



COVID-19 safety management plan for Church / Presbytery Office

D/1.1.11

Changes from the previous version are highlighted in yellow

Purpose

This procedure details the management plans for operating the Church / Presbytery office in the COVID-19 environment. The COVID-19 virus is highly transmissible from person-to-person and readily spreads to close contacts of infected individuals.

The UCAQ is committed to providing a safe workplace for its employees, contractors, visitors, students and volunteers. To meet this commitment the UCAQ will:

- meet its obligations under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act*;
- abide by the relevant Public Health Directions issued by the Queensland Chief Health Officer;
- follow [National COVID-19 safe workplace principles](#); and
- commit to continuous improvement.

Whilst this is a management plan for returning to the Church / Presbytery office, people should only return to the workplace with the approval of the Church Council or Presbytery Standing Committee.

Scope

All ministry agents, staff, volunteers, and contractors at the Church / Presbytery office.

Industry Plan for Places of Worship

- To conduct worship activities at the site, it is mandatory for all places of worship to adopt the [Industry Plan for Places of Worship](#)
- In addition to the relevant Safety Management Plan, the Industry Plan for Places of Worship checklist and Statement of Compliance needs to be completed and displayed at the entry.

Physical Distancing

- All persons on site will need to keep at least 1.5m distance between everyone in the workplace.
- Room capacity requirements must be adhered to, in addition to appropriate distancing.
- Signage regarding social distancing and room capacity is displayed in the workplace.

1. Workstations and offices

- Work areas have been measured and not all workstations will be able to be used, appropriate signage is erected. Managers will need to be cognisant of rostering for staff.
- Offices have been measured and the room capacity with appropriate social distancing has been determined and is displayed on signage in the offices. Some furniture has been moved to assist with social distancing. Room capacity is not purely based on floor space but has considered furnishings within the room and the requirement for movement within the space.
- Consider opening windows and doors for airflow, where possible. Remember to secure at the end of day.
- Shared workstations must be cleaned after use (refer Cleaning guide).



2. Meeting and other utility rooms (excluding worship and church halls)

- Meeting rooms have been measured and appropriate signage on the room capacity is displayed at the entrance to all rooms. The room capacity has considered furnishings and movement within the space.
- Meeting room tables are to be cleaned after use (refer to Cleaning guide).

3. Movement around the office including stairs and lift

- Most corridors in the office are only suitable for single person movement. To assist with physical distancing and reducing congestion, movement around the office will be in a designated direction. Arrows on the floor designate the flow, and signage has been erected on the doors to designate entry and exit points (except in the event of an emergency).
- Stairs: to limit passing on the stairs, stairwells, except in an emergency situation, have been deemed either 'entry' or 'exit' stairwells. This will assist with movement flow and assist with physical distancing.

4. Toilet and shower facilities

- Room capacity is displayed on signage on entry. If the maximum number is in the room area, waiting for facilities should happen in the outer area until someone exits.
- Liquid soap and disposable towels are available in all toilet facilities.
- Hand washing signage is displayed in all toilet facilities.
- Communal shower facilities are able to open but need to be cleaned between users in shared facilities. Signage and restricted entry should be in place.

5. Kitchen facilities

- Room capacity has been designated at the entry point and 1.5m distancing must be maintained whilst in the location.
- No eating is permitted in the lunch room due to restricted room capacity and the need to meet social distancing requirements. This may be exempt if the physical distancing of 1.5 m is able to be maintained at all times and the room capacity is not exceeded at any time.
- Hands need to be washed or sanitised on entering the kitchen area.

Contact Information

- For all types of gatherings at a place of worship, a list of all attendees (guests, ministry and staff) and any contractors on-site **must** be kept including name, email address (residential address if no email), telephone number, date and time of attendance **for a minimum of 30 days and no more than 56 days**, in the event of contact tracing for COVID-19 is required. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated time period. The details are to be securely stored, not used for any other purpose and deleted **after 30 days and no more than 56 days**. Consideration may be given to using the UCare system, contact the Synod office Business Development Unit on onechurchconnect@ucaqld.com.au. In collecting the information, you must comply with the UCAQ Privacy Policy and the *Privacy Act*.
- Time of patronage important. The entry time must be captured. The exit time or estimated period, where feasible, should be documented. Signage should be displayed encouraging attendees to sign out.

Personal Hygiene

- Staff are to practice good personal hygiene to limit the spread of germs. This includes:
 - no shaking hands or touching objects unless necessary;
 - sneezing into their elbow;



- using a tissue and disposing of in a closed bin;
 - not touching their face; and
 - thorough hand washing and hand sanitising, especially before and after eating; after coughing or sneezing; after going to the toilet; after changing tasks; after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Signage on how to hand wash and how to hand rub is displayed in the work environment.
 - Hand sanitiser has been placed on desks and at locations around the workplace, including entry and exit points.
 - Personal property that comes to the workplace should be cleaned with a disinfectant wipe (refer Cleaning section).

