

Places of Worship

Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland – Stage 4
Version 5 – Effective from October 16 2020

Supported by



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Introduction

Our faith leaders and community members have compassionately and courageously continued to serve, lift and strengthen their fellow Queenslanders throughout the dangers and difficulties of the COVID-19 crisis. They are to be commended and supported in their efforts. Queensland is better because of their sacrifices.

This Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland (the Plan) has been updated to reflect changes to restrictions in Stage 4 of Queensland's Roadmap to easing restrictions, to facilitate the gathering of people at **all places of worship** and ensure faith organisations keep their places of worship, staff and participants safe.

The Plan includes the principles, guidelines, checklists and a Statement of Compliance (Appendices 1, 2 and 3) to help you and your community of believers reconnect safely in places of worship through this reopening period.

All places of worship (regardless of size) will need to ensure the Checklists and Statement of Compliance in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are completed, printed, signed, and prominently displayed in each place of worship.

Places of worship across Queensland encompass a wide variety of faiths and services. While each organisation may have specific protocols and implementation requirements, the Plan offers minimum standards for faith organisations and scope for all faith organisations to establish consistent, safe practices in line with COVID-19 health regulations.

The information in the Plan should be read in conjunction with current government regulations and health advice relating to COVID-19. These procedures may be updated as necessary to ensure current best practice standards and measures for COVID-19 risk mitigation. Where there is an inconsistency between the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction (the Direction) and this industry plan, the Direction will take precedence over the industry plan for the extent of the inconsistency.

To stay up to date with any amendments to the Plan and with public health directions, individuals and organisations should refer to: www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses

If you have any questions about this plan, please email MA@dlgrma.qld.gov.au

We encourage you to sign up to the COVID-19 Stakeholder bulletins, so you will receive a summary of the key and current Queensland information about COVID-19. Visit: <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/updates/stakeholder-bulletins>

The two key points for any Industry COVID Safe Plan are **a commitment to follow health advice** and **to direct workers and community members to stay home if they are sick**.

If any staff, volunteers, attendees, or community members display symptoms of COVID-19 ask them to call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

For severe symptoms such as shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing, **dial 000**.

It is recognised that places of worship are potentially high-risk environments given the communal nature of many religious services and activities. Adherence to the Plan will help ensure physical distancing and good hygiene are complied with and transmission opportunities are effectively minimised for the safety of all attendees and the broader community. The measures included in the Plan will also support contact tracing and other public health measures in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Example of High-Risk Practices

The communal nature of some religious practices is high risk for the transmission of COVID-19. For example, receiving holy communion and bar mitzvahs will need to be managed differently to comply with physical distancing requirements. Consider modifying religious rites or rituals to avoid direct physical contact where practical. Where this is not practical, limit contact to hands. Ensure participant's hands are washed with hand sanitiser before and after each interaction.

Definitions & Coverage

- **Where there is an inconsistency between the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction (the Direction) and this industry plan, the Direction will take precedence over the industry plan for the extent of the inconsistency.**
- **Places of worship** are those places where people gather to conduct services, religious ceremonies or for other faith-based activities. This can include activities like Sunday Schools, Youth Groups and associated social activities.
- **Home worship** - If a person is using their home as a place of worship for people other than members of their household, then home worship will be consistent with the latest [Movement and Gathering Direction](#), which currently allows up to 40 people in your own residence in non-restricted areas. Note that this number may change as circumstances change. For example, it may be selectively/locally decreased in the case of an outbreak of COVID-19.
- The Movement and Gathering Direction can be viewed here: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/movement-gathering-direction>
- People wanting to use their home residence as a place of worship and wish to exceed the maximum number of people allowed under the latest Movement and Gathering Direction (currently 40 people) will have to abide by all aspects of the Industry Plan and are the responsibility of the person hosting the worship service in their home. This includes ensuring compliance with the following:
 - Physical distancing requirements.
 - Hand and respiratory hygiene are to be encouraged.
 - Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection must be maintained.
 - Any person who has symptoms related to COVID-19 must be excluded from your home.
 - All contact tracing requirements, as identified on page 20 must be met. Contact information must be kept for all persons for contact tracing purposes, including name, email address, mobile phone number and the date/time period of attendance for a period of at least 56 days.

- Ensuring the Checklists and Statement of Compliance in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 are completed, printed, signed, and prominently displayed in your home.
- Food service requirements
 - No buffets or shared ‘serve yourself’ sections such as salad bars etc. Ensuring you comply with any other COVID Safe Plans, for example, the [Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Plan](#) if you plan to serve food or drinks. You can view all approved Industry Plans here - <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/approved-industry-covid-safe-plans>
- You understand that non-compliance penalties apply including an on-the-spot fine of \$1,334 for the person hosting the worship service in their home under the *Public Health Act 2005*.
- If a **school** includes a place of worship (e.g. – a chapel), this plan does not apply if the place of worship is used as part of the school’s regular activities. However, if the place of worship is used outside of the school’s regular activities (e.g. – a chapel used on the weekend for a religious service), then this plan applies.
- **Shops and other non-worship related activities** such as op shops and meal preparation and delivery, are not included in this Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland. They may fall under a [separate industry plan](#), appropriate for the activity.
- The term **staff** in this document refers to both paid and volunteer workers associated with or working at a place of worship.
- **Religious ceremonies** include, for example, christenings, first communions, bar mitzvahs conducted by a religious facilitator.
- **The Plan does not cover funerals and weddings**, which currently have a maximum attendance of 100 on the basis that occupant density is no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for indoor venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or no more than one person per 4 square metres for indoor venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more. Up to 40 people can dance at any one time at a wedding with a COVID Safe Plan.
- For more information on funerals visit: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/non-essential-business-closure-direction-10/funeral-protocol>.
- For more information on weddings visit: https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/134943/covid-safe-industry-plan-weddings.pdf?nocache-v1.
- Organisers of events larger than 1,000 people for outdoor events or larger than 500 people for indoor events, and operating in compliance with an Approved Plan (other than a COVID Safe Event Plan) must notify the Public Health Unit of the event a minimum of 10 business days before the event via the COVID Safe Event Plan Submission Portal <https://healthserviceportal.health.qld.gov.au/hdsp>.
- The following information needs to be provided to the Public Health Unit:
 - Business name of the company/organisation which is holding the event
 - Trading name of the company/organisation which is holding the event
 - Key contact person(s) that can answer queries regarding the event (before/during/after)
 - Position in organisation
 - Phone number(s)

