Essential Personnel COVID-19 Response Plan

16th November 2020 (Phase 4)

Contents

Overview and Current Context

Essential Personnel continues to monitor the impact and spread of COVID-19, the coronavirus outbreak that began in Wuhan, China late last December.   COVID-19 has now spread to numerous countries around the world. Symptoms include fever, fatigue and dry cough. We are closely following developments and advice from various national and international government bodies.

About 80% of those with COVID-19 recover without needing any special treatment. Those most at risk from the disease are elderly patients with previously existing health problems. COVID-19 is thought to be spread mainly through person-to-person contact (i.e., coughing and sneezing).

At present, no Essential Personnel employees, volunteers, contractors or clients have been confirmed to have COVID-19, nor have any Essential Personnel offices been subject to known exposure.

While the risk of COVID-19 remains low, Essential Personnel is preparing for the potential impact of the disease which may involve community transmissions and state/local government actions such as school closures or movement restrictions.

This document sets out Essential Personnel's response to COVID-19, both immediate, and in the event of identified trigger events. This response will be reviewed daily in light of swiftly changing global and local developments.

Essential Personnel's COVID-19 Response Priorities

Essential Personnel will continue to implement precautionary measures to help minimise the risk of COVID-19 exposure, our priorities responding to COVID-19 are:

1. Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our employees, volunteers and customers;

2. Focusing on providing our customers with high quality services as far as practicable;

3. Taking actions to support slowing the community spread of the virus where there appear to be outbreaks, so that the most vulnerable people are able to get the care they need; and

4. Closely assessing the impact of COVID-19 on our communities and identify ways to safely extend support to those in need.

Executive summary of current actions

What	Who	How	By When	Done?
Implement additional hygiene measures/communications	Executive Team and Line Managers	Emails and posters	13 March 2020	Complete
Gather information regarding upcoming staff work and private travel plans	CEO and Executive Team	Local Plans	Ongoing from now on	Complete
Identify which personnel/teams are critical to operations, make plans to mitigate risk	CEO and Executive Team	Executive Team Meetings	Ongoing	Complete
Identify IT capacity for large numbers of staff to work remotely	CEO, Executive Team and Newtread	Executive Team Meetings	20 April 2020	Ongoing
Nominate a central person to manage information	CEO and Executive Team	Executive Team Meetings	23 March 2020	Complete
STOP all non-essential work related travel	CEO and Executive Team	Organisation plan	Ongoing	Complete
Identify which employees can/ cannot work from home	CEO and Executive Team	Site Level	27 March 2020	Complete
Monitor public health notices	CEO and Executive Team	Meetings	Ongoing	ongoing
Identify staff and customers at high risk	Executive Team	Health Questionnaire	15th April 2020	Complete
Identify which employees can/cannot work from home and to identify workload, duties, training and other work which may be done from home	Executive Team	Executive Team Meetings	15th April 2020	Complete

Communication Response Team & Channels

Response team

CEO
Executive Team
Regional Managers
As needed – Program Coordinators

Meet at least once a week to assess current status/situation – prioritise meeting to discuss urgent issues (via video conference)

Communication Channels

Email – primary communication channel
Managers accountable to ensure messages passed onto their team members (in cases where people may not have access to emails)
Central information kept displayed clearly in all office locations (poster links, latest data and information)
Staff to use Microsoft Team for communication and voice and video calls.

Response team to communicate urgent emerging issues via email and follow up call to all Program Coordinators

Actions to contain spread

Workplace Hygiene

To support prevention and containment of potential COVID-19 infection, we will take proactive steps to ensure high levels of office hygiene are encouraged:-

