

Protecting aged care workers

Daily attestations

7 September 2020

In response to the increasing rates of healthcare and aged care worker coronavirus infections acquired within a work setting, the Victorian Government is implementing a range of initiatives targeted towards making workplaces safer for Victorian workers.

Like all Victorian workers, aged care workers are required to stay home if unwell. This is particularly critical for aged care workers as they provide care to residents who are more vulnerable during the pandemic.

Initiatives to reduce any financial disadvantage to staff (as a result of being infected or furloughed and being restricted to working at one workplace setting) have been established.

Who should read this?

This factsheet is for residential aged care facilities (RACFs) to further embed health and safety screening requirements by requiring an attestation from their staff that they are fit to work because they do not meet any of the COVID-19 risk criteria.

What is attestation?

Attestation is the act of declaring that something is true.

The purpose of an attestation process is to reinforce that staff must not work while unwell, or if they do not meet the relevant COVID-19 health screening criteria. It strengthens the message to remain at home if they have any signs of ill health.

Attestation is required for Victorian public sector residential aged care services, public health services and hospitals.

Private and not-for-profit residential aged care providers should implement the attestation process outlined in this guidance. For providers, attestation is a mechanism to evidence they have in place systems to comply with their obligations under the [Care Facilities Directions](#), including daily screening to prohibit people with a temperature over 37.5 degrees, or who meet other stated criteria, from entering a residential aged care facility.

What should be included in a worker attestation?

To facilitate compliance with the Directions, the [COVID-19 Plan for Residential Aged Care Facilities](#) already requires providers to implement screening for staff, volunteers and visitors (including visiting workers) including temperature checks of visitors and other attendees.

The attestation process extends this requirement by asking staff to confirm, or attest, that the answers to the health screening questions are correct; and for a record to be kept of this confirmation.

How do I record worker attestations?

Providers can establish either a verbal or written attestation process. These attestations should be part of a suite of actions providers undertake to ensure the health and wellbeing of their staff.

Providers will be responsible for incorporating, and recording, an attestation of health screening compliance into their daily worker health checks. This includes:

- Verbal attestations – ask every staff member at the commencement of their shift questions addressing the health screening criteria. These questions are to be asked at an entry point by a designated person who is wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and who records the staff member’s response in a logbook (either physical or online). The entry point must provide staff and visitors with hand sanitiser and include a temperature check. **OR**
- Written attestations – require every staff member to provide in writing, or via text message or an app, that they meet the screening criteria.

Where providers are implementing written attestations using a physical logbook or diary, infection control procedures should be adhered to. This may include having a designated person fill in the logbook for all staff. Hand sanitiser should be provided where there is a shared pen/hard copy log. The logbook or diary should include the time, day of attestation and the staff member’s name, role and the setting where the attestation is being recorded.

The set of questions for verbal and written attestations should be consistent with the case definition and guidance set out by the department here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/assessment-and-testing-criteria-coronavirus-covid-19>.

An example attestation checklist

Assess if the staff attending the facility are at risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) by asking them to confirm and attest to the following*:

- Have you currently or within the last 7 days been unwell or been aware of any of the following symptoms: fever, night sweats or chills, cough, runny nose, sore or scratchy throat or shortness of breath Yes No
- Have you come in close contact with a person confirmed as having COVID-19 in the past 14 days without wearing full PPE? Yes No
- Have you arrived in Australia within the past 14 days? Yes No
- Have you had COVID-19? If yes, have you been given clearance from isolation? Yes No
- If you were required to isolate for any reason, have you been cleared to leave isolation (even if you were never diagnosed with COVID-19) Yes No
- Are you awaiting COVID-19 test results? Yes No

Temp range: >36.1 to <37.5 C. Verified by:

Signed:.....

Date:.....

* If the answer to any of the screening questions is ‘yes’, then the staff member should not enter the premises until the matter has been urgently escalated to, and considered by, a decision maker at the facility.

Time frame

This daily attestation process should be commenced by 4 September 2020, or be implemented as soon as possible, and be in place until otherwise directed by the Department of Health and Human.

Record keeping

It is recommended that all providers keep records of all daily attestations for a minimum six-week period for the purposes of informing contact tracing in the event of an active outbreak.