This is a general guidance document created by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on safe practices for the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program. This guidance is directed to accredited providers, to ensure that they take appropriate measures to manage risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19). These include risks arising from the activities done on their behalf or under contract by their contractors (including lead generators).

The guidance presented here is intended to complement other government advice and risk assessments conducted by each business. It will assist VEU program participants to prepare their businesses to carry out VEU activities, as well as put in place measures to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**DELWP strongly recommends that all accredited providers do their own risk assessment and planning to address individual circumstances – and ensure that their contractors have also implemented appropriate risk management measures.**


Information for workplaces is also available from Safe Work Australia and Worksafe Victoria:


The ‘Further Information’ section of this document provides useful references on a range of topics. It is recommended that these references are reviewed and considered by program participants when they are conducting their risk assessments.

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A coronavirus infection can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. The most common symptoms reported are:

- Fever
- Chills or sweats
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Runny nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste.

In certain circumstances, headache, muscle soreness, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea may also be considered.

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1 This document is based upon the WorkSafe Victoria – Managing the risk of COVID-19 exposure: Construction industry. Last Updated – Friday 17 Apr 2020


2 Refer to ‘Further Information’ at the end of this document.
Suspension or restriction of VEU program activities

The Victorian Government has implemented a wide range of measures to protect public health and slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). All accredited providers and their contractors (including installers and lead generators) must abide by the Victorian Government's public health directions released by Victoria’s Chief Health Officer. They should also be mindful of any instructions or policies provided by DELWP, and follow any information or requirements released by the Essential Services Commission for the Victorian Energy Upgrades program. Further notification about program activities will be provided on www.energy.vic.gov.au/energy-efficiency/victorian-energy-upgrades.

This guidance document sets out the key steps and considerations for risk identification and management that are expected of all accredited providers, installers and lead generators involved in delivering upgrades under the program.

In addition, all program participants are expected to have done their own risk assessment before undertaking any activities.

Face-to-face marketing and delivery of VEU program activities

To maintain physical distancing and to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, the use of doorknocking as a form of lead generation or sales in the VEU program should not occur.

In many cases, accredited providers contract installers and lead generators to approach households and businesses with upgrade offers and to undertake installations. It is understood that accredited providers use a range of lead generation techniques to contact eligible consumers, including through television, print and online advertising, telemarketing and doorknocking.

From 11.59pm on Wednesday 22 July, all providers who continue to deliver allowed VEU activities in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire, must wear a face covering when conducting these activities.

Risk management responsibility rests with accredited providers and their contractors and agents.
General advice for managing risks in the Victorian Energy Upgrades program

The VEU program is a Victorian Government initiative that provides discounted energy saving products and services to households and businesses through accredited providers who are private businesses not directly contracted by the government. Accredited providers deliver energy efficiency upgrades to large numbers of Victorian households and businesses each year – these are provided at a discounted rate, and are free in some circumstances due to the incentives available through the program.

Identifying risks at workplace and upgrade sites

Protecting employees

Due to working in proximity to other people and the potential to encounter potentially contaminated surfaces, steps must be taken to reduce the risks of exposure for employees delivering Victorian Energy Upgrades activities.

All employers have a duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. This includes preventing, and where prevention is not possible, reducing risk of transmission.

Employers must identify the level of risk to the health of employees at their workplace(s). This must be done in consultation with health and safety representatives (HSRs), if any, and employees, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care of their own and others’ health and safety in the workplace and cooperate with their employers about any action they take to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act) or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations).

More information about employer and employee obligations is set out below (see Legal duties).

Key issues for consideration

Some activities that may pose a risk – for both employees and customers – can include:

- Entering household and business premises, including touching surfaces
- Collecting signatures
- Travelling in vehicles
- Work that requires close contact with others
- Using shared tools or equipment
- Sharing facilities such as computers, phones, bathrooms, kitchens and communal break areas.

It is recommended employers complete their own risk assessment and develop tailored COVIDSafe plans for all VEU activities they deliver or participate in.

Where possible, all upgrade activities should be confirmed before arriving at the premises to enable appropriate screening to be completed, as outlined below in the section on controlling risks.
Planning ahead to ensure protection for households and businesses

Making sure appropriate protections are in place for employees will also help to reduce exposure risks for members of the public at upgrade sites and in the broader community. This will be important in ensuring community confidence in the VEU program and the work practices of accredited providers and their contractors (including installers and lead generators).

