

Critical COVID-19 Response Information for Tasmanian Employers

Current as at noon, 26 June 2020 2020

The following information is intended to assist businesses to navigate the unprecedented changes arising out of enhanced responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information about Government Response measures were current at the time of publication however, given the rapidly evolving situation, businesses should monitor reliable news sources for updated information.

What is the Current Stage Response?

The Tasmanian Government released a [Roadmap to Recovery](#), to be implemented based on public health advice. The timeframe started on **Monday 11 May 2020**.

Stage Three commenced at 12 noon, 26 June 2020 and includes the following easing of restrictions:

- The number of people permitted at a business or activity (other than households) is determined by the density of one person per 2 sqm, up to a maximum of:
 - 250 people for an undivided space in an indoor premises; and
 - 500 people in an undivided space outdoors.
- The gathering cap applies separately to each undivided space in one premises.
- The gathering limits do not apply to:
 - Airports
 - Health services including veterinary services.
 - Disability or aged care facilities
 - Prisons
 - Courts and tribunals
 - Parliament
 - Education institutions, including child care facilities
 - Premises that deliver social and community support
 - Emergency services.

Business permitted to reopen include:

- Indoor amusement premises
- Saunas and spas
- Garage sales
- Strip clubs
- Casinos
- Zoos
- Stadiums
- Markets and food venues
- Sex workers
- Food courts
- Night clubs (for seated service only)

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	<p>Gathering of up to 500 people for outdoor community sport and up to 250 for or one person per sqm 2 people for indoor sport and recreation.</p> <p>The Government services closures remain in place including specified services provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities Tasmania • Custodial Inspectorate • Health • Office of the Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner • Justice • Premier and Cabinet • Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment • State Growth • Treasury and Finance • Government House <p>In Tasmania the additional North West restrictions that commenced on 12 April 2020 have been lifted from 12:00am Monday 4 May 2020. That means the restrictions in the North West region are now consistent with the restrictions remaining across the State.</p>
<p>For how long will the current stage be in place?</p>	<p>The stages of easing of restrictions will continue to be based on public health advice, with further Stage Three changes proposed to commence on 24 July 2020.</p>
<p>What if I am not one of the employers that is included in the types of businesses included in the current Stage Response?</p>	<p>Businesses must adhere to the “2sqm rule”, maintain social distancing and follow other measures to mitigate against potential infection exposure.</p> <p>Employees are encouraged to continue to work from home where it is suitable to both the employer and employee.</p>
<p>Are the borders closed?</p>	<p>In Tasmania, the Premier has announced that all travellers to Tasmania will be required to complete a ‘Tasmanian Arrivals Form’. All non-essential travellers continue to be required to go into quarantine for 14 days in government provided accommodation.</p> <p>Essential travellers will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compassionate travellers; • people travelling for medical reasons; • if your work is identified as essential, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National and State Security and Governance; ○ Health services; ○ Freight, transport and logistics; ○ Specialist skills critical to maintaining key industry or businesses; ○ Paramedics and ambulance officers

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	<p>All essential travellers have different quarantine restrictions, including not sharing accommodation and a requirement to monitor and report any symptoms.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government has set a date of 24 July 2020 for changes to be made to border restrictions however, it remains subject to public health advice at that time.</p>
Do I need to keep paying workers?	<p>If your workers can work safely from home (discussed below), then they may do so.</p> <p>In the circumstances that impacted businesses experiences a stoppage of work and all paid leave has been exhausted, there may arise the basis to implement a stand down without pay, however legal advice should be sought first.</p> <p>In all cases, where an eligible business has experienced a drop in turnover of 30% or more (or 50% for a business with an annual turnover of \$1billion or more), full time, part time and casual employees (provided the casual employee has at least 12 months service) who were employed at 1 March 2020 may be eligible to receive a flat \$1,500 per fortnight JobKeeper Payment for a 6 month period.</p> <p>The \$1,500 JobKeeper payment will be payable irrespective of whether the employee is continuing to perform some paid work or whether they have been stood down without pay.</p> <p>The JobKeeper payments are being administered through the Australian Taxation Office and compliance monitored through the single touch payroll system. Employers received payments from the start of May 2020, backdated to 30 March 2020.</p> <p>Eligible employers can enrol for JobKeeper here.</p> <p>The Tasmanian State Government is offering interest free loans of between \$20,000 and \$250,000 to assist eligible local businesses. Loans are available for business continuity purposes.</p> <p>The State Government is also waiving of payroll tax for the last four months of 2019–20 for hospitality, tourism and seafood industry businesses. Direct funding has been provided towards critical air freight service for time sensitive freight (such as seafood).</p> <p>There has been the introduction of a youth employment payroll tax rebate scheme for young people from 1 April 2020, additional \$5000 grants for businesses that hire an apprentice or trainee. Taxi license fees have been waived for 2020 calendar year. Funding has been provided for one-off arts and cultural industry projects such as script development and music recording.</p>
What should I be thinking about in implementing working from home arrangements?	<p>Kingston Reid has developed a Working from Home Checklist, to which employers may refer in preparing employees to work from home.</p> <p>This Checklist is not exhaustive, and employers should have regard to any particular safety, information security and other considerations that may be unique to the work undertaken by particular employees.</p>

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What are other safety measures that I should be considering right now?

As part of the Tasmanian Government's plan to 'Rebuild a Stronger Tasmania', all workplaces will be required to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan that complies with minimum COVID-19 safety standards. The [Direction for COVID-19 Workplace Plans](#) sets the minimum standards for workplaces to be COVID Safe.

The nature of the Response measures and the effect of isolation will invariably have an impact upon the mental health of all workers. Check in regularly with employees at home and ensure that all are reminded of Employee Assistance Programs.

Employers should remain mindful that, if employees are directed to undertake non-essential work, and they become infected, there will foreseeably arise exposure to workers' compensation and potentially negligence claims under the workers' compensation scheme.

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