

COVID-19 – PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Below is an example risk assessment and some suggested controls we can undertake in Construction. This list is not exhaustive, you may have better identified controls or identify other hazards. The purpose of this assessment is to prompt thinking, consultation and action during the COVID-19 crises to help keep our Industry safe.

Hazard Category	Risks	Example Controls
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Mandatory or self-Isolation – can create heightened anxiety and limit resources or networking with support services	Ensure all workers have access to EAP or counselling/ support services
		Ensure there are procedures in place for staff check-ins, via different methods (video, email, phone etc)
		Assess each individual and any pre-existing mental health conditions, using an individual psychological risk assessment
	Lack of clarity – through lack of knowledge and understanding	Provide up to date information as soon as it is made available to all workers
		Consult with workers before and during procedural or policy changes
		Use trusted information sources (i.e not facebook), such as trusted government authorities to clarify any questions or concerns raised by workers
		Identify a point of contact for COVID-19 enquiries within the business and communicate this information to workers
	Financial – due to stand downs, lack of leave, price increases on necessities, cost of working from home	Access latest information from Fair Work and communicate entitlements
		Communicate changes with workers as soon as possible and try to come to mutual arrangements
		Provide financial support information to workers, including crises support avenues and OzHelp
	Increased/ heavy workloads leading to mental and physical fatigue	Develop a working plan to ensure that additional tasks are allocated as sparsely/ evenly as possible
		Check in with workers on a scheduled basis
		Monitor workers for signs of mental or physical fatigue, such as change in demeanour, slow reactions, withdrawal, anger or overly emotional, poor performance
	Lack of job control – due to guidelines and government enforced restrictions	Consult with workers and ensure that legal restrictions are outlined and understood
Limited or lack of communication – through inappropriate resources, lack of resources, through change management or lack of provision of information	Ensure that communication methods and lines are well-established and communicated with workers	
	Consult with workers on change management requirements	
	Provide workers guidance material on resources they may need to work from home, or additional resources to continue working to ensure they can prepare	
	Check in with workers individually at scheduled times	

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	Increased stress over personal situations affected by COVID-19 (such as family)	Coordinate mutual arrangements and flexible arrangements for those with vulnerable family members, or those they are financially or otherwise responsible for
PHYSICAL	Contracting COVID-19, causing fever, flu like symptoms, headaches and in extreme cases, death	Refer to PPE, Travelling workers, Work Environment, Compliance and Emergency Preparedness and Management
		Isolate unwell/ infectious person and advise them to call their GP and advise of their symptoms. Encourage the worker to comply with medical advice
	Transmitting COVID-19	Refer to PPE, Travelling workers, Work Environment, Compliance and Emergency Preparedness and Management
	Increased work-loads or extended work hours causing fatigue	Check in with workers on a scheduled basis
		Monitor workers for signs of mental or physical fatigue, such as change in demeanour, slow reactions, withdrawal, anger or overly emotional, poor performance
		Manage rosters to ensure workers who have additional workloads are having regular breaks
		Review travel requirements for any workers who may be at high risk of fatigue to ensure they can safely get home
	Infected worker presents to work (or non-compliance with self-isolation requirements for likely case)	Ensure all workers are educated on when self-isolation and testing is required
		On large scale project ensure there is an area identified for isolating sick or exposed workers
		Update sign in/ check in procedures to work site each day, so sick workers can be identified before accessing the site. (This may include brief questionnaires on entry, update to sign on apps, taking temperatures, or visual identifications)
		All instructions, signage and information provided is in a manner of which the worker will understand (consider gaps with literacy and language)
		Limit workers/ trades on site to only those of which are necessary (this may require a review of program/ rostering/ scheduling with contractors/ workers)
Workers not complying with social distancing or restricted gathering requirements	Ensure information on COVID-19 and the associated risks is provided to all workers on the requirements and establish a procedure for dealing with workers who do not comply	
	Provide signage or positive messaging around social distancing, such as (for example) friends don't give friends COVID-19	
	Have a disciplinary procedure in place for repeated non-compliance (such as removal from site)	

