

# COVID-19 Workplace Hygiene Practices

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## Health & Safety – Fact Sheet

### Purpose

This document should be used as the minimum standard to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic. While Regional NSW agencies and divisions may develop their own specific processes, these processes should meet the minimum requirements as set out in this fact sheet.

### Why is good hygiene practices so important?

Research shows that COVID-19 can spread via poor personal hygiene practices. A person can acquire the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

Good personal hygiene practices provide an effective means of control. The following provides an overview on how to adopt good personal hygiene when working in the office and in the field.

### Strategies to support good hygiene practices

We can control the risks of contracting COVID-19 through the following good personal hygiene practices:

- **If you are experiencing flu like symptoms, including coughing and sneezing - stay at home and seek medical advice.**
- Where possible wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser after touching surfaces, before and after eating and after going to the toilet.
- Cough into your elbow rather than your hands or into the open air.
- Place tissues in the bin immediately after use and wash hands with soap and water.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth prior to hand sanitisation or washing hands.
- Avoid physical contact e.g. hand shaking, hugging and kissing.
- Avoid wearing clothing more than once, wash before you wear again.
- Regularly disinfect high use items such as mobile phones and car keys.
- Where practical utilise tap and go credit card use.

### Working in the office

Follow hygiene principles stated above and additionally:

- Utilise hand sanitising stations or wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when entering or exiting the office.
  - Wipe down surfaces with anti-bacterial wipes before and after use, this includes:
    - desks, keyboard, mouse and other workstation equipment
    - touchpads
  - If handling money or frequently touched items, wear disposable gloves and/or use hand-sanitiser after handling items.
  - Where practical encourage tap and go credit card use.
  - Follow the Fact Sheet COVID-19 Workplace cleaning to prevent disease spread if required to clean surfaces for personal hygiene.
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## Working in the field

When working in the field, including entering premises', travelling to and/or working from a site, the following should be implemented:

- Review and follow instructions from the Safe work fact sheets:
  - travelling for work purposes
  - using plant & equipment including vehicles
  - engaging with external stakeholders
- Follow the good personal hygiene practices outlined in this document.
- Carry anti-bacterial wipes and utilise before and after touching high traffic items such as handles, equipment etc.
- Include and utilise respiratory/face masks, gloves, hand-sanitiser and antibacterial wipes as part of PPE kit when entering the field.
- Complete a risk assessment where there are concerns personal hygiene cannot be maintained.

When planning to visit someone ask the following questions?

- Have you or any members of your family recently been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Do you have COVID-19?
- Do you have any flu like symptoms (e.g cough, runny-nose, sore throat, loss of taste/smell)?

## Cleaning product alternatives

Where hand-sanitiser and other anti-bacterial cleaning products are not available, other products can be utilised and include:

- Substitute for hand sanitiser:
  - soap and water (more effective than hand sanitiser)
- A combination of rubbing alcohol and Aloe Vera gel (2:1 ratio) Anti-bacterial cleaning products:
  - phenolic disinfectants
  - quaternary ammonia compounds
  - hydrogen peroxide
  - chlorine and chlorine compounds e.g. sodium hypochlorite (household bleach)
  - peracetic acid
  - alcohol based cleaners

If you do not believe you can meet the minimum standards outlined in this document, please raise with your Regional NSW site contact or safety specialist to discuss a resolution.

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