



COVID-19 VICTORIA

FAQS

METRO MELB AND LOCKDOWN REGIONS | OCTOBER 14, 2021

As of Friday October 15, it is mandatory that any employer gathers and records vaccination status information on any person working anywhere other than from the worker's own residence.

Who needs to provide proof of Vaccination?

This applies to all paid staff and to any unpaid (volunteer) staff working from any location other than their own residence. This is a requirement throughout the entire state of Victoria and applies to everyone who is on the government's Authorised Worker lists. Those lists can be [found here](#).

Who needs to see and record the proof of Vaccination status?

Should proof be required by Health authorities, it is important that this information be available at the place where the work is done, or from where it is coordinated. Therefore, this information needs to be provided to, and recorded by, **the Church Council** for any authorised work activity on any church property or on behalf of the church. Church councils do not need this information for staff of paid contractors (eg plumbers or garden maintenance companies) as their employer must receive and record this proof.

Who would this apply to at our church?

Roles which would need to provide proof of vaccination status would likely include the worship leader, cleaner, organist/musician, Covid check-in marshals, those participating in recording/broadcasting live-streamed services, children's leader, food bank workers and anyone involved with building maintenance or gardening.

Does this requirement apply to Ministers?

While there appear to be some exemptions under certain circumstances from the requirement to gather this information from Ministers and other faith leaders, it is strongly recommended that Vaccination Status information be requested from Ministers to ensure compliance in **all** situations.

What if the proof is not provided?

An employer of a worker must not permit a worker who is unvaccinated to work for that employer outside the worker's ordinary place of residence, unless that person is medically exempted from vaccination requirements. If an employer does not hold vaccination information about a worker, the employer must treat the worker as if the worker is unvaccinated.

What information is required?

The Vaccination register must record the name of all staff and volunteers working onsite.

Beside each, it must show

- ▶ For fully vaccinated (2 doses)– the date of the 2nd dose, the vaccination document number and the type of vaccine received
- ▶ For partially vaccinated (1 dose)- the date of the 1st dose, the date due for 2nd dose and the type of vaccine received
- ▶ For excepted (medically exempt) - the type of exemption, the name of the medical practitioner who issued the certificate and the date.

How should the information be recorded?

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has produced a simple form to assist all Church Councils to meet the above obligation. [This form can be found here](#)

Who will have access to this information?

Synod's Crisis Management Team is recommending that no more than two people at any location have access to that location's staff vaccination records. It may be required at some point that authorised staff from either the Synod or Presbytery be able to verify compliance. At any time, this information may be requested by an Authorised Health Official.

Will this replace Permitted Worker Permits?

As of Friday October 15, any authorised worker in Metropolitan Melbourne or any area of Regional Victoria currently under "stay-at-home" orders will be required to carry both a valid Permitted Worker Permit and evidence of their vaccination status in order to attend any workplace.

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By October 15 all workers who are on the [Authorised Worker list](#) must have received their first vaccine, or be booked to receive their 1st dose by Oct 22, to attend any workplace. They must also receive their second dose by November 26. This includes faith leaders, marriage celebrants and funerary services.

The following restrictions apply in Metropolitan Melbourne plus any Regional Local Government Areas whilst under lockdown orders.

- There are only 5 reasons to leave home:
 - ▶ Shopping (within **15km** of home, unless nearest shop further than **15km**)
 - ▶ Exercise (within **15km** of home, up to **four hours**, with one other person plus dependants. The other person can be from another household providing neither of you travel more than **15km** from your home and you keep 1.5m distance between you.
 - ▶ Authorised work or Education
 - ▶ Caregiving & medical treatments
 - ▶ To get vaccinated

Additionally, you can leave home if there is an emergency. You can also leave home if there is family violence or violence by another person in the home, and you are at risk.

- **Curfew** – A curfew is now in place between 9pm and 5am daily. (Applicable only in Metro Melbourne).
- **Permitted Work:** [Only people whose work activities are listed at here are permitted to attend a workplace.](#) They must obtain a valid Permitted Worker Permit* before attending any workplace. Everyone else must work only from home.
- **From Oct 15, employers must obtain proof of Vaccination Status from any employee (including volunteer staff) before permitting**

them to work in any location other than the employee's home.

