



Apartment Living & COVID-19 Best Practice Guideline

BUILDING MANAGERS

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease spread between people who are in close contact with one another. Apartment buildings and other shared living spaces pose the potential risk of an infected resident spreading the virus to other residents. This is also known as community spread.

Building managers are a strata community's frontline defence and an essential service. It is vitally important that you and/or your company prepare your own contingency plan in case you and/or 40% of your staff contract the virus. The show must go on and how will you see that it can?

COVID-19 for Building Managers

If you haven't already, develop a Pandemic Plan

While planning for a pandemic should begin at the corporate level of any business, a successful approach must involve representatives not only from management, but from human resources, communications, IT, legal and compliance and facilities management.

Taking the Government's latest advice and looking carefully at your role as the building manager, consider how services will be delivered to the building and what your role is in the delivery of services, how you will continue to provide access to the buildings you have responsibilities for by considering:

- » Which building systems are mission-critical for your building:
 - » Waste collection services
 - » Car stackers
 - » Cleaning & caretaking of the building (including disinfectant cleans)
 - » ESM – Fire Safety Inspections and Servicing
 - » Utilities – Common Power, Water and Gas
 - » Lift Maintenance and Servicing
 - » Garage Door Preventative Servicing
 - » Sump Pump Servicing
 - » Bulk Hot Water System Servicing
 - » Plumbing
 - » Emergency Works – Burst Pipes, Weather and Accidental Damage, Roof Repairs, Hot Water System Replacement/Repairs
- » What is the bare minimum staff required to support the building operations?
- » Which staff are currently trained to operate critical systems and what specific skills make them qualified?
- » Which if any critical building operations can be managed remotely? Can other systems be upgraded to allow remote operations, and if so, what would these upgrades cost?
- » What would happen if any given facility had to be closed because of quarantine or staff shortages?
- » Which employees perform tasks that cannot be performed off-site, and where are these employees located?

The answers to these questions will go a long way toward forming the basis of a pandemic plan.

Currently in ACT, the following work is classified as essential:

- » urgent repair and maintenance services, including plumbing, electrical and heating repair ([see Construction Sector - information for industry](#)).

In an office building where the work is necessary for the normal operation of an essential business, activity or undertaking:

- » A person is not allowed to work outside of their residence unless providing an urgent an essential service which cannot be undertaken in their residence.
- » Administrative services provided by an employer to enable its employees to work from home are an essential activity.

Visit <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/lockdown#Business-support> to see the full list of what is classified as essential work.

It is likely they will point to a number of key action steps that include:

- » Preparing now to cross-train employees within the facility department to cover one another's responsibilities.
- » Ensuring front line staff do the [Department of Health coronavirus training online course](#).
- » Collaborating with other companies or sites to provide cross-training for facilities support functions.
- » Developing contingency plans for the acquisition of crucial supplies should delivery schedules be disrupted, or for the advance purchase of bulk supplies.
- » The development of "how to" notes describing step-by-step execution of critical tasks.
- » Preparing for a building to be shut down.
- » Sourcing reliable best practice guides from around the world including peak body association guides:

WorkSafe Cleaning Checklist

https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1554184/Fact-Sheet-WorkSafe-Cleaning-Checklist.pdf

Pandemic planning should include any Government directives and address interventions from:

- » Minor - whether and when to close coffee stations and water coolers.
- » Extreme - building lockdown - how to equip a facility with days or weeks' worth of supplies in case key employees need to quarantine themselves inside.
- » Map your dependencies to understand where disruptions might impact your development remembering your building is at maximum capacity. For example:
 - » Greater parcel delivery
 - » More visitors and parking
 - » How mail is delivered
 - » How a confirmed case will impact
 - » Access to emergency services

The virus can spread from person to person through:

- » close contact with an infectious person, including in the 24 hours before they started showing symptoms
- » contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- » touching objects or surfaces that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person and then touching your mouth or face.
- » Review the preparedness of your critical third parties based on your building systems mission-critical assessment above and write to each service asking for their pandemic plan to see if their services to you be impacted, especially if you have a confirmed case.