What	Why	How	By When	Done?
Promote thorough handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer	This is one of the most effective way of preventing disease spread	Promote through: • Emails / intranet / Workplace • Posters in bathrooms/work areas • Team meetings Ensure that hand washing facilities are kept well stocked with soap and paper towels. Alcohol-based hand sanitisers distributed throughout the workplace.	All staff, volunteers, contractors and Customers	Now
Promote appropriate protocols managing coughs/symptoms Cough into your elbow Do not enter Essential Personnel premises if you have a sore throat, cough and/or a fever	Reduce risk of spreading germs	Promote through: • Emails / intranet / Workplace • Posters in work areas • Team meetings	All staff, volunteers, contractors and Customers	Now
Social distancing Limit physical contact like handshakes Maintain a 2 square metre distance from other people	Reduce person-to-person spread of the virus	EP will ensure that the work environment complies with the current government guidelines and mandate in relation to social distancing and disinfecting work area. Promote through: • Emails / intranet / Workplace • Posters in work area • Team meetings • Maintain a 2 square metre distance from other people • For customers at Marwick House, further restrictions have been put into place to ensure customers not staying overnight have restricted access to the building	All staff, volunteers, contractors and Customers	Now
Increased cleaning Employees and volunteers asked to regularly clean hard surfaces in reception areas, counselling rooms	The virus can be transferred on hard surfaces	Email to staff, signs in reception/ Meeting rooms Provision of disinfectant wipes All staff to wipe hard surfaces in their work areas regularly (e.g. at twice daily)	Line managers	Now

and work spaces or similar with disinfectant wipes				
Increase workspace hygiene. We will increase cleaning of work areas, with a focus on cleaning hard surfaces		Increase cleaning contract requirements in all sites Line Managers will be responsible for implementing this twice a day (am/pm) • Door handles • Bathroom taps • Phones • Employees to be responsible to personal work area cleanliness • All staff to wipe hard surfaces in their work areas regularly (e.g. at least daily)	Line managers to implement at each site	Now
Increase cleaning/ hygiene supplies including tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant	Products required to reduce spread of germs and maintain high levels of office hygiene	If no supplies – use soapy water, or alternate cleaning products	Line managers to implement at each site	Now
Vehicles Hygiene Protocols	Due to social distancing measures and to reduce spread of germs as the virus can be transferred on hard surfaces	Essential Personnel will ensure the below procedure is being implanted and follow by staff. 1. Provide and promote sanitisers for use on entering vehicles. 2. Ensure customers sits in the back of the vehicle to try and achieve as much separation as reasonably possible 3. Open windows and set air conditioning to fresh air. 4. Promote cough etiquette – keep a box of tissues in the car. If you or the customer cough or sneeze, use a tissue, dispose of it straight away and then wash your hands. 5. Use disinfection wipes to clean the following surfaces: • Door handles both inside and out • Window controls • Inside door frame • Seatbelts and buckles • Steering wheel and console • Grab handles • Air conditioning vents • Any part of the vehicle that the client or staff member has physically touched. **NB:** This procedure must also be followed if staff are using their own vehicles for work purposes or customer vehicles for work purposes	Line managers to implement at each site	Now
Using Tap and pay not money	To reduce spread of germs as the virus can be transferred on hard surfaces	Essential Personnel staff are only using the tap and pay when providing a services/activity with customers.	Line managers to ensure staff are all heeding this instruction	Now
Appropriate training in infection control and COVID-19	To ensure staff have knowledge on what COVID-19 is and how to prevent spread by implementing hygiene and social distancing practices	All staff are required to complete training in infection control and COVID-19 and send a copy of the certificate to their line manager https://training.teamdsc.com.au/collections/covid-19-response/products/infectionfree https://get.cited.com.au/	Line managers to ensure staff have undergone training	Now

Meetings/ Groups/Gatherings

If the virus spreads in local areas, large gatherings of people will pose a potential spreading risk.

What	Why	How	By When	Done?
Identify and address risks related to events.	Limit opportunity for virus to spread	• Collate list of upcoming events including workshops, training and celebrations. • Assess risk of each event in light of current information to hand. • Implement mitigation strategies to address risks.	Line Managers provide list to Regional Managers.	Now
Indoor and Outdoor Public gatherings have been increased but must still comply with the 2 square metre rule (except for seated and ticketed performances)	Limit opportunity for virus to spread	• EP will abide by the government restriction for employee and customer interactions • Comply with the 2 square metre rule	Line managers to ensure staff are implementing this new social restriction	Now

Line-manager's guidelines for assessing risk, consider and weigh up in consultation with Regional Managers and CEO.

Up to date information on virus spread in local area (e.g. number of cases, health services advice, has it spread through community)?

1. Is the meeting / training essential to operations or optional?
2. How many people will be attending?
3. Are there alternative options (video conference etc.)?
4. Can one on one meetings be held by phone

The Regional Manager will make the decision if a face to face meeting is permitted.
If decision is granted to attend, take all necessary precautions and practise social distancing, link below. Social distancing is 2 square metres apart.