- ***Permitted Worker Permits** are required for anyone who must attend the workplace for work, and whose work function appears on the above authorised worker list. This includes ministers, staff and volunteers involved in worship broadcasting. See page 4 for further detail.
- **Masks** must be worn (indoors and outside) unless at home or with a valid exemption.
- **No visitors to the home, other than intimate partner.** Anyone who lives alone may create a "bubble" with one other person.
- **Outdoor Gatherings** – One person may meet another person not from their household for a picnic, a walk, or another outdoor activity. Additionally, up to five adults (plus dependents) from two households will be able to gather outdoors if all adults (18 years old or over) present have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine
- **Playgrounds** – Open. QR Code Check-in is required.
- **Basketball courts, skate parks and outdoor exercise equipment** are open.
- **Outdoor Personal Training** is allowed for up to 5 fully vaccinated people plus the fully vaccinated trainer.
- **Contactless outdoor recreation** (eg boating, golf, tennis) allowed.
- **Worship services** – Broadcast only.
 - ▶ 5 people max in broadcasting.
 - ▶ **Must all have a valid Permitted Worker Permit, submitted to Synod. See page 3 for further detail.**
 - ▶ **Must all provide proof of vaccination status**
 - ▶ **Must all have received at least 1 dose of Covid-19 vaccination or be booked to receive their first dose by Oct 22 unless medically exempt.**
- **Funerals** – maximum of 10 people plus those required to conduct the funeral.
- **Weddings may not proceed.** The only exceptions are for end-of-life or if deportation is pending.
- **Schools** – closed except for vulnerable children or children of emergency workers. Masks are now recommended for children over 5.

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- ▶ **Oct 5:** Students can return to sit GAT
- ▶ **Oct 6:** On-site learning resumes for VCE Units 3 & 4 and final year VCAL & IB students
- ▶ **Oct 18:** Prep, Years 1 & 2 return part time.
- **Adult education** – Online only.
- **Childcare and Early Learning** – closed except for vulnerable children or children of authorised workers **and single parents**.
A Permitted Worker Permit is required to access childcare or early learning (not required for children experiencing vulnerability). In-home childcare arrangements resumed as of Sept 3.
- **Restaurants/Cafes** – Open for takeaway or delivery services only.
- **Libraries and Toy Libraries** – Click and Collect services only.
- **Residential Aged Care** – No visitors, with very limited exceptions.
- **Hospitals** – Visitors only for end-of-life, or one support person for childbirth.
- **All entertainment, hospitality, accommodation and tourism to remain closed.**
- Travel between Metro Melbourne and Regional Victoria is not allowed, unless for a permitted reason.
- Residents of cross-border community local government areas will be required to obtain a permit to cross between Victoria and NSW from 6pm, Friday 13 August.

***Permitted Worker Permits are required for anyone who is unable to work from home and whose work is permitted/essential under the current restrictions. This applies to all staff, ministers and volunteers of the Uniting Church. See below for further detail.**

How you can help ensure Melbourne's lockdown ends

Please regularly check the list of exposure sites at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites

If you have been to any of those locations during the periods listed, follow the relevant advice for that exposure site.

Metropolitan Melbourne is defined as consisting of the following Local Government areas: Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra, Yarra Ranges

ROADMAP OUT OF LOCKDOWN

When will we next see restrictions ease in Metropolitan Melbourne and what are these likely to be?

The Government has released a roadmap with the following key targets:

- ▶ **70% of all people aged 16+ fully vaccinated (est 26 Oct 2021). Restriction changes will include:**
 - **Religious gatherings** – Outdoor only. If all attendees are fully vaccinated: with one person per 4 square metres, maximum of 50. If vaccination status unknown: one person per 4 square metres, maximum of 20.
 - **Funerals** – If all attendees are fully vaccinated: one person per 4 square metres, maximum of 50. If vaccination status unknown: no more than 20 people, and those necessary to conduct a funeral.
- **Weddings** – Outdoor only. If all attendees are fully vaccinated: one person per 4 square metres, maximum of 50. If vaccination status unknown: no more than 10 people, and marrying couple plus those necessary to conduct wedding.
- ▶ **80% of all people aged 16+ fully vaccinated (est 05 Nov 2021). Restriction changes will include:**
 - **Religious Gatherings** – If all attendees are fully vaccinated: Indoors with one person per 4 square metres, max 150 people, or Outdoors with one person per 2 square metres, max 300. If vaccination status unknown: One person per 4 square metres, maximum 20 people.