- Email
 - Postal address
- Name of the event
- Date(s) the event will be held
- Duration of the event (start and finish times)
- Location of the event (if multiple locations, each location, start/finish times for each)
- Which Approved COVID Safe Plan(s) they are intending to operate under
- Estimated/known number of people attending the event (including staff)
- Overview of activities that will be occurring at the event. E.g. sport competition, food stalls, merchandising, entertainment, rides, fireworks, etc.
- Where no, or only parts of an event are covered by an Approved Plan, event organisers must develop a COVID Safe Event Plan or use the COVID Safe Event Checklist (if less than 1500 people for outdoor events or less than 500 people for indoor events). The COVID Safe Event Plan should refer to the relevant components of the Approved Plan(s), which are applicable to the respective parts of the event.

Pre-Gathering Preparation

Preparing the Place of Worship

- Conduct organisational meetings via phone or online if possible.
- Prepare to deliver onsite activities including, for example, moving chairs, workstations, desks and tables further apart if necessary, to comply with physical distancing.
- Erect signs at the entrances to lifts and meeting rooms to ensure the maximum safe capacity is not exceeded.
- Provide physical distancing markers on the floor in areas where attendees line up or between each seated group.
- Ensure the **Checklist in Appendix 1** is completed, printed, signed, and displayed in the place of worship.
- Complete the Statement of Compliance included in **Appendix 3** and display it in a public place in your place of worship before you reopen with additional attendees.
- Develop a checklist to ensure continuity of worship and engagement if there is a suspected or confirmed outbreak of COVID-19 in the place of worship.
- Appoint a COVID Safe Warden to monitor and enforce compliance measures or nominate an individual or team to champion safe practices in the place of worship and to colleagues and community members.
- Provide clear advice informing individuals in vulnerable groups of their heightened vulnerability. Following [Queensland Health guidelines](#), this includes:
 - Queenslanders over 70 years of age
 - Queenslanders over 65 years of age with underlying health issues
 - First Nations Queenslanders over the age of 50 with one or more chronic disease.
- You can facilitate communal refreshments (e.g. food, tea & coffee) so long as you comply with the [Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Plan](#), ensure there is no self-service or buffet style food and that all patrons are appropriately physically distanced when eating or drinking
- Clearly display information on COVID-19 symptoms, physical distancing, and hygiene requirements. Resources available at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/support-and-resources/resources>
- Clearly designate entrances, exits, and direction of movement along paths to remove congestion at bottlenecks. For example: In a place of worship with 2 entrances, such as a double-doored foyer or a structure with front and back doors, designate one as entrance and the other as exit. Clearly sign room capacity limits and 1.5m markers in areas likely to experience queues. Clearly sign directions and 1.5m physical distancing markers to relevant locations within the place of worship to avoid groups bunching up.
- If an attendee displays symptoms of COVID-19, provide a face mask for the person, isolate the person in another part of the place of worship or outside and arrange for them to go home or to a health facility. Record the incident.
- Ensure alcohol-based hand rub and or hand washing facilities are available for all staff and visitors at entry and exit points.
- At entry points to the Places of Worship, display exclusion signs with a notice to all patrons, contractors or staff to not enter the place of worship if they:
 - Are unwell
 - Have been in close contact with a known active case of COVID-19
 - Have COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, fatigue or shortness of breath)

- Have travelled overseas in the previous 14 days
- Have been to a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days.

The list of declared COVID-19 hotspots can be found at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/hotspots-covid-19>.

Conditions of entry signage may be displayed.

Training & Education

- Appoint a dedicated individual or team to educate staff and community members on health measures and risk.
- Ensure staff are aware of and follow the measures included in the Plan.
- Anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms must call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 83).
- Be prepared and able to explain to community members why these measures are in place and their importance.
- Provide workers with information on COVID-19 including when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning.

As much of the work going into reopening during a period of high risk is outside of the typical skillset of most community members and staff, conscientious training is an important tool in supporting and protecting them.

- Ensure you comply with any other COVID Safe Industry Plans when necessary, for example, the [Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Industry Plan](#) if you plan to serve food or drinks before or after worship services. You can view all approved Industry Plans here - <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/approved-industry-covid-safe-plans>
- Direct staff and community members to stay home if they are sick and, if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, ask them to call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84). Ensure staff are aware of this number and are able to inform attendees.
- Instruct staff and community members to tell the place of worship if they are displaying symptoms, have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19, or have been tested for COVID-19.
- Treat personal information about individuals' health carefully, in line with privacy laws.
- Instruct staff to clean personal property that comes to work, such as sunglasses, mobile phones and other touch-screen items with disinfectant wipes or similar.
- If seeking clarification on a public health Direction or have any questions, call 134 COVID (134 268). Provide workers with information on COVID-19 including when to get tested, physical distancing and cleaning as per the Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship in Queensland guidelines - <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/testing-and-fever-clinics>.