- » Create a communication platform to inform residents. This could be as simple as a daily or weekly bulletin in the lobby or using technology platforms.
 - » Platforms should be push notifications only, shut down chat features.
 - » Remind people to be kind, you will see all extremes of humanity, it's a hugely stressful and anxious time for everyone, and a bit of positivity and kindness goes a long way.
 - » Do you have the resources to undertake the extra communication?
- » Create a communication plan to suppliers if you are advised of a confirmed case.
- » Communications plans should be spelled out well in advance, and email lists established for all staff, suppliers, and contractors. You need to know what their pandemic plans are.
- » Expect the unexpected, things that wouldn't even occur to you, like people exercising in fire stairwells, and completely ignoring the rules (i.e., parties in the pool area, BBQ's etc).
- » Consider the "Perfect Storm" and plan accordingly (power failure, fire, flood) as well as your building becoming a virus hub.
- » List the common areas most at risk for contamination and submit a management strategy for each area. For example, some things to think about are below:

MASKS

Updated 12/8/2021 - During the period of the lockdown, face masks must be worn at all times upon leaving home for everyone who is aged 12 years and over.

Risk Area	Risk Control	Action
On-site staff Surface Contamination Social Gathering	Remove front desk access Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing	Signage to indicate how the on-site staff can be communicated with.
CONTRACTORS Safe work site	Responsibility to maintain a safe worksite when contractors are engaged to work on the common property. Maintain social distancing from contractors working on site. Contractors to use PPE Potential threat of coming into contact with the virus. No entry to any contractors with COVID 19 symptoms, however mild. Provide evidence that they have completed Department of Health coronavirus training online	Committee to avoid contact or approaching trades persons when on site. Work orders to be issued by Committee or strata community management company; continue to require Safe Work Method Statements, which will now include additional processes including PPE and social distancing measures. Instruct all trades to operate as if someone with COVID-19 resides on site. If the strata community is notified of a person who has tested positive to the virus all contractors must be notified.
TOILET & SHOWERS Surface Contamination Social Gathering	Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing Consider shutting down the facilities	Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime. Notify residents of protocols established and reason for same. Affix signs in area of facility.
FRONT DOOR Surface Contamination Social Gathering	Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing	Authorise and arrange increased cleaning regime; to at least daily or more if high use and/or high infection rate. Consider spray bottle with a light bleach solution to be located at each entry point and signage asking each person who enters to spray and wipe the handle Encourage residents to implement social distancing requirements.
DOOR HANDLES Surface Contamination	Increase cleaning schedule	Authorise and arrange additional cleaning to at least daily or more if a high use area with increased risk of higher infection rate. Consider spray bottle with a light bleach solution to be located at each entry point and signage asking each person who enters to spray and wipe the handle
INTERCOM SYSTEM Surface Contamination Social Gathering From 12/08/2021 Stay home orders in in place	Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing	Consider hand sanitizer in lobby, request in interest of all that it not be removed. Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime.

Risk Area	Risk Control	Action
<p>LIFT ACCESS Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p>From 12/08/2021 Stay home orders in in place</p>	<p>Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing</p>	<p>Consider hand sanitizer in lobby and lift, request for the interest of all that it not be removed.</p> <p>Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime to at least daily or more if high use and/or high infection rate</p> <p>Encourage residents to implement social distancing requirements.</p> <p>Signage to restrict access to lift to one or two persons based on 1.5 m separation.</p> <p>Mandatory mask wearing for those 12 and over in lift.</p>
<p>VENTILATION/AIR CONDITIONING Airborne contaminants</p> <p>From 12/08/2021 Stay home orders in in place</p>	<p>Increase cleaning schedule Mandatory hot wash of filters</p> <p>Check if HEPA filters, consider upgrade if not.</p> <p>Advice on improving ventilation https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/Improving-Ventilation-Home.html</p>	<p>Consider undertaking a review of ventilation (fresh air) rates – increase fresh air rates if possible, to corridors & lobby areas</p>
<p>SHARED LAUNDRY</p> <p>From 12/08/2021 Stay home orders in in place</p>	<p>Increase cleaning schedule Mandatory hot wash</p>	<p>Create a sign or multiple signs and place around Laundry to wash their hands before and after using laundry facility, to use detergent and hot water wash and recommend using the dryer to finish.</p> <p>Consider hand sanitizer in room, request for the interest of all that it not be removed.</p> <p>Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime to at least daily or more if high use and/or high infection rate.</p> <p>Encourage residents to implement social distancing requirements. A booking system could be implemented to regulate numbers.</p> <p>Mandatory mask wearing for those 12 and over in shared laundry</p>

