



# WA COVID-19 Healthcare Worker Furloughing Guidelines

State Health Incident Coordination Centre (SHICC)  
Department of Health, WA

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## Version Control and Approval

Review and update of this document is coordinated by the State Health Incident Coordination Centre (SHICC) Planning Cell which can be contacted with feedback at [SHICC.PHAB@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:SHICC.PHAB@health.wa.gov.au).

Version	Date	Author	Approved by	Comments on revision
1.0	16 February 2022	SHICC Planning Cell	Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer	Original version
2.0	11 March 2022	SHICC Planning Cell	Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer	Removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References to national permissions and restrictions guidance</li> </ul> Added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reference to COVID Transition (Healthcare Critical Worker) Directions</li> <li>Updated mask requirements for permissions to work if high impact on services in first 7 days following exposure</li> </ul> Updated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formatting of Table 1</li> </ul>
3.0	14 April 2022	SHICC Planning Cell	Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer	Removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>References to high and very high caseload environments</li> </ul> Added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated close contact definition</li> </ul> Updated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formatting of Table 1</li> </ul>
4.0	3 May 2022	SHICC Planning Cell	Dr Andrew Robertson, Chief Health Officer	Updated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal obligations as outlined in COVID Transition (Testing and Isolation) Directions (No 13)</li> </ul> Removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table 1</li> </ul>

## Introduction

This guidance provides information on the requirements for asymptomatic close contacts who are healthcare workers (HCW) to attend work after a COVID-19 exposure. It applies to HCWs in health care settings (public or private health facilities where health care is primarily accessed via face-to-face services provided to residents, patients, clients and others).

## Work permissions and restrictions for healthcare workers

[COVID Transition \(Testing and Isolation\) Directions \(No 13\)](#) outline the legal obligations of asymptomatic close contacts to attend a high-risk setting (which include aged care facilities, residential care facilities, health care settings and correctional facilities) for the purpose of attending work. As per the Directions, relevant workers must:

- advise their employer that they are a close contact, and receive confirmation from their employer that the employer agrees to the person attending work,
- be fully vaccinated,
- return a daily negative RAT prior to leaving home,
- actively monitor for symptoms,
- leave the workplace and return home immediately if they develop symptoms or test positive,
- only remain at the high-risk setting for the purpose of their work duties,
- wear a surgical mask at minimum (or another mask as required by workplace),
- not share break areas with any other person at the high-risk setting, and
- use reasonable endeavours to maintain a physical distance of 1.5m from other people in the workplace.

The healthcare setting should determine if asymptomatic HCWs should attend work in a health care setting based on an individual risk assessment.

Symptomatic close contacts must isolate at home and must not attend work (see guidance for [close contacts](#)).

## COVID-19 close contact definition in a HCW

Where a HCW has been exposed to a COVID-19 case and;

- The worker is considered a close contact as defined below:
  - a household member or intimate partner of a person with COVID-19 who has had contact with them during their infectious period, or
  - someone who has had close personal interaction with a person with COVID-19 during their infectious period, where they spent 4 hours of cumulative contact with them in a residential setting (including a home, residential care facility, boarding school, maritime vessel, or other accommodation facility) in any 24-hour period where masks have been removed by both people during the period of contact, OR
- The worker was not wearing appropriate PPE (fit-tested N95/P2 mask, eye protection, gowns and gloves) where aerosol generating behaviours or procedures have been involved with a person with COVID-19, OR
- Someone who is informed by WA Health that they are a close contact.

## Additional resources

[WA COVID-19 TTIQ Plan \(health.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.health.wa.gov.au)

[Infection Prevention and Control in WA Healthcare Facilities \(health.wa.gov.au\)](#)

[COVID Transition \(Testing and Isolation\) Directions \(No 13\)](#)

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