

ESSENTIAL WORKERS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM CLOSE CONTACT ISOLATION

The Victorian Government has announced more essential workers will be eligible for an exemption from close contact home isolation requirements to attend their workplace.

From 11:59pm, Tuesday 18 January 2022, workers in the following sectors are eligible for an exemption:

- emergency services such as police, fire services and the SES
- critical utilities such as gas, electricity, water and waste disposal
- freight and transport operators, including at ports and airports
- primary, secondary and early childhood education
- critical care services that support our most vulnerable.

Under the conditions of the exemption, the worker may return to work if it is necessary for continuity of operations and if other options have been exhausted. The exemption will apply to attending work only, not any other settings.

In order to be eligible, the worker must first notify the employer of their status as a contact, and both parties must consent to the worker returning to the workplace. Workers are already required to be fully vaccinated.

Strong requirements will need to be met to qualify for an exemption – this includes:

- The worker must undertake a daily rapid antigen test (RAT) for five days and return a negative result prior to attending work each day.

- They must wear a face mask at all times, with exceptions in the case of eating or drinking, or safety reasons, and a P2/N95 respirator is preferred.
- The worker cannot enter shared break areas and the employer must try and facilitate solo break time. The employer must also take reasonable steps to deploy the worker in areas where transmission risk is lower.
- If at any time the worker develops symptoms or tests positive on a RAT, the exemption no longer applies. They are then a case, must isolate for seven days, and must notify others including their employer.

The exemption aligns with what has been granted to other workers and is designed to protect the state's essential workforce during the continuing Omicron wave.

More information on the conditions of the exemption will be published at coronavirus.vic.gov.au/isolation-exemptions when they come into effect at 11:59pm, Tuesday 18 January 2022.

Remember to book your third vaccine dose at www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccine.

For more information, please contact your ASU Delegate, or the ASU Member Contact Centre on info@asuvictas.com.au or 1300 855 570.

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