Risk Area	Risk Control	Action
<p>WASTE ROOMS and CHUTES Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p style="color: red;">From 12/08/2021 Stay home orders in place</p>	<p>Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing</p>	<p>Install signage. Consider hand sanitizer in waste rooms, request for the interest of all that it not be removed. Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime to at least daily or more if high use and/or high infection rate Encourage residents to implement social distancing requirements. If COVID 19 present in the building, consider a separate area for contaminated waste to be stored prior to pick up. Consider a dedicated COVID 19 wheelie bin – leave outside the apartment door at a designated time and remove and quarantine for pick up to dedicated bin room. Mandatory mask wearing for those 12 and over using waste room or taking out garbage.</p>
<p>PLUMBING Surface Contamination</p> <p style="color: red;">Emergency plumbing considered essential service from 12/08/21</p>	<p>Use of substitute paper products as toilet paper e.g., Newspaper, tissues or serviettes is to be discouraged Potential blockages, increasing health concerns and access to services</p>	<p>Convey concerns to all residents of potential problems and how it will impact them and ask them to comply. Notify contractors you will need to engage to fix problems that arise. There is a high risk to a plumber who must clear blocked sewer pipe. Needs to be advised if there is a positive case. Keep floor drains and sinks in bathrooms, basements, garages areas filled with water to keep the P-traps full at least once per month. Contractors to wear PPE.</p>
<p>VISITORS Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p style="color: red;">Visitors are not permitted from 12/08/2021</p>	<p>Maintain social distancing from contractors working on site. Potential threat of coming into contact with the virus.</p>	<p>Basic premise is “do not enter stay outside the door” Signage required for specific instructions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Delivery of goods » Australia Post » Visitors – only essential visitors, no more than 2 people. <p>Consider basic instructions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » No entry – resident comes to door and receives the service outside » Entry – resident touches doors and lift buttons not visitor

Risk Area	Risk Control	Action
<p>MOVE IN/ MOVE OUT Surface Contamination</p> <p>Furniture removalists, but only where moves cannot be reasonably delayed from 12/08/2021. Recommend visiting https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/lockdown</p>	<p>Only necessary moves should take place</p> <p>Removalists to comply with building entry and exit sanitizing procedures</p> <p>Social distancing applies in all building spaces, including the lifts</p> <p>No entry to any contractors with COVID 19 symptoms, however mild</p> <p>Increase cleaning schedule after each move, including the apartment level</p>	<p>Move in/out booking form should include COVID 19 status of the resident moving on or out.</p> <p>If confirmed COVID 19 in either case a “Environmental Clean” is required. See Department of Health guidelines</p> <p>If not confirmed, then light bleach solution clean of all touch points used throughout the move area.</p>
<p>EMERGENCY SERVICES Surface Contamination</p> <p>Recommend visiting https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/lockdown</p>	<p>Not subject to the Contractor regime</p> <p>Un-feted access required</p>	<p>If confirmed COVID 19 a “Environmental Clean” is required. See Department of Health guidelines</p>
<p>GYM Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p>From 12/08/2021 Close the Gym</p>	<p>Inform users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » to wipe down equipment with disinfectant before and after use, » shower after exercising at the gym, » sit on their own towels, » wipe sweat with a disposable paper towel and wash their hands after. » stay home if they don’t feel well. <p>Consider closing the facility; be guided by Government directives.</p>	<p>Create a sign or multiple signs and place around Gym to wash their hands before and after their workout sessions and other relevant protocols established.</p> <p>Can add hand sanitizer</p> <p>If you have a cleaner, arrange to have the gym and equipment cleaned more frequently.</p> <p>Door could be left open to increase ventilation, if safe to do so.</p> <p>Notify residents of and reasons for closure if this decision is made. Affix signs to advise of closure also.</p>
<p>POOL Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p>From 12/08/2021 Close the Pool</p> <p>Continue maintenance of the pool – legal requirement.</p>	<p>Inform users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » that use of pool is at their own risk » to shower before use » stay in their apartment if they don’t feel well. » implement social distancing with other users » sit on their own towels » wipe sweat with a disposable paper towel, dispose of correctly and wash their hands after. » exercise social distancing » increase cleaning schedule <p>Consider closing the facilities; be guided by Government advice.</p>	<p>Create a sign or multiple signs and place around Pool area notifying residents of established protocols</p> <p>Notify residents of and reasons for closure and affix signs advising of same.</p>