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	Vulnerable workers being exposed to COVID-19 which may result in more serious illness and increase the likelihood of death	Review employee information and have individual health consultations with workers to identify and manage any vulnerable people (such as those who are immunocompromised, over 70 or have existing cardiac or respiratory conditions)
REMOTE (FROM HOME) WORKERS	Limited (or no) supervision and monitoring with an increased risk of isolation and access to prohibited substances	Schedule facetime/ video conferencing on a regular basis in order to assess any physical changes in workers
		Update Alcohol and Other Drugs Policies, to include workers who are working from home during allocated working hours and communicate to all workers
		Create work plans so targets or actions are clearly identified with realistic time frames to keep workers accountable
		Provide information to workers on mental health and negative effects of drugs and alcohol
	Hazards in the home	Develop a working from home guide or similar to educate workers how to set up for work at home, identifying hazards (ergonomic/ access/ personal safety etc) and communicate
		Organise a virtual walk-through or inspection to ensure workers are adequately equipped to safely work from home
	Safety risks in the home (such as domestic violence)	Discuss the working with home arrangements with workers and identify any personal safety risks. If risks are identified, then provide support/ crises service contact information and work with the worker to find a solution that will be suitable and not expose them to further personal safety risks
	Ergonomic risks causing MSDs	Provide workers with a workstation/ ergonomic assessment/ checklist they can complete, along with instruction on safe and suitable set-ups
	Mental health risks due to isolation or unintentional ostracization	Ensure all workers have access to EAP or counselling/ support services
		Ensure there are procedures in place for staff check-ins, via different methods (video, email, phone etc)
		Assess each individual and any pre-existing mental health conditions, using an individual psychological risk assessment
		Ensure all workers are aware of who is responsible for what during remote working activities, so inadvertent ostracization is minimised
Distractions impacting mental health	Provide staff adequate information to plan their day, with structure, including breaks, exercise etc	
	Establish procedures for staff check-ins to assist in keeping workers focused	
Lack of knowledge/ understanding or experience working from home and identifying symptoms of escalating mental health illnesses/ concerns	Provide information and training to staff on symptoms of mental health illness, particularly in relation to fatigue, anxiety and isolation	
	Provide support avenues for workers, such as counselling	

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		Consider a remote buddy system
	Lack of resources to undertake work safely	Prepare a checklist for staff to complete based on their home set up. Review the checklist and prepare a virtual walk through to identify any gaps, issues or hazards
REMOTE (TRAVELLING) WORKERS	Non-compliance with Government travel restrictions	Provide regular updates to all workers about the travel bans in place, and any changes as they happen
	Increased risk of exposure to COVID-19	Consider temporary accommodation close to work site to avoid workers travelling in vehicles together and reduce number of areas for exposure
	Unfamiliar modes of travel/ public transport	Stay up to date with TCCS and changes to cleaning and timetables. Comply with government recommendations
		Consider is remote travelling workers can work from home
		Consider split rosters or shifts to decrease number of personnel onsite, and additional requirements for travel
Adequate cleaning of company vehicles	Implement procedure of one operator per shift where possible	
	Implement procedure for the operator to clean at the end of their shift, including steering wheel, blinkers, internal windscreen, seat belt and clips, headlights and other dashboard interactive buttons/ levers. Ensure there is a checklist that can be signed off by the operator and reviewed by WHS	
	Ensure cleaning products are made available to each vehicle	
	Set air-conditioning mode to outside air	
WORK ENVIRONMENT	Cleaning procedures not adequate for disinfection against COVID-19	Comply with ACT Health recommendations for cleaning
	Confined/ Restricted work areas that make social distancing difficult	Assess tasks and prioritise requirements. Any tasks that require people to not comply with social distancing should be reviewed and alternative work methods put in place.
	High risk/ high traffic areas on site	Implement a 'you touch it, you clean it' policy, ensuring cleaning equipment is available around the site and in work areas
		Encourage workers to push buttons to lifts, and open doors with elbows where possible. If doors do not need to be shut, prop them open to minimise the requirement of touching
	Limited infrastructure to support additional hygiene requirements (such as running water)	Install water coolers with disposable/ recyclable bottles
		Utilise water/ soap free alcohol-based hand sanitisers
Indoor works with little fresh ventilation	Prop doors open where possible	
	Switch aircon over to outside air	

