

CHECKLIST: Physical distancing

This checklist will assist you to implement physical distancing measures at your workplace. Don't forget to also check our [COVID-19 website](#) for additional measures for your industry.

One person per 4 square metres

Calculate the number of people you can have in an enclosed space at any one time.

- Do a walk through of your workplace with a tape measure and write down the dimensions of all enclosed spaces.
- Calculate the area of each enclosed space by multiplying the length of the space in metres by its width in metres.
- Divide the calculated area by 4. The result is the number of workers you can have in a space to allow for at least 4 square metres of space per person.

For example:

*Length = 5 metres, Width = 10 metres
Area in square metres: $5 \times 10 = 50$
Maximum number of people: $50 \div 4 = 12.5$.
Round it down to 12.*

Is it reasonably practicable for you to provide 4 square metres of space per person?

- Consider how many people are usually present in the enclosed area at any one time. Is this more or less than the number you calculated above?
- If the calculated number is less than the number of people in the workplace, can you reduce the number of people in the enclosed space by:
 - reducing the number of work tasks in the enclosed space
 - postponing non-essential work
 - facilitating working from home
 - modifying work tasks

- splitting workers' shifts to reduce the number of workers onsite at any given time
- restricting access to the enclosed space to essential workers and/or others
- staggering entry into the workplace by customers or clients
- Are there any considerations you need to take into account regarding worker numbers?

For example:

Child to carer ratios, the minimum number of workers required to carry out a task or operate plant or equipment safely.

- Have you consulted with workers and relevant health and safety representatives on implementing this control measure? You have a duty to consult with workers when they are likely to be or are directly affected by a situation involving their health and safety.

What if it is not reasonably practicable to provide 4 square metres of space per person?

- Can you still implement measures that increase the square meterage each person has?
- Implement other control measures to reduce exposure to COVID-19 (e.g 1.5m physical distance between each person).

How to implement measures to achieve 1.5m distance between each person

Identify all the situations, tasks and processes where workers and others (clients, customers, contractors, visitors) interact closely with each other.

- What work tasks require workers to be close to each other?

For example:

Tasks involving safe lifting, working at heights in elevated platforms, conducting private meeting.

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- What are the situations where workers interact closely with customers or clients?

For example:

Customers at the cash register, child care workers, washing someone's hair over a basin.

- Does the layout of the workplace, including entry and exits, require workers and/or others to be close to each other?

For example:

Dining room tables in the break areas, office desks next to each other, data centre racks in close proximity.

- Do workers and/or customers or clients travel together in vehicles?

Identify the situations tasks and processes where it is reasonably practicable for workers and others to keep 1.5m away from each other.

- Can you change the layout of your workplace?

For example:

Can you move work stations and plant further apart? Can you restrict customer or client movement to a particular part of the workplace? 1.5m distancing includes both side to side and back to back.

- Can you modify the way workers and others interact with each other?

For example:

Can put in physical barriers that minimise contact between workers and others (e.g Perspex shield)

Is there a way to manage doorways more effectively to avoid congestion? (e.g. one door marked for entry only, the other for exits, or keeping some entrance doors open, if safe to do so).

- Can you modify how staff gather, meet and train together?

For example:

Use electronic communication such as tele and video conferencing for meetings and training. Ensure face-to-face time is limited.

- Can you modify the use of workplace facilities?

For example:

Reduce the number of workers utilising common areas at a given time by staggering meal breaks and start times.

- Review regular deliveries. Can you request contactless delivery? Check systems for e-invoicing are in place.

- Identify and address, so far as reasonably practicable, any other risks that may arise if workers and others are required to practice physical distancing.

- Have you consulted with workers and relevant health and safety representatives on implementing this control measure. You have a duty to consult with workers when they are likely to be or are directly affected by a situation involving their health and safety.

Put in place measures to communicate and remind workers of the need to practice physical distancing

- Put signs around the workplace and create wall or floor markings to identify 1.5m distance. Your staff could wear a badge as a visual reminder to themselves and each other

- Provide physical distancing markers on the floor in areas where customers line up or where workers perform tasks.

Close contact work tasks

You may have particular work tasks that, due to their nature of the work or for work health and safety reasons, can only be performed if workers are in close contact.

Identify and implement measures to reduce the amount of time workers spend in close contact.

- Is the work task essential? Can it be postponed?

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- What measures can you put in place to reduce the amount of time workers spend in close contact. Can you:
 - minimise the number of people within an area at any time?
 - stagger start, finish and break times where appropriate?
 - move work tasks to different areas of the workplace or off-site if possible?
 - separate workers into dedicated teams and have them work the same shift or work in a particular area?
 - provide each worker or the dedicated team their own equipment or tools?
- Have you consulted with workers and relevant health and safety representatives on implementing this control measure? You have a duty to consult with workers when they are likely to be or are directly affected by a situation involving their health and safety.

For more resources:

Visit the Safe Work Australia website swa.gov.au/coronavirus

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Have you considered and implemented measures to limit the amount of time workers will spend in close contact?
- If yes, will workers, despite other control measures, be in close contact with each other or with other people for longer than the recommended time (i.e more than 15 minutes face to face cumulative over the course of a week or more than 2 hours in a shared closed space)?
- If yes consider the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes respirators with positive airflow and disposable gloves.
- Workers must be trained in the proper use of PPE. Be aware of WHS risks that may arise as a result of workers using and wearing PPE.