Risk Area	Risk Control	Action
<p>BBQ & COMMUNITY AREA Surface Contamination Social Gathering</p> <p style="color: red;">From 12/08/2021 Close the Area</p>	<p>Increase cleaning schedule Exercise social distancing Consider closure of the facility</p>	<p>Authorise and arrange additional cleaning regime. Notify residents of protocols established for use. And/or notify residents of and reasons for closure if this decision is made. Affix signs to advise of protocols established or closure of facility.</p>
<p>COMMITTEE MEETINGS Surface contaminants Social Gathering</p> <p style="color: red;">From 12/08/2021 Committee Meetings must be held remotely.</p>	<p>Exercise social distancing Wipe down tables, chairs etc. before and after use of committee meeting area Request a Committee Member not attend if they have travelled overseas recently, been in contact with someone who has, or has been in contact with someone who has contracted the virus or is known to have symptoms or has the virus themselves. Consider alternative means of communicating to make decisions.</p>	<p>Notify Committee members of the protocols established and request they comply. Consider alternative meeting solutions like Skype, ZOOM or telephone for discussion then use email ballots to capture decisions and create record.</p>
<p>GENERAL MEETINGS Surface contaminants Social Gathering</p> <p style="color: red;">From 12/08/2021 General Meetings must be held remotely.</p>	<p>Exercise social distancing Wipe down tables, chairs etc. before and after use of meeting area. Request Members not attend if they have travelled overseas recently, been in contact with someone who has, or has been in contact with someone who has contracted the virus or is known to have symptoms or has the virus themselves. Consider alternative means of communication and decision making. Consider deferring meeting.</p>	<p>Notify all lot owners of protocols established and request they comply. Consider other solutions like Skype, ZOOM, Voting on-line platforms, postal ballots etc</p>

This publication is only a guide. Readers should make and rely on their own expert enquiries. No warranty is given about the accuracy of the material and no liability for negligence or otherwise is assumed by SCA, its servants or agents in any way connected with this publication.

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Please visit [Government Websites for regular updates.](#)

Government Information – Useful Links

COVID-19 ACT Government Updates

Website

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

Business Support and Restrictions

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/lockdown>

Face Mask Requirements

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/face-masks>

COVID-19 exposure locations in the ACT

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/act-covid-19-exposure-locations>

ACT Public Health Directions

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/act-status-and-response/act-public-health-directions>

Other Resources – Useful Links

<https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/>

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/>

<https://www.act.gov.au/business/business-support/covid-19-economic-support-for-business>

<https://business.gov.au/risk-management/emergency-management/coronavirus-information-and-support-for-business/keep-you-and-your-employees-safe-during-covid-19>

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/09/coronavirus-covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-for-employees-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf>



**Have a question?
Looking for advice**

COVID-19 helpline

► Call **(02) 6207 7244**
from 8am-8pm daily.

Access Canberra Business Liaison Line

► Call **(02) 6205 0900** to discuss your
business needs.

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