Risk Management

- Revise and update the Workplace Health and Safety Risk Management Plan for the place of worship.
 - Complete, print out, sign, and display the Checklist included in Appendix 1.
-
- Staff at places of worship will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and review and adjust their risk management response accordingly.
 - Risk management measures will be put in place to minimise the risks posed by COVID-19 to attendees at places of worship.
 - This includes, for example, maintaining a record of identified hazards and risk management measures in your place of worship, such as: physical distancing, practising good personal and hand hygiene, keeping the place of worship clean during COVID-19, routine cleaning, personal protective equipment where necessary, managing symptoms of COVID-19 and ways to manage psychosocial risks.
 - For further details on how to manage psychosocial risks, please refer to page 8 of the Office of Industrial Relations COVID Guide:
https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/191678/covid-19-overview-and-guide.pdf
 - Communication, consultation, instruction, training and supervision of volunteers, religious delegates and employees at places of worship and their representatives will occur throughout whole of COVID-19 risk management process.
 - **The Checklist included in Appendix 1** will assist with effective risk management processes, including:
 - How and when control measures were implemented, monitored, and reviewed, including who was consulted.
 - Identify individuals as points of contact and authority in implementing control measures.
 - Relevant training records.
 - Any plans for changes.

Monitoring & Notification

As attendees gather to their place of worship, it is essential to have systems in place that will help manage entry, exit, and participation so that it is a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

Contact tracing is critical.

It is strongly recommended every venue encourages its patrons to download the **COVIDSafe app** link: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/COVIDsafe-app>

The COVIDSafe app is not mandatory.

The COVIDSafe app is not an alternative to collecting and retaining contact information.

Contact information must be kept for patrons, contractors, and staff. This information must include:

- full name
- phone number
- Email (or residential address where the person does not have an email account)
- date and time of entry
- exit time or estimated period, where feasible.

If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your business can fulfil this request.

Places of Worship can utilise electronic systems, written registers or written personnel records of attendance as a means of collection however **must** ensure collection and storage is privacy compliant. For further information please see: <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>

The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose, and destroyed after 56 days.

Period of patronage

Any person visiting the place of worship, patrons, contractors and staff must sign in with their time of arrival, they should also be strongly encouraged to provide a time of departure or estimated duration, with signage displaying signing out allows for more effective contact tracing.

Places of worship should display signage encouraging patrons to sign out.

Example Contact Tracing Register

Place of Worship Name:

Date:

Signing this form acknowledges that:

- *You are well.*
- *You do not have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, sneezing/runny nose or loss of sense of smell).*
- *You have not been in close contact with a known active case of COVID-19.*
- *You have not travelled overseas in the previous 14 days*
- *You have not been to a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days.*

Full name	Phone	Email address	Date of patronage	Time IN	Time OUT	Signature

Onsite Activities

- Under Stage 4, indoor occupancy is set at a maximum of 1 person per 4 square metres in a venue unless the place of worship is less than 200 square metres, then the one person per 2 square metres rule applies up to a maximum of 50 people. For outdoor areas at the venue, this is set to no more than one person per 2 square metres.
- Singing is permitted and no longer requires 7 square metres per person, only the same physical distancing requirements listed above, based on your venue size.
- If members of the same household are attending services, they do not need to practice physical distancing from each other, but each person must have the ability to physical distance from other people of their household if they choose to do so. In all other circumstances physical distancing requirements must always be observed.
- Pre- and post-service gatherings or mingling are allowed, however ensure public health controls are followed, including ensuring people are appropriately physically distanced when drinking or eating communal refreshments. The service of food is guided by the [Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Plan](#), or, as applicable, the COVID Safe Checklist for seated dining and drinking in restaurants and cafes. There are very strict hygiene requirements that are attached to the service of food and no buffet or self-service of food is allowed.
- Move workstations, desks and tables further apart if necessary, to comply with physical distancing where applicable.
- Do not use communal items or accept physical offerings and handle cash with care.
- If taking donations, the preference is to take electronic payment (e.g. Direct Debit, Tap&Go, ApplePay, etc.) or other non-touch options. If contactless payment is not an option, ensure that staff handling money are practicing good hand hygiene while doing so.
- Charitable donations may still be accepted if left in a dedicated contact-free area within the premises.
- Have guidelines and support for the presence of children so that they are safe and maintain appropriate physical distance wherever possible.
- Ensure musical practices and performances maintain appropriate physical distance.
- Facilitate worship and engagement that complies with physical distancing requirements, including online or long-distance community gatherings if appropriate.

Physical Distancing Examples for Indoor Occupancy

A 6m x 12m (72 square metres) hall could accommodate up to 36 people, including staff and faith leaders. In the 72 square metres hall with 36 attendees, the attendees would be spread out as much as possible throughout the available space in line with physical distancing guidelines.

A 4m x 60m (240 square metres) hall could accommodate 60 people, including staff and faith leaders. In the 240 square metres hall with 60 attendees, the attendees would be spread out as much as possible throughout the available space in line with physical distancing guidelines.

A 5m x 20m (100 square metres) hall could accommodate up to 50 people including staff and faith leaders. In the 100 square metres hall with 50 attendees, the attendees would be spread out as much as possible throughout the available space in line with physical distancing guidelines.

Determining Maximum Attendance for Indoor Occupancy

To determine the maximum number of people that can attend a place of worship (indoor occupancy), follow these steps:

1. Determine the entire site size (the place of worship – the space where your worship service is ordinarily held) in square metres.
2. Determine the size of the non-useable spaces in square metres (for example: space taken up by equipment, storage containers, kitchens, toilets and other impenetrable structures).
3. Deduct the non-useable area size from the entire site size.
4. Divide the usable area of the site by four (if your venue is above 200 square metres) or by two (if your venue is below 200 square metres, noting this is limited to a maximum of 50 people).