There are specific issues that should be considered as part of risk identification and assessment to ensure protection for households and businesses receiving VEU program upgrades, such as:

- Screening processes that fully consider employees and consumers
- Implementing physical distancing requirements, including isolating work areas if practicable
- Timing activities to reduce exposure risks
- Appropriate hygiene and cleaning practices
- Documentation and record keeping that enables detailed contact tracing.

There is an expectation that accredited providers and their agents will actively consider community safety as part of their risk assessment.

Controlling risks

Employers have a duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. This includes preventing, and where prevention is not possible, reducing the risk of transmission.

Employee screening

Employers should implement a screening process to minimise the potential transmission through Victorian Energy Upgrades program activities.

- For example, by asking employees at the start of their shift if they have travelled, been in contact with any confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) or if they have flu-like symptoms, fevers, chills, sweats, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, or loss of sense of smell.

To ensure person-to-person contact is minimised, screening should be done over the phone or by other non-contact methods.

Workplace mapping

In the event of an employee being confirmed as having coronavirus (COVID-19), those who are potentially affected need to be quickly identified.

Employers should implement processes to record the schedule and work locations for all employees (including contractors), that enables tracing of those who have come into contact with the confirmed case.

The record should include:

- The day and time work was done
- The members of teams that worked together
- Specific details on households and businesses interacted with
- Any breaks taken, including time and location
- Details of movement between premises.

It is recommended that all employees have the COVIDSafep app installed on their phone.
Consumer Screening

Prior to employees entering a premise to complete an upgrade activity, they should ask if the consumer or anyone at the premises has travelled, been in contact with any confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), are awaiting a test result, have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19) or been told to isolate because they are a close contact, have flu-like symptoms (fevers, chillis, sweats, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, or loss of sense of smell) or are self-isolating due to age or vulnerability.

*If the consumer answers yes to any of these questions, an upgrade should not take place.*

To ensure person-to-person contact is minimised, screening should be done over the phone or by other non-contact methods. If doorknocking occurs, physical distance and hygiene measures must be observed.

It is recommended that during this screening, the employee outlines what the upgrade entails and the health and safety measures that will be in place to minimise the need for face-to-face explanation.

For door-to-door activity

*To maintain physical distancing and to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission, the use of doorknocking as a form of lead generation or sales in the VEU program should not occur.*

Physical distancing

Physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres should be implemented. Employers should consider each work task and whether there is a safe alternative way to do the work with an increased distance between employees and consumers.

- Mark safe distances in work, transit and break areas (e.g. on floors and walls)
- Consider different shift patterns to minimise the number of employees onsite (e.g. AM/PM shifts)
- Stagger start times, breaks and finish times to avoid congestion in high traffic areas and minimise employees coming into contact with each other
- Install temporary physical barriers (e.g. fences, screens) between work areas, where appropriate.

Maintaining appropriate physical distancing should be done at all times. Where it is not possible to do work tasks while maintaining physical distancing, other control measures need to be implemented. For example:

- Minimise the number of person-to-person interactions that need to be completed within 1.5 metres
- Minimise the number of individuals involved in activities that need to occur within 1.5 metres of each other
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. gloves, masks, glasses).

More information about the safe use of PPE is set out below.

When scheduling an appointment, it is important to notify the consumer of physical distancing requirements in advance. For example:

- Request all people maintain as much distance as possible during the appointment
- Request that where possible, a minimum number of people are at the premises during the appointment

Hygiene

- Ensure all employees follow good hygiene practices, including washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, covering coughs and sneezes, or coughing into their elbow or shoulder and avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth
- Display hygiene information in prominent locations at business and warehouse sites such as break rooms, site offices, toilets, foyers, lifts and site entrances
Provide hand sanitiser to all off-site employees and contractors, and at business entrances and exits, amenities, vehicles and other high-traffic areas of the business. Communicate with staff about hand sanitiser locations and encourage regular use. Employers must ensure that employees have access to appropriate amenities.