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- Weddings and Funerals** – If fully vaccinated: Indoors with one person per 4 square metres up to 150 people or Outdoors with one person per 2 square metres up to 500 people. If vaccination status is unknown: Funerals must have no more than 20 people plus those necessary to conduct the funeral, while Weddings may have no more than 10 guests.
- 80% of all people aged 12+ fully vaccinated (est 19 Nov 2021)** will see the most significant changes with all restrictions aligned to the National COVID-19 Response Plan.

[Click here to see the full roadmap out of lockdown for Metropolitan Melbourne.](#)

Should you require any further detail, please see DHHS website: [DHHS website](#) or the [Coronavirus Victoria](#) website.

Should you have any further questions please email the [Crisis Management Team](#).

PERMITTED WORKER PERMITS

Who needs a Permitted Worker Permit?

The only people who may attend any workplace are those whose work activities are permitted under current Covid Restrictions (see the next section How is 'permitted' work defined?).

From October 15, only those people who have Received at least one dose of Covid vaccine (unless medically exempt from vaccination requirements) and who have provided evidence of their COVID vaccination status to their employer are permitted to attend a workplace. From November 26, only those people who have been fully vaccinated will be able to attend a workplace, unless medically exempted from vaccination requirements.

Note: Anyone in Regional Victoria who recently obtained a Permitted Worker Permit may continue to use these. You do not have to reapply if you still have your permit.

Anyone who lives and/or works in Metro Melbourne or any Regional Area which is in lockdown, whether paid (staff) or unpaid (volunteers), doing any type of **permitted work** at any workplace other than from their own home is required to have a Permitted Worker Permit and to carry that permit with them at

all times whilst working. Students attending face-to-face adult education which cannot be undertaken remotely are also required to carry a permitted worker permit.

How is “permitted” work defined?

The Government’s Coronavirus website has a comprehensive list of permitted workers. This can be found at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/authorised-provider-and-authorised-worker-list

To assist, on the next page we have shortlisted the most common worker types relevant to the church.

How do I apply for a Permit?

You can download the Permitted Worker Permit Template UCA 2021 from Synod’s website at <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions>.

Once you have downloaded this word doc you need only complete the following sections (look for the blue highlight):

P1: In the Employer section:

Trading name [If different to company name]	Eg: St Davis Uniting Church
Permitted industry/activity	Eg: Religion

P1: In the Employee section:

Your full name, Your date of birth, and your residential address. **The Permitted Role for on-site work which you enter must only be one of those Permitted Work Activities listed on the government website.**

Permitted Role for on-site work (See Authorised Workers list)	You can click on See Authorised Workers list to see the full list. Eg: Faith leader broadcasting services & ceremonies
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Employee work location [If different to company address]	Eg: St Davis Uniting Church, 143 Disciple Lane, St Davis.
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P1: Signing the form

To assist Synod staff with processing these forms, please submit them as a Word document. If you have an electronic signature, you may add this to your application before it is submitted. Otherwise, please submit the form to Synod UNSIGNED.

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If you do submit the form unsigned, you will need to print and sign the form when it has been authorised by the Associate General Secretary and returned to you.

P2: Hours of Work

If you must work from the office for recurring hours each week, you need only complete Table 1, by indicating your usual work times for each day of the week. **Please keep your working times to the absolute minimum necessary.**

If you work only occasionally or varying hours, you will need to complete Table 2, showing up to 6 work weeks.

Where do we send completed Permit applications?

Completed applications must be sent to CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au.

Synod's Crisis Management Team is asking that every workplace co-ordinate this with all staff and volunteers at that workplace, so that all applications are gathered for that workplace, and submitted to Synod in one or two emails.

What happens next?

Synod's Crisis Management Team will review the application. If it meets the Permitted worker criteria, it will be approved by the Associate General Secretary and returned to you via email.

How long does it take to get approval and what happens while I'm waiting?

Permits will be approved and returned as quickly as is possible, but this may take a little longer initially due to the expected number of applications received. Please be patient.

Meanwhile, if you were issued with a Permitted Worker Permit in 2020 you should carry this until your 2021 permit arrives. If you were not issued with a Permitted Worker Permit in 2020 you cannot attend the workplace after 11.59pm Tuesday August 17 until you receive your 2021 Permit.