You are not permitted to exceed the maximum attendance for your place of worship. This means you will have to refuse entry if you have reached your maximum attendance capacity. You have the legal right to do this in the interests of public health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Determining Maximum Attendance for Outdoor Occupancy

For all outdoor areas at the venue / premise, for example outdoor dining areas, this is set to no more than one person per 2 square metres.

Signage

Suitable signage must be displayed stating the maximum occupancy allowed, provided the appropriate occupancy density rule is applied. If a venue / premise comprises of indoor and outdoor patron facilities, the additional maximum occupancy signage for each area should be displayed at all entry/exit points for each indoor and outdoor patron facility.

Occupancy Management

- Operators of venues / premises must have adequate policies in place to manage and monitor the number of patrons in attendance at the venue/premise at any time so as not to exceed the maximum occupancy allowed under this Plan, considering the different densities allowed for indoor and outdoor areas.
- The policy should include measures (for example the use of area-specific ticketing, wristbands, badging, direct supervision of indoor/outdoor entry and exit points) that will be taken to ensure only the maximum allowable patrons within any indoor and outdoor area at the venue/premise at any one time.
- Upon request from an Emergency Officer, the operator of the venue/premise must be able to immediately provide the patron occupancy levels at any indoor and/or outdoor area within the venue/premise, to the Emergency Officer.
- At all times, the Plan is subject to regulations, guidelines and Public Health Directions issued by the Chief Health Officer, and any changes that may be made to the Queensland Government's Roadmap to easing Queensland's restrictions.

Staff/Religious Leader Practices

In addition to attendees, places of worship are also frequented by faith leaders and other supporting staff. Specific considerations should be made for the safety of these people and those they serve.

- Model good hygiene: washing hands, sneezing and coughing into elbow, wearing protective equipment (as a point of connection with many people, religious leaders can be vulnerable to contracting infections and spreading them), using hand sanitiser regularly.
- Limit the number of staff in the place of worship to comply with physical distancing requirements.
- Consider modifying religious rites or rituals to avoid direct physical contact where practical. Where this is not practical, limit contact to hands. Ensure participants' hands are washed with soap and water or hand sanitiser before and after each interaction.

Health and Safety Considerations

After having considered the health and safety of attendees and staff of the place of worship, it is important to consider broader health and safety issues at the venue.

- Provide hand washing facilities for customers and patrons including clean running water, liquid soap, paper towels. If hand washing facilities are not readily available, provide an appropriate alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Make appropriate hand sanitiser available for attendees and staff at entry and within the venue. **Appropriate hand sanitisers contain at least 60% ethanol, or 70% iso-propanol. Alcohol-free hand sanitisers are not considered effective against the COVID-19 virus.**
- Toilet facilities are to be cleaned at least twice per day, ensuring that soap, running water, and paper towels or a hand dryer are always available.
- Maintain adequate ventilation **throughout the gathering or service, for example, ensuring doors and windows are left open to limit touch points.**
- Develop a plan/checklist to maintain recommended physical distancing measures and hygienic conditions at ablution or washing facilities.
- Revise Workplace Health and Safety risk management processes **to identify and manage any new or changed hazards that may arise from implementing this Plan.**

Cleaning

Cleaning is of special importance in ensuring a safe and healthy environment in which to worship. All places of worship must undertake the following cleaning measures in line with the [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland COVID-19 Guide](#).

- Ensure any areas frequented by staff and/or attendees are cleaned at least daily with detergent and/or disinfectant.
- Instruct staff to wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands thoroughly with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.
- Hand washing should take at least 20-30 seconds, including washing the whole area of each hand (palms, fingers, nails and back of hands), covering all areas with soap before washing with water.
- Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces several times a day with a detergent or disinfectant solution or wipe. Hourly cleaning is recommended. Prioritise communal areas, e.g. seating areas and toilets. Some example surfaces include:
 - Elevator buttons
 - Light switches
 - Air conditioning controls & TV remotes
 - Handrails
 - Tables and counter tops
 - Doorknobs and handles
 - Sinks
 - Computer keyboards & mice
 - Chair backs
- Ensure sufficient waste disposal facilities are available in the venue and are emptied regularly.
- Follow the equipment and cleaning recommendations outline on pages 5-7 of the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland COVID-19 Guide.

Useful Links

The Queensland Government's COVID-19 website:

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/>

Queensland's Roadmap to Easing Restrictions:

https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/127150/DPC7309-COVID-19-Restrictions-roadmap.pdf

Travel restrictions to remote communities:

<https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/travel-restrictions-remote-communities>

Roadmap to easing access restrictions for Queensland's remote communities:

<https://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/resources/datsima/covid/remote-communities-roadmap.pdf>

Industry COVID Safe Plan information:

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses>

WorkCover Queensland guidelines for keeping workplaces safe during COVID-19:

<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/coronavirus/workplace-risk-management-b>

COVID-19 cleaning, disinfection and waste recommendations:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/industry-and-businesses/resources-and-fact-sheets-for-industry/covid-19-cleaning-and-disinfection-recommendations>

COVID Safe resources for businesses (posters):

<https://www.australia.gov.au/covidsafe-resources> and
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources#posters>

COVIDSafe app:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/COVIDsafe-app>

Privacy Information for contact tracing:

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>

The list of COVID-19 hotspots:

www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/hotspots-covid-19

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about Places of Worship

Stage 4 of easing Restrictions

Effective 16 October 2020

What happens if there is a difference between the Industry Plan and a Chief Health Officer's direction /update to the Roadmap to Easing Restrictions?