Unwell person/s

- If staff are unwell, even minor symptoms, they must stay home. A discussion needs to occur with your Manager whether you are able to work remotely or required to take paid/unpaid sick leave.
- If staff are in the office and display any cold-like / flu-like symptoms they will be directed to leave.

6. Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 worker

- If a worker suspects they have COVID-19, they must isolate themselves (self-quarantine) and advise their manager immediately.
- They should inform their manager and call a doctor or hospital and tell them their symptoms, recent travel or close contact history.
- If the person has serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers of the recent travel or close contact history.

7. If the person is at the workplace

- Isolate the person to prevent the spread. A surgical mask is to be provided for the person to wear.
- Call 13HEALTH and follow directions of the public health officials.
- Transport – ensure the person has transport to their home or to a medical facility. Consider if they are able to drive themselves, if their vehicle is available, or use taxi or ride-share service ensuring the person wears a mask whilst being transported.
- Clean and disinfect the areas where the person and close contacts have been. Do not use those areas until the process is complete. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning (eye protection, gloves, mask, disposal apron, if available).
- There is not an automatic WHS requirement to close down an entire workplace, particularly if the person infected, or suspected to be infected, has only visited parts of the workplace. A decision on whether to close all or partial sections of the workplace for a period of time will be considered by the executive and in conjunction with directions from public health officials.
- Identify and inform: consider who the person has had close contact with. If instructed by public health officials, tell close contacts they may have been exposed and follow advice on quarantine requirements. This is within the requirements of the *Privacy Act*.
- Workers assisting a potentially infectious person should have appropriate PPE and follow hand hygiene procedures.
- The work area is to be thoroughly disinfected before further use.

8. If the person was recently at the workplace

- Seek advice from public health officials.



- Identify and inform: consider who the person has had close contact with. If instructed by public health officials, tell close contacts they may have been exposed and follow advice on quarantine requirements. This is within the requirements of the *Privacy Act*.
- Clean and disinfect the areas where the person and close contacts have been. Do not use those areas until the process is complete. Use personal protective equipment when cleaning (eye protection, gloves, mask, disposal apron, if available).
- There is not an automatic WHS requirement to close down an entire workplace, particularly if the person infected, or suspected to be infected, has only visited parts of the workplace. A decision on whether to close all or partial sections of the workplace for a period of time will be considered by the executive and in conjunction with directions from public health officials.
- The work area is to be thoroughly disinfected before further use.

9. Vulnerable persons

The following may be considered as a vulnerable person to COVID-19:

- Over 70 years of age
- Over 65 years of age who have existing health conditions or comorbidities, and
- First Nations People over the age of 50 who have existing health conditions or comorbidities,
- Are significantly immunocompromised or taking immunosuppression therapy;
- Have chronic medical condition, including:
 - Kidney disease
 - Coronary heart disease or congestive heart failure
 - Chronic lung disease including moderate to severe asthma, cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, suppurative lung disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or chronic emphysema
 - Poorly controlled diabetes
 - Poorly controlled hypertension
 - Cancer
 - Genetic immune deficiencies
 - Chronic liver disease.
- As per government health advice, immunocompromised persons should take extra precautions and when they travel outside and avoid situations where they may come into contact with a lot of people.
- Vulnerable persons are encouraged to exercise judgement and consult their doctor for advice on their specific situation.
- Vulnerable volunteers / workers must have completed a [vulnerable worker risk assessment](#) and have it approved before undertaking service duties.
- Church / Presbytery is committed to support vulnerable workers or those with family requirements to work remotely to minimise risk.

Meetings – internal and external attendees

- Meetings involving external parties on the premises should be minimised. If a meeting is held, the duration should be limited to no more than 2 hours.



- Internal and external meetings should continue to consider using online technology. If this is not possible, the meeting needs to be kept short and in a large area with consideration given to having the meeting outdoors.
- If visitors / contractors do come to site, they must report to reception and have their details recorded.

Deliveries to the work site

- Deliveries should be contactless. A box placed in the reception area.
- Suppliers should be requested to provide an e-invoice.

