPE resources, train workers and implement disposal procedures

Table 2 – What is a High Risk COVIDSafe Plan

Employers must acknowledge that they understand their responsibilities and obligations under the associated directions made under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

Are there any other requirements?

Yes. All employers involved in onsite cladding rectification activities must address the following:

Requirement	Implementation
1. Reduced on-site worker numbers	N/A worker reductions are not mandatory for cladding rectification sites.
2. Consultation with impacted workers	Mandatory consultation regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) risk identification b) mitigation and control decisions c) employer's role in risk d) facilities for worker welfare e) procedures around health and safety consultation and information and f) changes to the workplace or work undertaken
3. Record-keeping	Mandatory processes regarding record-keeping (site attendance) and calculation of worker numbers on site

Requirement	Implementation
4. Limit movement between sites	Mandatory steps to reduce movement of workers, specialist contractors and consultants between sites and attendance at site
5. Carpooling prohibition	Confirm that the prohibition has been communicated to workers, sub-contractors, trades and consultants
6. Personal protective equipment training plan	Employers must have a training plan in place
7. Cleaning log	Must be on display in all shared workplaces and publicly accessible areas which sets out dates, times, and frequency of cleaning the relevant area, including frequently touched surfaces
8. Worker declarations	Workers must declare in writing at the start of each shift that they <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) are free of COVID-19 symptoms b) have not been in contact with a confirmed case and c) have not been directed to self-isolate Workers must not attend if they are symptomatic, have been tested and are awaiting test results
9. Additional site cleaning	Cleaning of all shared spaces (including frequently touched surfaces) at least three times per day, using an anti-viral disinfectant

Table 3 - Other Requirements

How do I prepare a High Risk COVIDSafe Plan?

Template plans to assist you are available on the [Coronavirus Victoria website](#).

Businesses participating in cladding rectification activities must complete and regularly update their *High Risk COVIDSafe Plan*.

What training is available?

All workers attending site in relation to cladding rectification activities must undertake infection control training and training about the correct way to wear a mask.

Cladding Safety Victoria will support employers to provide this training if employers are unable to do so.

Are apartments still being inspected?

Cladding Safety Victoria and its advisors are still inspecting apartment buildings.

However, we are only entering private apartments where:

- It is necessary and safe to do so
- Apartment occupiers consent to the entry
- Apartment occupiers confirm that neither a confirmed case nor a close contact will be present during the inspection and

- Apartment occupiers confirm that any persons regularly residing or present in the apartment and previously diagnosed with coronavirus have been cleared by the Department of Health and Human Services for at least 14 days

All persons entering common or private property must follow all necessary safety precautions including wearing and proper disposal appropriate personal protective equipment (**PPE**).

What will happen if there is a *suspected* coronavirus case on site?

Cladding Safety Victoria requires site managers to exercise constant vigilance with respect to any suspected cases of coronavirus on any cladding rectification site. Cladding Safety Victoria must be informed of any suspected coronavirus cases immediately.

An employer must not require a worker to perform work if the worker is displaying symptoms. The employer must direct any person displaying symptoms to return home immediately or self-isolate at the premises if it is not safe for the worker to travel home. The employer must advise the worker to get tested and to self-isolate while awaiting the result.

The employer must take all reasonably practicable steps to manage the risk of transmission, including by thoroughly cleaning the site and ensuring records are available for contact tracing if a suspected case becomes a confirmed case.

Guidelines for cleaning high-touch surfaces are available on the Department of Health and Human Services website: [Coronavirus Victoria website](#).

What will happen if there is a *confirmed* coronavirus case on site?

A worker who has tested positive must immediately notify their employer at any work site they have attended during the 48-hour period before displaying any symptoms or having a test (if asymptomatic).

The employer must immediately undertake the following steps.

Requirement	Implementation
1. Notify Government	Mandatory notification to DHHS, WorkSafe and CSV
2. Direct the worker not to attend site and to self-isolate	The worker is not permitted to attend site. If on site, employer must direct the worker to travel home or isolate on site if not safe to do so
3. Risk assess whether site should be closed for cleaning and contact tracing	Relevant factors in the risk assessment include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) duration the worker was on-site b) exposure of other persons to the worker who has tested positive c) tasks undertaken by the worker who has tested positive d) surfaces, tools, equipment, and plant touched or used by the worker who has tested positive and e) location of tasks undertaken by the worker who has tested positive
4. Comprehensive clean of the site	Irrespective of whether site is closed, the site must be comprehensively cleaned
5. Identify close contacts and advise them to self-quarantine	Records will help identify any co-workers working in proximity of a worker who has tested positive

Requirement	Implementation
6. Notify all workers and inform them to be vigilant	Informing other workers will support reduction in further transmission
7. Manage risks	Assess and control risks of transmission amongst workers and to the community, especially building occupants
8. Contact DHHS and notify when actions have been taken	DHHS must be notified when all steps completed
9. If site has been closed, do not re-open until contact tracing is complete and the site has been cleared for re-opening and WorkSafe is notified	If site closed, re-opening only when site has been cleared

Table 3 - Confirmed Case Steps

Cladding Safety Victoria requires the immediate and complete cooperation of the site manager to ensure all building occupants are informed to reduce the risk of any breakout.

What if a building occupant tests positive to COVID-19 at an apartment complex where cladding rectification works are underway?

The owners corporation must inform Cladding Safety Victoria immediately if a building occupant tests positive to coronavirus.

Information about a positive case will allow us to act swiftly and implement safety precautions outlined in our COVIDSafe Plan as quickly as possible.

Where can I find more information?

The Directions are frequently updated and are available on the Department of Health and Human Services website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>.

A range of preventative measures are available on the [Coronavirus Victoria website](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace): <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace>

COVIDSafe Plan templates, guidance material and *High Risk* attachments are available on the Coronavirus Victoria website: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/creating-a-covidsafe-workplace>

Guidelines for cleaning high-touch surfaces: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace>

For more information about Cladding Safety Victoria's program, please visit our website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/cladding-safety>.

For more information about Cladding Safety Victoria's response to coronavirus, please visit our website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-cladding-safety-important-information>.

More information for practitioners and industry groups is available on our website: <https://www.vic.gov.au/i-am-practitioner-or-part-industry-group>.