

# Religion and ceremonies sector guidance

Guidance for places of worship in Victoria



## Improving COVID-19 testing times and reducing transmission

The [Victorian Government has announced](#) steps to reduce testing times and transmission under new pandemic orders taking effect from 11:59pm, Thursday 6 January 2022.

### **A density quotient of one person per two square metres will be required indoors at:**

- hospitality venues, including restaurants, cafés, pubs and nightclubs
- entertainment venues, including arcades, casinos and gaming venues.

The strong recommendation to work from home and study from home for adult education if you can, remains in place.

### **Changes to the COVID-19 testing system**

People who test positive on a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) will be considered probable cases and be subject to the same requirements as confirmed cases from a PCR test. They must isolate for seven days and notify their contacts.

More information on how Victorians can report their RAT result will be on the coronavirus website from 7 January. Information on updated [COVIDSafe settings](#) will also be published when the orders come into effect.

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**Last updated: 24 December 2021**

# Venues covered by this guidance

- churches
- meeting houses
- mosques
- synagogues
- temples
- gurdwaras
- other places of worship (as defined under the Victorian Heritage Act 2017).
- ceremonies held in other locations (for example, homes, gardens and community venues).

## Industry guide

Use this industry guide to make your workplace COVIDSafe. This information supports the relevant [Pandemic Orders](#) 

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register> in place throughout Victoria.

### 1. Workplace COVIDSafe Settings

For general business COVIDSafe Settings visit [How we work: Victoria](#) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions>

#### **Places of worship (for example, churches, synagogues, mosques, temples)**

**Open** to full capacity - a density quotient does not apply

A [COVID Check-in Marshal](#) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals> must ensure attendees check-in via the [Service Victoria app](#)  <https://service.vic.gov.au/> .

### 2. Additional industry obligations

Additional industry obligations do not apply to this sector.

### **3. Check vaccination requirements**

Mandatory vaccination requirements do not apply to people attending places of worship, weddings and funerals unless the ceremony takes place in an open premises (for example, a function centre). Most workers (including contractors, volunteers and students on placement) are required to [show evidence of their vaccination status](#)

<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/information-workers-required-be-vaccinated#faqs-for-workers> > to their employer in order to continue working outside their home.

Some faith leaders are not required to show proof of vaccination to work at or in connection to a place of worship. These include faith leaders who conduct services of public worship and acknowledgements of faith, provide end-of-life faith services or perform marriages, funerals and special memorial services according to tradition and ecclesiastical and civil law.

Learn more about [Information for industry and workers required to be vaccinated](#) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/information-workers-required-be-vaccinated> > .

### **4. Create and review COVIDSafe Plans**

Places of worship with on-site operations (including home-based businesses) must have a [COVIDSafe Plan](#) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan> > . The COVIDSafe Plan supports a business to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is current.

### **5. Use QR codes and keep business records**

Places of worship must keep records to show compliance with the COVIDSafe Settings including all logs created during the time of COVIDSafe Settings being in place, work premises rosters, time and attendance records and payroll data.

Places of worship must use the [Victorian Government QR Code Service](#) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/about-free-service-victoria-qr-code-app> > to check-in their workers, attendees and visitors, with some limited exceptions.

Places of worship must display QR Code posters at each public entrance to the premises (both indoor and outdoor) and at points of sale (in a retail or food and drink premises).

## 6. Check face mask requirements

Wearing a mask is required for everyone aged 8 and above in **all indoor settings** in Victoria (unless an exception applies, such as when in a home, when consuming food or drink, or when receiving beauty services).

Face masks must be carried at all times, when leaving home.

Businesses and venues must display face mask posters at each public entrance when they are required at the work premises.

For full details of face mask requirements, including all exceptions visit [Face masks - when to wear a face mask](#) 

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask> .

## 7. Display signage

A range of [signs, posters and templates for your workplace](#)

<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates> are available, in various languages, to support COVIDSafe workplaces.

## 8. Maximise ventilation and keep spaces clean

It is recommended that businesses open windows and outside doors where possible to maximise ventilation to [improve indoor air quality](#) 

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/six-principles-covidsafe-workplaces#improve-indoor-air-quality> . Reduce or eliminate recirculated air and increase the use of outdoor air where possible. Work with your building owner or manager to improve ventilation where possible.

Shared and public spaces should be regularly cleaned to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection. Cleaning information for businesses, managers and cleaners is available at: [COVID-19 cleaning guidelines for workplaces](#) 

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/infection-prevention-control-resources-covid-19> .

## 9. Understand fines and enforcement

Places of worship must comply with COVIDSafe Settings. Places of worship may need to provide evidence of their compliance, including their COVIDSafe Plan, work premises rosters, time and attendance data, payroll data and other site attendance records.

Victoria Police and Victorian Department of Health authorised officers regularly check to ensure compliance with COVIDSafe Settings.

## 10. Respond to a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in the workplace

Places of worship must respond quickly to a [confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in their workplace](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace) [<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace>](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/case-workplace). This will limit further exposure and reduce potential outbreaks.

For advice about what to do if a worker tests positive to COVID-19, or they have been told they are a close contact see: [Your COVID Checklist](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist). [<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist>](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist)

## 11. Understand the risks

COVID-19 can be transmitted by contact with droplets or airborne aerosols (tiny particles that float in the air) from a person with COVID-19, and contaminated surfaces. The mixing of people in the workplace can spread COVID-19. Places of worship must implement [COVIDSafe measures](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/six-principles-covidsafe-workplaces) [<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/six-principles-covidsafe-workplaces>](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/six-principles-covidsafe-workplaces) and should use this industry guide to reduce the risk.

Learn more [Facts about COVID-19](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/facts-about-coronavirus-covid-19) [<http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/facts-about-coronavirus-covid-19>](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/facts-about-coronavirus-covid-19).

## Visual guide for workplaces

Use this visual guide to understand key recommendations and obligations (for example, signage placement, physical distancing) for workplaces.

Visual guides are currently being updated.

## Additional resources

- [Victorian Department of Health](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/) [<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/>](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/)

- [WorkSafe](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/)  <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

## Frequently asked questions

For general business FAQs related to current COVIDSafe Settings, visit [How we work: Victoria](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions) <http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/how-we-work-current-restrictions>

### **I am a wedding photographer – when can I work at a venue?**

Wedding photographers are permitted to provide photography services on-site at weddings.

### **Do members of a choir and altar attendants have to be vaccinated to take part in a service at a place of worship?**

Yes, as they are volunteers, members of a choir and altar attendants 18 years and older must be vaccinated (or have a valid medical exemption) to take part in a service at a place of worship.

### **Can food, drinks and communal equipment be shared at places of worship?**

Due to the risks of COVID-19, food, drinks, crockery, utensils and vessels (such as spoons and cups) or other communal equipment should not be shared by attendees. However, this is permitted under current COVIDSafe Settings.

If food or drinks is to be shared, servers should wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser after handling used crockery and cutlery. All communal equipment should be thoroughly cleaned between uses.

Reviewed 05 January 2022

## **COVID-19 business support**

The Business Victoria hotline provides information on restrictions and support to help your workplace plan and respond to COVID-19.

Call Business Victoria on **13 22 15**



## **24/7 Coronavirus Hotline**

If you suspect you may have COVID-19 call the dedicated hotline – open 24 hours, 7 days.

Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only.

 **1800 675 398**