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing

People Presenting With Symptoms

Essential Personnel employees, volunteers and customers need to be vigilant to identify symptoms (respiratory issues, coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath and/or fever) and take proactive action to reduce potential spread of the disease:-

We have been monitoring the rapidly-evolving COVID-19 situation closely and as always, our priority is the health of our staff, customers and community; and on maintaining continuity of care. Therefore as an organisation we have made the following decisions:

- A pre-screening checklist of question will be completed by all customers, visitors, and family members'.
- If the answer to any of the questions is yes, meeting or services will be cancelled until Essential Personnel is confident there is no risk to staff or the wider community.
- Customers should not receive supports if they have any signs of illness relating to COVID-19.
- In the event of a customer presenting cold or flu like symptoms, they will need cease services and supports at that time.
- All customers and staff arriving from South Australia will be required to enter self-quarantine for 14 days and be tested for COVID-19. Please see the information contained in this link

What	How	Who	When
If an employee or volunteer experiencing symptoms – not at work	- Stay home, do not attend work - Take personal leave (same as if they were ill) - Inform their line-manager they are experiencing symptoms - Line-manager will inform Regional Manager and CEO - Regional Manager and CEO will work with line-manager to identify if there may be any infection risks – take action accordingly - Employee to seek medical advice and call 1088 671 738 (public health hotline line) or inform their GP	Employee Volunteer Line-manager Regional Managers Chief Executive Officer	Now
If an employee or volunteer experiencing symptoms – at work	- Leave work immediately (travel by safest route home possible) - Inform line-manager they are experiencing symptoms - Line-manager will inform Regional Manager and CEO - Regional Manager and CEO work with line-manager to devise response plan identifying those potentially exposed– take action accordingly - The employee will be paid for the remained of their days work hours.	Employee Volunteer Line-manager Regional Managers Chief Executive Officer Other impacted people	Now
If a customer or member of the community presenting with symptoms	Ensure posters or signage requests that people do not enter Essential Personnel sites Pre-screening questions to be asked before any service or supports are provided. If the customer answers yes to any of the questions, then refer to the bullet points below Employees be vigilant for presentation of symptoms, if symptoms present:-Request that customer leave premises and return home by safest way possible, request that they call 1088 671 738 (public health hotline line) or inform their GP - Employee to inform their line-manager - Line-manager inform Regional Manager and CEO	Employee Volunteer Line-manager Regional Managers Chief Executive Officer Other impacted people	Now

	• Regional Manager and CEO to work with line-manager to devise local response plan identifying those potentially exposed – take action accordingly		
If an employee is required to be placed in quarantine due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 virus infection.	• Employee to inform line-manager • Employee to keep line manager updated over quarantine time of health and results if tested • Line-manager will assess on a case by case basis the suitable of the employee fulfilling their work duties at home through the quarantine period and approve this with the employee • Employee will be required to provide a medical clearance to Essential Personnel before they return to a workplace • Essential Personnel will remain in continual communication with employees throughout this difficult time and work with you to ensure you supported and are provided the correct information and advice in relation to your employment conditions • Regional Manager and CEO will work with line-manager to identify if there may be any infection risks – take action accordingly and notify relevant authorities.	Employee Volunteer Line-manager Regional Managers Chief Executive Officer Other impacted people	Now
COVID-19 testing criteria expanded in WA	Any person presenting to a COVID clinic with BOTH a documented fever of 38°C or above AND an acute respiratory infection (e.g. shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) will be tested For any queries, please call the COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 for advice and find more information by visiting the WA Department of Health website.	Line manager to ensure all staff are informed they are able to request a test if they need require one.	Now
If a customer in 24 hour supports presents with symptoms and then tested positively to COVID-19	• Staff to inform Regional Manager • Regional Manager will inform next of kin and arrange for allocated staff members to commence shifts • Staff working at that time to transport the customer to a testing facility (wearing masks and gloves) and request the quick results (one hour) • If test comes back positive, staff to transport the customer back to the house and hand over to allocated staff member • Staff on shift to go home and self isolate. • Employee to seek medical advice and call 1088 671 738 (public health hotline line) or inform their GP Home support • Allocated staff member supporting COVID-19 customer to put on all PPE equipment, which is stored next to the first aid box • Isolate customer in one room and restrict movements in the house • Inform authorities	Staff to ensure they know where the PPE is located and understand have the training on how to use it. Regional Manager	Now