What happens if I don't get a valid Permitted Worker Permit?

There are substantial fines for leaving home for work purposes without having a valid Permit, or for completing the form with false or misleading information. Penalties are up to \$21,808.80 for individuals or up to \$109,044 for bodies corporate/ organisations.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON CHURCH-RELATED PERMITTED WORK ACTIVITIES include:

- ▶ faith leaders broadcasting services and ceremonies at places of worship, with the minimum number of people required for the broadcast to occur (no more than 5 people);
- ▶ funerary or mortuary services or related activities;
- ▶ marriage celebrant only if one or both of the two persons being married are at the end of life, or will be deported from Australia unless the marriage takes place;
- ▶ organisations that provide urgent services necessary for the health and safety of any person, animal or premises;
- ▶ care services for people with particular needs because of homelessness, family violence, age, infirmity, disability, illness or a chronic health condition or other essential support services; eg Family violence and sexual assault services, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Agencies carrying out essential relief activities, including Neighbourhood Houses.
- ▶ administrative services provided by an employer to enable its employees to work from home; eg Payroll and IT services.



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MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Victorian Multi-cultural Commission Coronavirus (COVID-19): In-language advice and information at <https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-language-advice-and-information>.

Ethnolink have information available in 51 languages at: <http://www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-%2019-coronavirus-translated-resources/>

The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: <https://Covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

The Victorian Multicultural Commission have release multi-lingual resources including:

- Audio messages: <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>
- Posters (JPG / PDF): <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>
- Social Media banners: <https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai>

HOLY COMMUNION

What changes to worship services are permissible?

Assembly Standing Committee has approved temporary pastoral measure guidelines for congregations and faith communities to enable the celebration of Holy Communion as part of online worship.

These guidelines have been extended to 30 November 2021 and can be found at: <https://www.assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3163-temporary-arrangements-for-holycommunion>

For some thoughts on how to conduct Holy Communion in a COVID-safe manner read Rev Dr Sally Douglas' November 19 article at <https://victas.uca.org.au/how-can-we-keep-holy-communion-covid-19-safe/>

As of 26/11/2020

SYNOD MINISTRIES AND OPERATIONS

Synod Ministries and Operations staff are currently working remotely, in line with Victorian COVID restrictions. However, they remain available via email or mobile phone as normal.

As of 23/08/2021

SAFE (DIGITAL) MINISTRY

What safety measures should be adopted for ministry within the digital space?

The Culture of Safety Unit has prepared some guidelines for leaders and communities, offering commentary and interpretation of how our existing Child Safety resources and policies, and the Uniting Church Code of Ethics, continue to shape our digital ministry practices. To view the guidelines visit: <https://victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry/>

As of 07/04/2020

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Where can I access worship resources to help me keep connected?

Our worship resources page, which caters for all people across our Synod, is updated each week. Available at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

As of 06/04/2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING LICENCES

What does it cost for a Zoom meeting licence?

If you plan on using Zoom frequently and/ or require full functionality, Synod Ministries and Operations along with other Synods have negotiated with Zoom to purchase a bulk deal. As such we are able to provide Zoom licences for a cost of just \$7.93 per month. If your presbytery or congregation is interested, please contact: George.Delice@victas.uca.org.au You will need to provide: Number of licences required and the details of the contact person (including their email address)

As of 08/07/2020





CROSSLIGHT

There will be no print version of the October 2021 edition of Crosslight magazine available in Metropolitan Melbourne. However there will be a digital version available including a printable PDF.

As of 02/09/2021

WELLBEING

During this time it is important that we all take care of ourselves and of each other. Sometimes we may need help to do this. Below are just some of the places you can turn to if you, or someone you know, may need some assistance coping with COVID restrictions:

Lifeline ph **13 11 14**

Beyond Blue ph **1300 22 4636**

Kids Helpline ph **1800 55 1800**

1800RESPECT ph **1800 737 732**
(Domestic & Sexual Violence)

SafeSteps ph **1800 015 188**
(support & planning to escape domestic violence)

LGBTQIA ph **1800 184 527**
(peer driven support)

FINANCIAL hardship

Centrelink online financial resources for existing customers:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency>

Centrelink Crisis Payments ph **132 850**

Uniting Vic Tas

<https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/contact-us/>