Where there is an inconsistency between the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction (the Direction)/Roadmap to Easing Restrictions and this industry plan, the Direction will take precedence over the industry plan for the extent of the inconsistency.

What do I need to do if I want to hold a specific worship celebration or event (i.e.: Eid, Christmas etc)?

If you are planning to hold an event, an Event Organiser should identify whether there is an Approved COVID Safe Industry, Site-Specific or Professional Sporting Code Plan (Approved COVID Safe Plan) is applicable to your event in whole or in part:

- COVID Safe Industry Plan for specific industries, such as community sports, live music and hotels
- COVID Safe Site-Specific Plan for the venue in which the event is being held, such as a stadium or convention centre
- COVID Safe Professional Sporting Code Plan for professional sporting events.

Where an existing Approved COVID Safe Plan covers all facets of the event, the event may operate in compliance with the Approved COVID Safe Plan rather than in accordance with the COVID Safe Event Checklist or a COVID Safe Event Plan.

Organisers of events larger than 1500 people for outdoor events or larger than 500 people for indoor events, and operating in compliance with an Approved Plan (other than a COVID Safe Event Plan) must notify the Public Health Unit of the event a minimum of 10 business days before the event via the COVID Safe Event Plan Submission Portal <https://healthserviceportal.health.qld.gov.au/hdsp>.

The following information needs to be provided to the Public Health Unit:

- Business name of the company/organisation which is holding the event
- Trading name of the company/organisation which is holding the event
- Key contact person(s) that can answer queries regarding the event (before/during/after)
 - Position in organisation
 - Phone number(s)
 - Email
 - Postal address
- Name of the event
- Date(s) the event will be held

- Duration of the event (start and finish times)
- Location of the event (if multiple locations, each location, start/finish times for each)
- Which Approved COVID Safe Plan(s) they are intending to operate under
- Estimated/known number of people attending the event (including staff)
- Overview of activities that will be occurring at the event. E.g. sport competition, food stalls, merchandising, entertainment, rides, fireworks, etc.

Where no, or only parts of an event are covered by an Approved Plan, event organisers must develop a COVID Safe Event Plan or use the COVID Safe Event Checklist (if less than 1500 people for outdoor events or less than 500 people for indoor events). The COVID Safe Event Plan should refer to the relevant components of the Approved Plan(s), which are applicable to the respective parts of the event.

Visit - https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/132570/industry-framework-covid-safe-events.pdf for more information about holding large events.

Does the Plan apply to all places of worship, or do we need an individual one?

This is a blanket Industry Plan applicable to all places of worship. Completion, signing, and display of the Checklist in Appendix 1 and the Statement of Compliance in Appendix 3 will allow for gatherings in line with this plan's requirements at any place of worship.

Does the Plan apply to my home if I use my place of residence for home worship services?

Only if you wish to use your home residence as a place of worship and want to exceed the maximum number of people allowed under the latest Movement and Gathering Direction (currently 40 people). In this circumstance, you will have to abide by all aspects of the Industry Plan.

The Movement and Gathering Direction can be viewed here: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/legislation/cho-public-health-directions-under-expanded-public-health-act-powers/movement-gathering-direction>

Will the Plan carry over into later stages of the Roadmap?

Yes, the Plan will carry over to later stages with potential for revision if required. Where there is an inconsistency between the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction (the Direction) and this industry plan, the Direction will take precedence over the industry plan for the extent of the inconsistency.

Do we have the legal right to turn people away if capacity is reached?

Yes, you do. It is a difficult thing to do, but necessary to limit the number of people in a building for both public health and contact tracing. It is recommended that organisations with smaller places of worship run multiple services and set up a "pre-booking" system to avoid rejections at the door.

Is singing permitted during services?

Yes, singing is permitted – with the same distancing guidelines applying to all attendees for indoor occupancy (4 square metres per person for venues larger than 200 square metres, 2 square metres per person for venues below 200 square metres up to 50 persons).

What happens if different approved COVID Safe Plans apply to activities at my place of worship?

If there are multiple industries and/or activities undertaken at a specific place of worship (e.g. outdoor youth group camp, serving of food and beverages, worship services, book shop premises) several Approved COVID Safe Plans may apply.

If this is the case, apply the following:

- Where there is clear separation between the activity and it is a discreet business entity, the relevant plan applies to the relevant area.
- Display the COVID Safe [Statement of Compliance](#) for the appropriate Plan in each area and implement the Plan's requirements.
- Where an **event** is outside of the scope of the Approved Plan, please refer to the [Industry Framework for COVID Safe Events](#) which provides further guidance on developing COVID Safe Event Plans. The planned event must be hosted in accordance with the following conditions:

For Outdoor Events

- **Fewer than 1,500 people** – must comply with a COVID Safe Event Checklist, no further approval needed
- **Between 1,500 and 10,000 people** - must comply with a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by local public health units
- **Over 10,000 people** - must comply with a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by the Chief Health Officer.

For Indoor Events

- **Fewer than 500 people** – must comply with a COVID Safe Event Checklist, no further approval needed
- **Between 500 and 10,000 people** - must comply with a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by local public health units
- **Over 10,000 people** - must comply with a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by the Chief Health Officer.

Do I have to record contact details?

Yes. Contact tracing is critical.

It is strongly recommended every venue encourages its patrons to download the **COVIDSafe app** link: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/COVIDsafe-app>

The COVIDSafe app is not mandatory.

The COVIDSafe app is not an alternative to collecting and retaining contact information.

Contact information must be kept for patrons, contractors, and staff. This information must include:

- full name
- phone number
- Email (or residential address where the person does not have an email account)
- date and time of entry
- exit time or estimated period, where feasible.

If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship can fulfil this request.