Amenities need to include:
- Hand washing facilities (whether permanent or temporary), such as a wash basin, clean running water, soap and paper towels, placed in strategic locations to ensure employees can access them in a timely manner. Ensure these facilities are well stocked and properly maintained
- Access to hand sanitiser
- Rubbish bins with touch-free lids (e.g. foot pedal bins)
- Thorough and regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces
- Appropriate waste management systems
- Provide signage that communicates safe hygiene practices

While completing installations at private premises, employees should attempt to minimise the need to use on-site amenities. This can be done by:
- Vehicle hand washing facilities (where possible), such as clean water, soap and paper towels
- Always carrying and using hand sanitiser
- Safely removing all rubbish including PPE in enclosed disposable bags for safe disposal off site.

**Personal protective equipment**

From 11.59pm on Wednesday 22 July, if you live in metropolitan Melbourne or Mitchell Shire you must wear a face covering when you leave home and when conducting VEU activities.

Any PPE that is provided by employers needs to be accompanied with information, instruction and training on the safe use, decontamination, maintenance and disposal of the equipment.

Any PPE provided needs to be practical for the work environment (e.g. allowing the necessary visibility and mobility) and properly decontaminated or disposed of at the end of every shift.

Employers should monitor and encourage correct use of PPE, for example by providing information on posters and digital screens about:
- Washing or sanitising hands before putting PPE on, and putting face protection on before gloves
- Removing gloves before face protection, washing or sanitising hands after removing PPE and decontaminating or disposing of used PPE safely.

For more information on this advice, visit the [Department of Health and Human Services website](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-covid-19).

**Shared tools, product and equipment**

Avoid the shared use of tools, product and equipment wherever possible. For example, phones, device touch screens, stationery, cameras, ladders and lights should not be used by more than one person.

Where it is not possible to eliminate shared use:
- Keep cleaning products with employees for use on tools, products and equipment at all times

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• Ensure all employees thoroughly wash or sanitise their hands at appropriate points during an upgrade activity
• Ensure all parts of tools, products and equipment (e.g. including handles, handrails) are wiped down before and after interaction
• Where possible, group employees, tools and equipment (e.g. vehicles) into the same shifts, so the same employees use the same equipment to limit the number of people who interact with each other and items.

The shared use of phones, desks, offices, computers and other devices should also be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible, these items should be regularly disinfected.

Cleaning ⁴

Thorough and regular cleaning needs to be done for all:
• Work areas (including surfaces touched during an upgrade activity at a private premises)
• Transit areas
• Communal and meal break areas
• Shared facilities (e.g. bathrooms and kitchens)
• Shared equipment and vehicles.

Cleaning needs to be conducted in accordance with the DHHS information on cleaning and disinfecting for businesses and construction sites.

Collecting signatures

For each upgrade activity you must collect and maintain a Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificate (VEEC) assignment form, completed and signed by the employee (i.e. installer) and consumer. It is recommended that:
• The employee sanitises the pen, pencil, stylus and or touch screen device before and after use
• The employee safely washes or sanitises their hands before and after handling both the form and pen, pencil, stylus or touch screen device
• The employee recommends the consumer uses their own pen or pencil where appropriate
• The employee recommends the consumer safely washes or sanitises their hands before and after handling both the form and pen, pencil, stylus or touch screen device.

