

30 January 2020

Information on the novel coronavirus – updated advice from the Australian Government

Late afternoon yesterday (29 January 2020), the Australian Government issued the following updated **advice** based on the latest medical advice:

1. People who have been in contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus cases must be isolated in their home for 14 days following exposure.
2. Returned travellers who have been in Hubei Province of China must be isolated in their home for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province, other than for seeking individual medical care.

Accordingly, ACSA is recommending employers seek disclosure from employees, volunteers and consumers regarding any recent travel to China or contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus cases.

If an employee or volunteer has visited China or had contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus case and is engaged in a non-consumer facing role and can reasonably and practically perform their work safely at home, we recommend that the employer make the direction for the employee to work from home.

If an employee has visited the Hubei Province of China or had contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus case and is engaged in care work or other work involving direct contact with consumers or other staff and volunteers etc., the employer may need to direct the worker to stand down from work for a period of 14 days after leaving the Hubei Province or coming into contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

As the stand down is initiated by the employer, the employee must be paid for the shifts they would have otherwise worked during this period. We recommend providers seek disclosure from volunteers regarding recent travel to China or contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus case and exclude them from volunteering activities for 14 days after leaving Hubei Province or following contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

We also recommend assessing the risk of exposure of your employees and volunteers to the coronavirus in the community i.e. community aged care employees visiting consumers in their own homes. As a precautionary and health and safety measure, it would be reasonable for providers to ask questions of consumers regarding any recent visits to China or contact with any confirmed novel coronavirus case. Providers must implement risk assessment and management measures in order to reduce the likelihood of exposure of employees and volunteers to coronavirus.

The Department of Health has today published 'Coronavirus update at a glance' at <https://www.health.gov.au/news/coronavirus-update-at-a-glance>.

The novel coronavirus resources can be found at
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-resources>.

As noted in yesterday's ACSA Member Update on the novel coronavirus, the Department of Health is preparing factsheets relevant for aged care which we understand should be available today.

As this is an evolving situation, advice from the Department of Health will be provided to members as soon as we receive updates, and we expect more information to be available in the coming days and weeks.

If you require more information or support please contact ACSA Member Advice Line on 1300 877 855 or email memberadvice@acsa.asn.au.

Alternatively, visit the Department of Health's [website](#) for more information.