Monitor Travel

Travel to and from affected regions increases risk of infection spreading. To counter this, we will reduce non-urgent travel and monitor personal travel as well as request information on customers recent travel activities. Information relating to Western Australia's boarder arrangements can be found here

What	Why	How	Who	When
No non-urgent/ non-essential travel not to be permitted for work purposes.	Potential spread or exposure to the disease reduced and to abide by government regulations	Travel is only permitted through the Wheatbelt area if work is considered to be essential to Essential Personnel business. Where possible use video conferencing or similar instead of travel Communicate through emails, intranet, Workplace	Regional Managers	Now
Monitor personal travel Employees and volunteers to inform line-manager of recent or upcoming travel plans 14 day self-quarantine required where people have returned from high risk States and Territories	The virus is spreading faster in some locations, with the number of 'hot-spot' locations increasing and changing regularly	Operational to ensure awareness of team members' travel plans and take action when necessary Communication via email, intranet, Workplace Where Regional Manager views it is possible, work from home, otherwise personal/annual leave.	Regional Managers	Now
Customer and contractors requested to disclose recent travel to impacted locations	The virus is spreading faster in some locations, with the number of 'hot-spot' locations increasing and changing regularly	Posters in reception areas Staff to include travel queries when interacting with customers/contractors (e.g. when booking customers) - if customers have travelled to South Australia in the last 14 days will be asked not to attend sites - where possible telephone or video supports can	Line Mangers Employees Volunteers	Now
Travel is now permitted between low risk States and Territories	Restrictions have been reduced permitting travel throughout Australia. Information relating to Western Australia's boarder arrangements can be found here	Essential Personnel staff are now able to travel within Western Australia but comply with government restrictions However, staff will only travel when necessary to support customers. All travel will be recorded in vehicle log books.	All staff	now

Working from Home

Should COVID-19 spread further in our community, there is a high likelihood that staff will be asked to work from home it their duties and role allows.

This means that Essential Personnel will encourage people not to attend their workplaces; may opt to close certain work sites depending on circumstances to support safety, health and wellbeing.

What	Why	How	Who	When
Working from home	To reduce risk associated with the spread of virus and to maintain a healthy workforce	If it is necessary for an employee to work from home due to personal circumstances then arrangements, subject to line management approval All eligible staff to submit a request along to their line manager with a "working from home risk assessment questionnaire". IT, internet and phone functionality and capacity to be reviewed prior to approval Staff training to use online platforms, such as Microsoft Teams	All staff Line managers Newtrend IT	Now
Flexible leave and working arrangements	Essential Personnel recognises some staff may need to work flexibly in order to maintain their employment	Essential Personnel will enable flexible leave and working arrangements, subject to line management approval. For example, flexible leave and working arrangements may be used if employees are unable to work at home. Flexible leave include careers leave, personal leave, annual leave and pandemic leave. Entitlements for this leave can be found here. Flexible working arrangements can include changes to the number of hours worked, start and end time changes to working shifts, change to work patterns and changes to the type of work done.	All staff Line managers	Now

Health, mental health and wellbeing supports

Essential Personnel recognise staff and customers react differently and for some the COVID-19 pandemic is very scary. To support our staff during this time, the following actions will be implemented:

What	Why	How	Who	When
Access to Employee Assistance Program	To reduce anxiety for staff and enable them to have an independent and professional counselor to talk to	All employees of Essential Personnel are able to access free and confidential support from Vision. Email to be sent to all staff with contact details and to be discussed at team meetings and supervisions.	All staff	Now
To provide staff and customers with information on strategies aimed at reducing stress	During times of high anxiety staff and customers may need information to encourage them to take up strategies for self care.	All employees have been sent out information with suggested strategies All staff have been sent information about free and confidential well being support available in their community Essential Personnel COVID-19 website provides up to date information, access to reliable resources and mental health supports.	Marketing	Now
To provide staff with information and financial support to have a flu vaccination	The government has recommended the influencer vaccination due to possible overlap with COVID-19	Essential Personnel has provided all employees with information on the flu vaccination and offered all employees the opportunity to have the flu vaccination paid for by the organisation. It is not a requirement of any employee to have the vaccination and advice to the suitability of the vaccine should be requested from the individual employees own GP	All staff	Now