Travelling for UCAQ business

10. In a vehicle

- Staff should solo travel in a work vehicle. If another staff member must be in the vehicle, this person should sit in the backseat. Trip length should be minimised.
- If riding in a taxi or ride-share, the staff member should sit in the rear seat of the vehicle. . If physical distance is unable to be maintained, a face mask should be worn for the duration of the trip.
- If workers are required to travel together for work purposes and the trip is longer than 15 minutes, air conditioning must be set to external airflow rather than to recirculation or windows should be opened for the duration of the trip. . If physical distance is unable to be maintained, a face mask should be worn for the duration of the trip.
- Pool vehicles must be cleaned by the driver when the car is returned. This includes wiping down the steering wheel, hand brake, gear knob/shift, door area, fuel release, boot release, car audio and air controls, centre console, hand latch, boot holds, or other areas they may have been touched.
- Gloves are to be worn when filling the vehicle with petrol at a service station. Gloves are to be provided in all vehicles.

11. Intra-state

Travel should be minimised and only where considered necessary.

12. Interstate and international travel

In accordance with Government restrictions.

13. Public transport

Small bottles of hand sanitiser are to be used when taking public transport. This should be used on entering and exiting the mode of public transport. Whilst on public transport, every effort should be made to maintain 1.5m distancing from other persons.

Fire safety

- All workers must adhere to sign-in and sign-out procedures.
- The designated physical distancing paths of travel (refer section 3) do not apply in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- Fire wardens may not be present to guide or direct workers. If the fire alarm is activated, workers in the building are to move quickly to the nearest marked exit and proceed to the assembly area.
- Workers are to remain at the assembly area until the all clear has been given or you are instructed to move further away from the building.



Church / Presbytery issued laptops

- Staff with Church / Presbytery issued laptops must take the laptop and its power supply with them at the end of each working day in the office. This is in the event the worksite is not available at short notice.

Cleaning

- Daily cleaning involving detergent and/or disinfectant is undertaken in all work areas with particular attention on high contact points by cleaning staff.
- Staff should clean their desk and high touch equipment on a daily basis at the start and end of each work day using the disinfectant solution supplied. Aerosols are to be sprayed onto a disposable cloth and equipment wiped down.
- Staff should be discouraged to move desks during the day. If movement is required, the work area should be cleaned prior to use.
- High touch points will be cleaned throughout the work day.
- Desks in meeting rooms and lecture rooms need to be cleaned after each use. This needs to be factored into room booking times.
- For extended length of time cleaning, gloves are to be worn if undertaking cleaning. Hands should be washed with soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.
- Cleaning regime of the worksite conforms to the published guidelines (Attachment B)

Hazard and incident notification

- A hazard incident notification form ([WHS forms](#)) is to be completed. In accordance with the Synod Critical Incident Policy, any confirmed COVID-19 case with a member or worker of the Uniting Church Synod should be escalated.
- If a person who has been at the site is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 and you are notified
 - Contact Queensland Health by telephoning 134 COVID to seek advice from public health officers on workplace procedures to be put in place.
- If the confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case is treated and transported by paramedics or requires immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital it is a notifiable incident.
 - A notifiable incident needs to be reported to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ), telephone: 1300 362 128.
- Any records of a notifiable event to WHSQ need to be retained for a minimum of 5 years from the date it was reported to WHS Queensland
- In the event that there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, Queensland Health will be notified by the medical professional who confirms the diagnosis.

Looking after yourself

- Staff are to stay informed via the communication issued from the Synod office, Church Council and Presbytery.
- If working remotely ensure you maintain contact with colleagues.
- If you manage others, establish regular mechanisms to talk to staff members who are working away from the workplace.

Related documents

Cleaning

- [Uniting Church in Queensland summary COVID-19 routing cleaning requirements](#)
- [Safe Work Australia cleaning to prevent spread of COVID-19](#)



Printable Posters

[Keeping your distance](#)

[Stop the spread of germs](#)

[Handwashing](#)

[Protect yourself and others](#)

[How to use hand sanitiser](#)

Attendance register

[UCAQ attendance register](#)

Synod policies

[Synod Wide Work Health and Safety Policy Statement](#)

[C/1.3 Critical Incident and Issues Escalation Policy](#)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
COVID-19	Novel coronavirus formally named SARS-CoV-2. The clinical disease state resulting from an infection with SARS-CoV-2 is known as COVID-19. COVID-19 is highly transmissible from person-to-person and readily spreads to close contacts of infected individuals.
Physical distancing (or social distancing)	To keep space between yourself and other people outside of your household as one way to slow the spread of viruses, such as coronavirus. This requires to stay, where possible, 1.5m from other people, not to gather in groups, and avoid crowded places and mass gatherings.

Revisions

Document number	D/1.1.11				
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
6.0	14.12.2020	General Secretary	14.12.2020	COVID Coordinator	COVID Coordinator
Next scheduled review	14.12.2021				