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	Increased risk of exposure/ transmission through sharing of tools/ plant/ machinery	Discourage the sharing of tools. Where tools are required to be used by multiple users, ensure all workers are familiar with the procedure to clean the tools after use and provide the necessary equipment to do this
		Reduce number of workers in the task where possible to avoid additional inadvertent contact
FACILITIES	Lunch-rooms/ Meeting rooms are not adequately sized to host all workers required for meal times, meetings or toolbox talks to comply with gathering restrictions and social distancing rules	Host meetings outdoors where possible
		Consider virtual toolbox talks or meetings
		Avoid unnecessary gatherings in person
		Create a rotating roster for workers in the lunch sheds (spacing out lunch breaks) to comply with 4m ² and 1.5m social distancing guidelines
	Limited access or supply of hygiene products such as hand wash, hand sanitiser, toilet paper, bleach or disinfectant etc	Contact multiple suppliers and organise back orders in preparation. Consider using suppliers with ability for large orders such as PFD, Officeworks, Chem Works, Cleaning Warehouse etc. Consider placing online orders.
SYSTEMS	Insufficient or out of date policies or procedures that have not addressed COVID-19	Update/ develop an audit schedule, an allocate responsible persons to review the policies and procedures, identifying which ones require the most significant attention (such as WHS policy, Drug and Alcohol Policy, Work from Home Policy, Incident reporting etc).
		Consider any additional procedures that may be required, such as isolation, testing or reporting procedures
	Not being able to conduct normal site meetings/ toolbox talks as per system requirements without being in contravention of social distancing and restricted gathering requirements and exposing workers to higher chance of exposure to COVID-19	Arrange for alternative methods of communication to allow consultation and site meetings to continue so far as possible, whether this be with smaller groups, virtually, via noticeboards etc.
		Review procedure for toolbox/ talks or site meetings to accommodate social distancing requirements
	SWMS for high risk construction activities identify tasks be done in a manner that does not comply with social distancing requirements	Review all SWMS and consult with workers and other duty holders to identify alternative means of carrying out the task.
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	Workers not complying with recommended or mandatory PPE requirements	Implement a site safety campaign to ensure workers understand the importance of social distancing. Refer to the 'MBA Friends don't give friends Coronavirus' as an example.
	Unable to source required PPE	Reach out to industry counterparts to see if others have new excess supply to share
		Assess early the additional requirements of PPE required and order early
		Coordinate with local suppliers (note: MBA is lobbying for additional PPE supplies into Construction Industry)

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	Workers lack of training/ knowledge to wear and maintain PPE effectively and adequately	<p>Provide information to workers on the importance of PPE and how to appropriately fit and maintain the PPE</p> <p>Reinforce requirements for workers to wear mandatory PPE through a disciplinary procedure where there is lack of compliance</p> <p>Update site signage to include face masks as mandatory PPE if necessary</p>
	PPE contributing to cross contamination of areas	<p>Ensure workers are aware of cross contamination through wearing of (and not changing) gloves</p> <p>Provide signage at lunch-room and bathroom doorways for workers to remove gloves and wash hands during meal and toilet breaks</p> <p>Provide information and signage to workers to avoid touching face, and doing so while wearing gloves is no different to not wearing gloves</p> <p>Ensure workers have access to clean and appropriate face masks where required. Consider whether disposable masks are sufficient and cost effective (given the recommendation that these be disposed of and replaced daily)</p>
RESOURCES	Increased work-load with limited workers or capacity, creating risk of burn out or fatigue	Check in with workers on a scheduled basis
		Monitor workers for signs of mental or physical fatigue, such as change in demeanour, slow reactions, withdrawal, anger or overly emotional, poor performance
		Manage rosters to ensure workers who have additional workloads are having regular breaks
		Review travel requirements for any workers who may be at high risk of fatigue to ensure they can safely get home
	Reduced crews to comply with social distancing and gathering restrictions	Revise program and work methods to ensure social distancing can be complied with (better to work slower than not at all!)
		Review supervision requirements to ensure new work methods and social distancing requirements are being complied with
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT	Identified emergency assembly area is small and will encourage breaches of the social distancing and restricted gathering requirements	Review emergency management plan, procedures and evacuation locations to ensure there is consideration of COVID-19. This may require identifying a different evacuation point and reviewing responsibilities and procedures for mass evacuations within the plan.
		To avoid congestion during evacuation, particularly over multiple levels, consider means of communication to avoid panic and gathering during evacuation, such as updating procedures to evacuate level by level (if appropriate and situation allows)