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| f  Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency Accommodation program  Last updated 6 May 2020 |



The coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency Accommodation (CEA) program provides hygienic, safe and secure accommodation for Victorian frontline workers who are required to self-isolate or quarantine, should they be unable to do so in their home.

## How will the program work?

If you are required to self-isolate or quarantine the CEA program will organise, in partnership with your employer, suitable accommodation within the Melbourne CBD or other metropolitan and regional areas. Workers will be accommodated, where possible, within reasonable proximity to their usual home or workplace. Workers cannot choose their accommodation or the rating of the accommodation they will be provided.

Accommodation will also be available to frontline hospital and paramedic workers regularly operating in an environment with consistent exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) patients who require accommodation on compassionate grounds and who cannot safely quarantine at home because they live with people who are at-risk or other healthcare workers.

## Who is eligible for CEA emergency accommodation support?

The following frontline workers are eligible for emergency accommodation support in three categories:

* + Public and private hospital clinical or non-clinical healthcare workers
  + Paramedics and patient transport officers
  + Frontline workers in hospital laboratories
  + Victoria Police workforce
  + Youth Justice workforce
  + Metropolitan Fire Brigade officers
  + Country Fire Authority Emergency Medical Response officers
  + Victoria Corrections workforce
  + Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation workforce
  + Frontline workers in supported accommodation for people with a disability
  + Public sector residential aged care workforce
  + Community based pharmacy workforce
  + Workers in primary care settings
* **Category 1:** Frontline workers with **unprotected exposure to coronavirus** (COVID-19) or who have been directed to quarantine by their employer and who cannot safely quarantine at home.

**Category 2:** Frontline workers who have a **confirmed diagnosis** of coronavirus (COVID-19) and who cannot safely self-isolate at home.

**Category 3:** Frontline hospital and paramedic workers regularly operating in an environment with **consistent exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) patients** and require accommodation on compassionate grounds, or those who cannot safely quarantine at home because they live with people who are at-risk or are other healthcare workers. All categories include non-clinical hospital staff such as orderlies, clerks, food services staff and cleaners who work on hospital wards. Emergency accommodation is only available for the frontline worker, not for their family members or housemates.

## When do workers have to quarantine or self-isolate?

Consistent with public health advice, quarantine is required for a period of 14 days if there is close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

If the recommended infection control precautions have been taken while caring for a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as using the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), it is **not** considered to be a close contact and quarantine is **not required**. Refer to [COVID-19-Guidelines for health services and general practitioners](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-services-and-general-practitioners-coronavirus-disease-covid-19) for the complete definition of close contact.

If a worker has been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) they must go into self-isolation. The department will advise when a confirmed case can be released from self-isolation.

For healthcare workers choosing to self-distance due to consistent exposure to COVID-19 patients (category 3) there is no set time and should be decided in conjunction with the healthcare organisation’s human resources lead.

## When is accommodation unsuitable for self-isolation or quarantine?

The home environment may not be suitable for self-isolation or quarantine if the worker lives with people identified in an at-risk group, such as:

* people over 65 years of age
* people who are immunosuppressed or have an underlying chronic health condition
* pregnant women, particularly from 28 weeks gestation
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The home environment may also be unsuitable for self-isolation or quarantine if the worker shares a house with other frontline workers.

## How will frontline workers access the CEA emergency accommodation?

Frontline workers employed by a Health Service, Ambulance Victoria, Corrections Victoria, Youth Justice, Victoria Police, Metropolitan Fire Brigade or Country Fire Authority Emergency Medical Response officers, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS), or are part of the public sector residential aged care workforce or working in supported accommodation for people with a disability can access this program through your direct line manager or your Human Resources department who will assess your eligibility and directly arrange your emergency accommodation.

If you are small organisation or practice without an in-house Human Resources team or a sole practitioner or trader in community-based pharmacy or primary care settings, please call 1800 675 398 and press the option for accommodation.

## Is it mandatory for frontline workers to access the CEA emergency accommodation?

Participation in the program is voluntary, unlike airport arrivals who are subject to a mandatory quarantine direction. This program is for frontline workers who cannot safely quarantine or self-isolate at home.

Frontline workers can choose to self-isolate or quarantine in their own home with extra precautions in place to manage the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission to others.

## Are there activity restrictions?

Workers in quarantine cannot:

* leave that place except in an emergency
* allow other people into the accommodation
* be closer than 1.5 metres to others.

Healthcare workers in emergency accommodation for an extended period, under compassionate grounds, are not considered to be in quarantine but are required to follow the guidance and directives relating to restricted activity, staying at home and physical distancing. Further information is available at [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au).

## How will food be provided to those in isolation?

For those in quarantine, the hotel will provide you with three meals a day, delivered to your door. You will also have standard hotel cleaning services.

If we place you in other hotels where meals cannot be provided, we will work with the relevant employer and accommodation provider to determine if food or other supplies are needed and how best to deliver these.

Allergies and special dietary needs will be met.

In accommodation where room service is available, you can order it at your own expense.

Healthcare workers in emergency accommodation for an extended period, under compassionate grounds, are not considered to be in quarantine and will be placed in accommodation where they are able to self-cater.

## Can family or friends visit?

To limit any risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, workers should not visit family or friends, or have family or friends visit them at the emergency accommodation.

If diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19), the worker must not allow any visitors to the emergency accommodation unless for emergency purposes.

## Will frontline workers still attend work while in emergency accommodation?

Frontline workers falling within category one or two are not permitted to attend work while they are in emergency accommodation in order to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus (COVID-19) to patients or other workers.

Healthcare and paramedic workers falling within category three will be able to continue to attend work.

## Can I leave the accommodation program?

Frontline workers are required to quarantine for 14 days after close contact of a confirmed or suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

If workers are confirmed to have coronavirus (COVID-19) and move into emergency accommodation, they must complete self-isolation in the accommodation, unless those premises become unsuitable. The [guideline for health services and general practitioners](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-services-and-general-practitioners-coronavirus-disease-covid-19) contains information about return-to-work criteria for confirmed cases.

Frontline workers who are in self-isolation because they have tested positive may feel well and not have any symptoms. If they become unwell while in self-isolation, they should seek medical care and advice.

## How can I access health and wellbeing support during my stay?

The Department of Health and Human Services will provide the employer with hard copy or links to material of a general nature regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) and self-isolation or quarantine. The department will not provide any additional welfare checks, health checks or social supports as part of the CEA program.

Employers are encouraged to facilitate access to relevant health and wellbeing supports while in self-isolation or quarantine whether the worker chooses to self-isolate/quarantine at home or at a hotel.

Workers should monitor their own health and wellbeing and seek medical attention if needed.

## Additional information

For more information and guidance, and for the latest updates, visit the Department of Health and Human Services website: [dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)

Information for employers is available on the Australian Government Department of Health website: [health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources)