



PHSA COVID-19 Safety Plan

Current as of: 19/11/2021

Purpose

This plan provides guidance on operating in a COVID-safe way, and helps identify and mitigate risks during the ongoing pandemic.

Policy

PHSA is dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of all team members, customers/clients, contractors and visitors. In this pandemic environment, we acknowledge additional precautions are required and these are outlined in this COVID Safety Plan.

1. Office access and visitor flow

To control the flow of people into and through our offices, we will:

- encourage telehealth consultations (where appropriate). Team members are encouraged to work from home if appropriate and reasonable for them to do so
- ensure all visitors, clients and staff use the local Government's QR code system to collect an electronic record of the name, contact number and entry time. A staff member / receptionist will confirm that the individual has checked in (keeping 1.5m physical distance between staff and visitors)
- ensure that QR codes are clearly visible and accessible at the entrance to the premises
- record appropriate details of any client / visitor who cannot use the electronic QR code system (e.g. due to a language or age barrier)
- check the temperature of each person presenting to our office. If the temperature registers $>37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ the person will be asked to remain outside until further assessment can be conducted. Upon additional testing and/or if the person is displaying signs of cold or flu, the individual will be declined entrance
- rapid antigen testing (RAT) for all visitors to site. Any positive test will be declined entry and the person will be directed to complete polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing to confirm diagnosis
- limit visitor entry to the main entrance / reception so that screening can be completed
- display information at the entrance and ensure clear messaging on the website asking visitors to not attend if they have any symptoms or are required to isolate. Visitors will be advised of entry requirements at least 3 days in advance by their allocated consultant.
- display information at the entrance outlining the requirements of entry including: completion of a temperature check, RAT, wearing a mask, have an appointment and be free from symptoms consistent with COVID-19
- require all clients entering the practice to don a face mask [clients are asked to bring their own, but will be supplied with one if they present without a mask]

- provide access to hand-hygiene products upon entry and exit (and at appropriate locations throughout the office), such as an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or hand-washing facilities
- shared work areas are only accessible to workers. Clients with appointments will be shown to an allocated meeting room only and will not have access to the shared office workspace
- not allow staff to work across multiple PHSA offices (i.e. not working across more than one PHSA sites)
- review regular deliveries and request contactless delivery and invoicing where practical

2. Physical distancing

Our facility will put in place physical distancing measure by:

- providing training to all members of the team
- minimising numbers of individuals utilising the lift per the building's protocols
- requesting that team members do not carpool
- taping a line on the floor 1.5 m from the reception desk to ensure adequate distance upon arrival
- erecting physical shields at high-interaction areas (e.g. reception)
- minimising congestion in the office by:
 - limiting the number of people on the premises at any one time (staff rosters / workforce bubbles)
 - visitation by appointment-only
 - spacing furniture in the waiting room

3. Infection-control training

All members of the team, including Consultants, Managers and administrative staff, will undertake infection-control training.

All training will be documented and include:

- review of PHSA's COVID-19 Safety Plan
- infection prevention and control module within the PHSA induction
- ensure team members are aware of their role when managing a visitor presenting with – or exhibiting symptoms suggestive of – COVID-19.

4. Use of personal protective equipment

Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical in limiting the spread of COVID-19. All members of the team will:

- ensure standard precautions, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and appropriate waste-management techniques, are maintained
- wear PPE appropriate to the consultation / meeting and as per advice from the local public health unit
- dispose of all used PPE in accordance with standard precautions
- receive training/guidance on how to ensure the correct fit, use and disposal of PPE

- be encouraged to ensure daily washing of reusable face masks.

5. Environmental management and cleaning

Our offices will be regularly cleaned and disinfected including shared spaces, surfaces and communal items. PHSA will:

- enhance air flow by opening windows and doors in shared spaces (where and when appropriate) and optimising fresh air flow in air conditioning systems (by maximising the intake of outside air and reducing or avoiding recirculation of air)
- ensure mechanical ventilation systems are regularly maintained to optimize performance (e.g. regular filter cleaning or filter changes)
- minimise the volume of equipment in clinical or assessment rooms (e.g. the functional assessment room) and waiting rooms to reduce the cleaning burden and risk of transmission
- minimise the sharing of clinical and administrative equipment between team members
- adhere to strict environmental cleaning as per the most current advice from the Department of Health or our local public health unit
- maintain disinfectant solutions at an appropriate strength and use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces with detergent and disinfectant wipe/solution between each use – using a cleaning detergent followed by a disinfectant, or a two-in-one product with cleaning and disinfecting properties
- any items / equipment taken from the office (such as functional assessment equipment / worksite testing equipment) will be cleaned and disinfected upon its return and stored in a locked cabinet
- provide cleaning products and disinfectant in the pool car. It will be the responsibility of the hiring consultant to clean frequently touched surfaces (i.e. steering wheel, controls and handles) with detergent and disinfectant wipe/solution between each use
- ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels
- display 'how to hand wash' posters / instructions
- provide instruction to all staff members on environmental cleaning requirements
- maintain a cleaning log in both the office and the pool car.