### Example table of risks and controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you need to do?</th>
<th>How will you do this?</th>
<th>When will it happen?</th>
<th>What supplies do you need?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering household and business premises, including touching surfaces</td>
<td>• Employee Screening</td>
<td>Prior to, during and after completing an activity</td>
<td>• Carry sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consumer Screening</td>
<td></td>
<td>• PPE if appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice safe hygiene</td>
<td></td>
<td>• COVIDSafe App</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Maintain physical distancing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Clean all surfaces, equipment etc before and after touching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Wear and safely dispose of PPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Install the COVIDSafe App</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work that requires close contact with others</td>
<td>• Avoid close contact where possible</td>
<td>Before, during and after interaction</td>
<td>Ensure employees have access to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employee Screening</td>
<td></td>
<td>• appropriate hygiene products including hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consumer Screening</td>
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<td>• COVIDSafe App</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Safe cleaning and hygiene practices</td>
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<td>• Wear and safely dispose of PPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Workplace mapping</td>
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<td>• Install the COVIDSafe App</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Group employees and stagger shift and break times where possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using shared tools or equipment</td>
<td>• Avoid sharing where possible</td>
<td>Before and after interaction</td>
<td>• Hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Thoroughly wash or sanitise hands</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure all parts of tools, products and equipment are wiped down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting signatures</td>
<td>• Wash/sanitise hands prior and after collecting signature</td>
<td>After completing an activity</td>
<td>• Carry sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use own pen etc to collect signature</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal stationery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sanitise pen etc prior and after collecting signature</td>
<td></td>
<td>• PPE if appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Recommend consumer follows steps above</td>
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<td>• COVIDSafe App</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Install the COVIDSafe App</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharing facilities such as computers, phones, bathrooms, kitchens and communal break areas</td>
<td>• Avoid sharing where possible</td>
<td>Before and after interaction</td>
<td>Appropriate:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cleaning in accordance with DHHS guidelines</td>
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<td>• cleaning supplies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure that employees have access to appropriate amenities</td>
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<td>• access to amenities, hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workplace Mapping</td>
<td></td>
<td>• COVIDSafe App</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Install the COVIDSafe App</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Signage outlining safe practices in communal areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Workplace signage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Staggered shifts and break times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelling in vehicles</td>
<td>• Clean vehicles before and after use</td>
<td>Prior to, during and after travelling in a vehicle</td>
<td>• Carry sanitiser and cleaning wipes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain physical distancing where possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vehicle hand washing facilities</td>
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<td>• Group employees and shifts to vehicles</td>
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<td>• Install the COVIDSafe App</td>
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</table>
What do to if an employee has coronavirus (COVID-19)

In the event of a suspected or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case, DHHS will contact the individual to identify the close contacts. If the employee has attended their workplace while they were infectious and had close contact with other employees, DHHS will contact the employer and advise what steps need to be taken.

Employers should establish a response plan and procedure for suspected and confirmed cases, which should include:

- Consultation and communication arrangements with employees, contractors and consumers including making sure contact details are up to date, complete and easily accessible
- Maintain workplace mapping information. All details must be up to date, complete and easily accessible
- Identify site locations for cleaning and disinfection
- Implement an appropriate cleaning and disinfection regime, which should be overseen by a competent person – for example, an occupational hygienist
- The competent person should advise that the cleaning and disinfection regime has occurred for re-entry to the affected areas
- Provide employees and contractors with relevant information prior to re-entering the site and resuming work
- Review and revise systems to ensure risks are effectively controlled, in consultation with HSRs and employees.

For further information for workplaces in the event of a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) case see www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace-covid-19

Ensure employees know what to do

If an employee develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) they should isolate themselves immediately, call the information line on 1800 675 398 and follow the self-isolation guidance available on the DHHS website.

An employer's duty to eliminate or reduce risks associated with exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19) so far as is reasonably practicable includes ensuring that:

- Employees know what to do or who to notify if they feel unwell or suspect they’ve been infected, according to the information provided by DHHS (see link below)
- Any unwell employee does not attend the workplace, including employees who have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) or who are confirmed cases.

Follow DHHS advice - https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au

Legal duties

Employers have duties under the OHS Act, which include that they must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees and independent contractors
- Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of employees and independent contractors
• Provide such information, instruction, training or supervision to employees and independent contractors as is necessary to enable those persons to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.
• Monitor the health of their employees.
• Monitor conditions at any workplace under their management and control.
• Provide information concerning health and safety to employees, including (where appropriate) in languages other than English.
• Ensure that persons other than their employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the employer’s undertaking.
• Consult with employees and HSRs (if any), on matters related to health or safety that directly affect or are likely to directly affect them.

Regardless of whether or not they are an employer for the purposes of the OHS Act, a person with management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace and the means of entering and leaving it are safe and without risks to health.

Employees also have duties under the OHS Act, which includes that they must:
• Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at a workplace.
• Co-operate with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with a requirement imposed by or under the OHS Act.

Further information

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au

Department of Health and Human Services - Cleaning and disinfecting to reduce coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission

Department of Health and Human Services - How do you define close contact?

Department of Health and Human Services - How does coronavirus (COVID-19) spread?

Department of Health and Human Services - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - coronavirus (COVID-19)

Master Electricians - Code of Practice for the Electrical Industry coronavirus (COVID-19)

National COVID-19 Coordination Commission COVIDSafe Plan

Safe Work Australia coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for workplaces

Worksafe Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Amendments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>First release</td>
<td>24 June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Clarification of doorknocking requirements and DHHS guidance on the use of face coverings</td>
<td>20 July 2020</td>
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