Venues can utilise electronic systems, written registers or written personnel records of attendance as a means of collection however **must** ensure collection and storage is privacy compliant. For further information please see: <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>

The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose, and destroyed after 56 days.

Any person visiting the place of worship, patrons, contractors and staff must sign in with their time of arrival, they should also be strongly encouraged to provide a time of departure or estimated duration, with signage displaying signing out allows for more effective contact tracing.

Places of worship should display signage encouraging patrons to sign out.

Do I have to opt-in to the Plan?

Yes. The Places of Worship Industry Plan is mandatory for all places of worship (regardless of their size or how many/few attendees they have) under the new directions. This means all places of worship (of any size) must follow the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship and the public health guidelines/principles contained within, as well as complete the checklists in the appendices and prominently display the statement of compliance. This is to ensure the safety of your attendees.

How many people are allowed in places of worship?

This depends on the size of your venue and if you have opted-in to this Plan

Maximum attendees for indoor occupancy are determined by the 4 square metre rule, except for smaller venues below 200 square metres, which can have one person per 2 square metres up to 50 persons at a time. You are not permitted to exceed the maximum attendance once it has been reached. This means you will have to refuse entry to people if you have reached your capacity limit for your place of worship. For all outdoor areas at the venue / premise, for example outdoor dining areas, this is set at no more than one person per 2 square metres.

What is an outdoor area defined as?

- has fixed or temporary boundaries
- is not fully enclosed, i.e. is open to the elements and natural ventilation (significant amount of natural and unrestricted air movement required for most of the time area is in use)
- can include a veranda, balcony, deck, patio, or similar structure that might be connected to an external wall of a building
- can have a roof, awning, or eave
- may include a rotunda, tarpaulin or shade structure situated in a larger open space.

An outdoor area **does not include**:

- atriums internal to a building, internal courtyards or similar
- a temporary or permanent marquee, unless marquee walls are lifted for the duration of the event
- a tent, e.g., a circus tent or performance tent.

Use of curtain walls, panel walls or other fittings to fully enclose an area to protect from the elements is considered **indoors**.

Sometimes Queensland weather may require curtain walls, panel walls or other fittings to be used for short periods to partially enclose an area for patron comfort and safety. **If a business is in doubt, it should operate as if it is an indoor space.**

Will places of worship still be required to take contact details of attendees and keep for 56 days and manage people in groups of 20?

Places of worship must keep contact details for 56 days, however, no longer need to manage people in groups of 20.

Contact tracing is critical.

It is strongly recommended every venue encourages its patrons to download the **COVIDSafe app** link: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-andtools/COVIDsafe-app>

The COVIDSafe app is not mandatory.

The COVIDSafe app is not an alternative to collecting and retaining contact information.

Contact information must be kept for patrons, contractors, and staff. This information must include:

- full name
- phone number
- Email (or residential address where the person does not have an email account)
- date and time of entry
- exit time or estimated period, where feasible.

If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship can fulfil this request.

Venues can utilise electronic systems, written registers or written personnel records of attendance as a means of collection however **must** ensure collection and storage is privacy compliant. For further information please see: <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>

The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose, and destroyed after 56 days.

Any person visiting the place of worship, patrons, contractors and staff must sign in with their time of arrival, they should also be strongly encouraged to provide a time of departure or estimated duration, with signage displaying signing out allows for more effective contact tracing.

Places of worship should display signage encouraging patrons to sign out.

What advice is in place for older people (the over 65-70 age group) – are they allowed to attend places of worship or are they still in the vulnerable category?

The advice remains that people over 70, and First Nations people over 50 with a chronic disease are encouraged to exercise judgement and consult their doctor for advice on their specific situation. They are not 'banned' from attending. Where they do return to volunteering or attend services at places of worship, they should be advised to stay home if they are sick and maintain good hand/coughing hygiene and physical distancing. The Flu vaccination is recommended.

Are pre and post service gatherings or mingling allowed to take place?

Yes, so long as the following public health rules are maintained:

- ✓ People must be appropriately physically distanced when drinking or eating
- ✓ Physical indoor occupancy based on the size of your venue (4 square metres per person for larger venues, 2 square metres per person for smaller venues less than 200 square metres)
- ✓ Hand hygiene (washing hands or using alcohol-based sanitiser)
- ✓ Respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing into elbow)
- ✓ Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection (i.e.: wiping down shared surfaces, tables and chairs)
- ✓ Physical distancing is to be observed (1.5m away from people other than those from the same household)

Can places of worship provide or facilitate communal refreshments (i.e.: food, tea and coffee)?

Yes, so long as there is no buffet/self-service (i.e. staff or volunteers serve all food or drink) and the following health rules are maintained:

- ✓ People must be appropriately physically distanced when drinking or eating communal refreshments.
- ✓ Physical indoor occupancy based on the size of your venue (4 square metres per person for larger venues, 2 square metres per person for smaller venues less than 200 square metres)
- ✓ Hand hygiene (washing hands or using alcohol-based sanitiser)
- ✓ Respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing into elbow)
- ✓ Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection (i.e.: wiping down shared surfaces, tables and chairs)
- ✓ Physical distancing is to be observed (1.5m away from people other than those from the same household)

- ✓ Areas serving any food or beverages must operate in line with the COVID Safe Checklist for seated dining and drinking in restaurants and cafes or Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Plan

What are the requirements for youth groups and Sunday Schools in Stage 4?

The same density requirements outlined above depending on the venue size. Children from the same household do not need to physical distance.

How many people can I have at a wedding?

Wedding ceremonies can have a maximum of 100 people on the basis that indoor occupant density is no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or no more than one person per 4 square metres for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more. It is important if you are unwell, that you do not go to a wedding. A record of names and contact details of each guest must be kept for 56 days to assist in contact tracing if required. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within a stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship can fulfil this request. Up to 40 people can dance at any one time at a wedding with a COVID Safe Plan.