6. Record-keeping

To aid contact tracing in the event a client, team member, contractor or any visitor to the practice tests positive for COVID-19, PHSA will:

- utilise a contactless electronic system (ie QR code) to record contact details, ensuring data is stored confidentially and securely and is only used for the purpose for which it was intended
- maintain a record of all onsite appointments (including recording people accompanying the visitor), team member work times, and contractors/visitors to the practice, including entry and exit times
- ensure that records can be provided in electronic format, such as via a spreadsheet if the QR code is not utilised, within 4 hours, upon request from an authorised officer
- maintain these records for a minimum of 28 days.

7. Team management and limiting interactions in closed spaces

7.1 PHSA Office

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between team members in the office, we will:

- limit the number of people on the premises at any one time (clients are by appointment-only; team members must book their visit via a calendar / roster)
- regularly communicate with all team members regarding the requirement to not attend the office if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, regardless of how mild, and will encourage testing in line with local public health unit advice
- request that only staff who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 attend the office
- request that employees who are not fully vaccinated work at their place of residence only. If it is not reasonably practicable for them to work from home, they must advise their Manager and WHS Manager so that a risk assessment can be conducted
- check the temperature of each team member on commencement of work. Where the person registers a temperature >37.5°C they will not enter the office and will be asked to seek further medical review
- perform rapid antigen testing (RAT) for all staff on each day they attend the office. Any positive test will be declined entry and the person will be directed to complete polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing to confirm diagnosis.
- support any team member who tests positive for COVID-19, or is identified as a close contact or is required to self-isolate, including providing details of their leave entitlements
- encourage physical distancing in common areas (ie tea room), through organisation of furniture, floor markings and signage
- assign workers to specific workstations and disinfect any shared office equipment between users
- encourage tea breaks/lunchbreaks to be taken outside
- stagger breaks to limit the number of people in common areas
- encourage all team members to provide their own drinking vessels and cutlery. Disposable cutlery will be available in the office
- require all team members to thoroughly clean communal items (e.g. cups) immediately after use by washing with hot water and detergent
- ban the sharing of food on site (e.g. cake and dips).

7.2 Working in the field / offsite

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission between team members working in the field, we will:

- request the use of face masks for all face-to-face appointments
- encourage staff to access COVID-19 vaccination
- request that employees who are not fully vaccinated work at their place of residence only. If it is not reasonably practicable for them to work from home, they must advise their Manager and WHS Manager so that a risk assessment can be conducted
- limit the number of face-to-face appointments each week. This will be communicated frequently by the WHS Manager or Managing Director depending on current local case numbers and assessed risk
- encourage the spacing-out of appointments (e.g. one appointment per day, every second day),

depending on the most up to date health advice

- encourage team members to conduct their meetings outdoors
- ensure all team members complete a COVID-19 screening case note / checklist against their client's file prior to their face-to-face meeting, and to discuss any health and safety concerns with their Manager or WHS Manager prior to the appointment
- communicate the vaccination status of the allocated consultant to the client, whilst maintaining the privacy of the staff member (i.e. vaccination certificates will not be released / sent to any third party by PHSA)
- follow the Department of Health or local public health unit's requirements for entrance to premises (e.g. vaccination, QR codes, mask usage etc.)
- if utilising a co-working space or hired facility for the purpose of an assessment or meeting, request a copy of the facility's own COVID Safety Plan and ensure that procedures meet PHSA's own safety protocols for staff and clients.

8. Responding to a positive case, or close contact, in the team

If a member of the team tests positive to COVID-19, PHSA will:

- contact the local public health unit and follow their advice
- notify the appropriate state authority if applicable (e.g. SafeWork NSW or WorkSafe Victoria)
- follow the direction of the local public health unit regarding cleaning of the premises
- ensure the team member does not return to the office or field until they meet the criteria for release from isolation, and as instructed by the local public health unit
- assist the local public health unit in contact tracing by providing records of all clients, team members and visitors who have attended the workplace / meeting location during the period in which the team member was potentially infectious (as defined by the local public health unit).

Plan review

This plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the current processes and procedures of PHSA as well as current legislation requirements and public health directives. The plan will be reviewed on or before 19/02/2022.

Public health unit contacts

State/territory	Public health unit contact
Australian Capital Territory	02 5124 9213 (business hours) 02 9962 4155 (after hours)
New South Wales	1300 066 055
Northern Territory	08 8922 8044 1800 008 002
Queensland	Find your nearest unit
South Australia	1300 232 272
Tasmania	1800 671 738
Victoria	1300 651 160
Western Australia	08 6373 2222

Further resources

Federal Department of Health

- [COVID-19 infection control training](#)

Safe Work Australia

- [COVID-19 Information for workplaces](#)

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