How many people can I have at a funeral?

Funerals may be attended by a maximum of 100 people on the basis that indoor occupant density is no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or no more than one person per 4 square metres indoors for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more. It is important if you are unwell, that you do not go to a funeral. A record of names and contact details of each guest must be kept for 56 days to assist in contact tracing if required. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within a stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship can fulfil this request.

How many people can attend a religious service?

Places of worship can have one person per 4 square metres indoors. However, if the place of worship is less than 200 square metres, then the venue can have one person per 2 square metres indoors, up to a total of 50 people at either private or public services. You are not permitted to exceed the maximum attendance once it has been reached. This means you will have to refuse entry to people if you have reached your capacity limit for your place of worship.

Do children count in the limits on number of people?

Children and infants are included in the total numbers where limits are indicated.

Why are restrictions being eased?

Queensland has done a great job flattening the curve, which means we can start to get back to business as usual whilst maintaining physical distancing. We need to ease restrictions in phases and manage this sensibly. The selected restrictions are being lifted based on recommendations determined by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPCC) and Queensland's Chief Health Officer.

What will happen if people don't follow the rules at places of worship and cases go up again?

Restrictions are being lifted because Queenslanders are doing a great job at listening to health advice and following the rules. However, there is the potential for our state to require tougher restrictions to be enforced if people don't abide by the new restrictions.

How will this be enforced?

Queensland Government enforcement agencies, including Queensland Police Service and Queensland Public Health Units, can enforce the lifting of these restrictions and ensure Queenslanders are doing their part to slow the spread. Breaches can be reported to 134 COVID.

Are there penalties if I don't comply?

Yes. If you don't comply you may be given an on-the-spot fine of \$1,334 for individuals and \$6,670 for corporations under the *Public Health Act 2005*.

Does the easing of restrictions also apply to people who are more at risk?

We strongly urge all people with a compromised immune system and people with chronic medical conditions to take extra precautions to reduce their risk, like strictly adhering to physical distancing and hygiene guidelines and avoiding situations where they may come into contact with a lot of people. We also recommend they talk to their doctor about their individual situation.

What modelling exists?

The Commonwealth Government has released modelling about what the progression of the virus may look like in Australia. That modelling was considered when this Plan was developed.

Will there be more cases?

It is likely we will see more cases. We have very clear monitoring systems in place. Our healthcare system is prepared and has capacity to handle any new cases. We need to take special care of people who are vulnerable to COVID-19, so that they avoid catching the virus. For example, special measures on visiting residential aged care facilities.

Will the original restrictions be put back in place again? Why/Why not?/When?

While we're easing some restrictions, it's essential Queenslanders continue to do the right thing and abide by the restrictions that are in place. The last thing we want is to see the number of cases in Queensland grow. We're working towards getting Queenslanders back to normal living.

The roadmap mentions COVID Safe check points. Will data from the COVID Safe app be used to assess these?

We're urging every Queenslanders to download the app to their phone. Data from the app will help us respond to any potential outbreak. That's the only purpose for which data can be supplied to Queensland Health experts.

Has physical distancing changed?

No. You should continue to practise physical distancing when you leave your home. This includes keeping 1.5 metres or two big steps away from each other and avoid hugs, kisses and handshakes.

What's the difference between the 4 square metres rule and physical distancing of 1.5 metres?

Physical distancing is one way to help slow the spread of viruses and can help protect the people in our community who are most at risk of getting really sick from COVID-19.

The 4 square metres rule describes the maximum number of people who can occupy indoor premises at the same time - the 'density' of people at a place of worship. For example, it is the measure that a place of worship should use to plan how many people can occupy a venue safely. Unless the place of worship is less than 200 square metres when the place of worship may have a maximum of 50 people with one person per 2 square metres.

We are also asking everyone to keep a physical (social) distance of 1.5 metres away from other people to the extent possible (other than for people of the same household). This is about each of us being responsible for how close we get to others, wherever we are.

Does a place of worship need to do both; that is, make sure there is 4 square metres per person and physical distancing of 1.5 metres?

Yes. The 4 square metres rule or 2 square metres rule when less than 200 square metres for indoor occupancy does not determine the distance between people. It's important to be mindful of arranging tables and traffic flows to ensure that wherever possible that patrons and staff are each at least 1.5 metres apart. People from the same household do not need to maintain physical distancing from each other.

Appendix 1: Checklist

The term “staff” in this document refers to both paid and volunteer workers associated with or working at a place of worship.

Preparatory Checklist

- If your place of worship has been closed, check the condition of equipment and facilities are fully functioning, such as gas, electricity, toilets, and hand-washing facilities. Ensure food and beverages stored at your business have not been contaminated or are out of date.
- Direct staff and volunteers to stay at home if they are sick, and to go home immediately if they become unwell. Require them to be tested for COVID-19 if they have any symptoms of acute respiratory disease (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) or a fever or history of fever. They must remain in isolation at home till they get a negative result for COVID-19.
- Nominate an individual or team to manage to champion safe practices and assist with implementation of checklist items and compliance with the Industry Safe Plan.
- Instruct staff and attendees to tell you if they are unwell and displaying respiratory symptoms, have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19, have COVID-19 symptoms, have been in a COVID-19 hotspot, have been overseas or have been tested for COVID-19. They must not enter the place of worship if any of these apply to them.
- Treat personal information about individuals' health carefully, in line with privacy laws. <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>
- Consider safety risks and manage these according to the appropriate hierarchy of controls, i.e. elimination, substitute, isolation, administrative controls then personal protective equipment where required.
- Consult with staff, volunteers, and community on COVID-19 measures in your place of worship and provide staff and volunteers with adequate information and education, including changes to tasks and practices and appropriate cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Put signs and posters up to remind workers and others of the risk of COVID-19, including reminders about physical distancing, hand washing, sneezing and coughing, and shared items/food risks.
- Put up exclusion signage, including signs and posters to remind patrons, contractors or staff to not enter the place of worship if they: are unwell, have been in close contact with a known active case of COVID-19, have COVID-19 symptoms, have travelled overseas in the previous 14 days, have been to a declared COVID-19 hotspot in the previous 14 days. Conditions of entry signage may be displayed.

Onsite Activities

- Place signs at entry points to instruct attendees not to enter if they are unwell or have COVID19 symptoms. It is recommended that the signs include COVID-19 contact information for Queensland Health and a point of contact at the place of worship.
- If practicable set up separate exit and entry points to minimise contact.
- Ensure the full name, email address (residential address if email not available), phone number, date of patronage and time of patronage of attendees are recorded at the outset of the gathering, and that the contact lists are retained and must be provided to public health officers within a stated time if needed for the purposes of contact tracing. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship can fulfil this request.
- Treat personal information about individuals' health carefully, in line with privacy laws. <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses/information-privacy>
- Anyone who demonstrates symptoms of respiratory illness must not be allowed into the place of worship.
- Prioritise disabled access to the place of worship.
- Implement measures to restrict numbers within the premises and ensure an average space of 4 square metres per person or 2 square metres per person for smaller venues below 200 square metres up to 50 persons for indoor occupancy.
- Ensure physical distancing by placing floor or wall markings or signs to identify 1.5 metres distance between persons for seating, prayer spaces, and standing areas.
- Remove waiting or entrance area seating or space any seating at least 1.5 metres apart.

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Ensure staff and attendees are provided with hand washing facilities or appropriate alcohol-based hand sanitisers. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% ethanol, or 70% iso-propanol, are recommended.
- Instruct staff and attendees to practise good hygiene by frequently cleaning their hands. Hand washing should take at least 20 to 30 seconds. Wash the whole of each hand, covering all areas with soap before washing with water. If hand washing is not practical, alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% ethanol, or 70% iso-propanol, is recommended.
- Instruct workers to clean personal property that comes to work, such as sunglasses, mobile phones and other touch-screen items with disinfectant wipes or similar.
- Reduce the sharing of items, including removing shared books/magazines from common areas.
- Do not offer communal refreshments, including tea and coffee, or water stations. This includes disposable cup and stirrer options.
- Clean frequently touched areas and surfaces before and after each service with detergent or disinfectant (including shared equipment and tools, Eftpos equipment, tables, counter tops and sinks).
- Develop a plan to maintain recommended physical distancing measures and hygienic conditions at ablution or washing facilities.

Donations and Business

- Develop a continuity plan for continued delivery of services and worship in the event of another COVID-19 outbreak or pandemic.
- Use electronic paperwork where practical. If a signature is required, discuss providing a confirmation email instead, or take a photo of the goods onsite as proof of delivery.
- Avoid physical cash donations through use of contactless payment methods.
- Regularly review your systems of work to ensure they are consistent with current directions and advice provided by health authorities.
- This checklist is a key part of the Plan as outlined on the WorkSafe website.
- Publicly display this signed checklist as evidence that you are a COVID Safe place of worship.
- Keep up to date and find additional guidance at www.covid19.qld.gov.au & www.worksafe.qld.gov.au.
- Employees with a general work-related complaint can call WHS Queensland on 1300 362 128.
- Business owners that would like to better understand their WHS duties regarding COVID-19 can call 1300 005 018.
- Attendees who have concerns about whether a place of worship is complying with this checklist can call 134COVID (13 42 68).

Name of person(s) conducting business or undertaking as defined in the Work Health & Safety Act 2011	
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Appendix 2: Daily Checklist

This checklist is to be completed each day that a place of worship is open.

- All areas frequented by staff and/or attendees have been cleaned with detergent or disinfectant.
- Staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands thoroughly with soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves.
- Staff and faith leaders have been provided with or otherwise have access to sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to fulfil requirements outlined in the Industry Safe Plan.
- Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned before and after each worship service using either detergent and water, a disinfectant solution or disinfectant wipes.
- Sufficient waste disposal facilities are available in the venue and are emptied regularly.
- Toilet facilities are clean and have a sufficient supply of soap, running water, and paper towels or a hand dryer at all times.
- Toilet and ablution facilities are cleaned regularly, several times per day.
- Adequate ventilation is maintained throughout the place of worship.
- Communal areas have been cleaned in accordance with of the [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland COVID-19 Guide](#).
- An individual or team managing these requirements is on site.
- Contact information is kept for patrons, contractors and staff. This information must include full name, phone number, email (or residential address where the person does not have an email account), date and time of entry, exit time or estimated period, where feasible. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated timeframe. The information should be readily available to ensure your place of worship/organisation can fulfil this request.
- Signage on physical distancing, health measures, maximum occupancy and movement (e.g. entry/exit) is clearly visible.

Appendix 3: Statement of Compliance

Print this page, sign and date it and post it in a public place in your place of worship.



Statement of Compliance

This site is operating in compliance
with the Public Health Directions

Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and
Undertakings Direction

A copy of the COVID Safe Industry Plan may be found at
www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/covid-safe-businesses

- This is a COVID Safe site.
- Contact details are required for tracing purposes upon entry.*
- Practice physical distancing.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Follow the rules and keep us all safe.

Signed by: _____
(Authorised business representative)

Date: _____

* This does not apply to deliveries, patrons purchasing items over the counter or takeaway.

COVID19.qld.gov.au

