

## e-News March special edition

### Message from EO on behalf of the Committee CMAWA

Dear members, we realise you are all closely monitoring the rapidly changing landscape around COVID-19 and that you are each implementing some actions that will help reduce the risk of the exposure for yourself, team and customers.

CMAWA is committed to assist and support you throughout these trying times, so we will do our utmost to keep abreast of the latest news to help you, your families and your staff stay remain safe. Our aim is obviously to reduce the spread of the disease and witness low or minimal impact on business productivity for our members. The following information may be of assistance. Stay safe and look after yourselves.

Best regards Sheila Payne (Executive officer CMAWA)

### COVID –19

Under current legislation, employers are required to provide and maintain, as far as is practicable, a working environment in which their workers are not exposed to health risks. This includes situations where employees and contractors may be at risk of contracting viruses such as the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Employers need to keep up to date with the latest health warnings from the Australian government to ensure that any action taken is measured and appropriate.

If there is concern about the risk of employees being exposed to viruses of this nature while at work, a risk assessment should be carried out with reference to the latest information available at the links below. Employers should develop prevention and control strategies appropriate to the workplace, in consultation with their employees and ensure that all employees are aware of and follow these strategies. These strategies may include:

- \* Providing clear advice about quarantine periods following at-risk travel or contact with at-risk or unwell people, in accordance with advice from the [Department of Health](#)
- \* Fitness for work policies and procedures, including instructions on actions employees should take if they have symptoms consistent with a virus, such as fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.
- \* Dealing with contingencies such as staff shortages
- \* Minimising or eliminating the need for work travel, particularly to known risk areas – refer to government advice at [Smart Traveller](#)
- \* Reminding staff about the need to ensure good personal hygiene and encourage regular hand washing
- \* Regular communications with staff should the situation or organisational policies or procedures change

Where a business has been impacted by travel or import / export restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 coronavirus, and there is no work or reduced work available to employees, employers must continue to pay full time and part time employees who are willing and able to work unless the employees are covered by a WA award which contains specific stand down or break down provisions which would cover this scenario.

Full time and part time award free employees would need to continue to be paid by the employer as there is no stand down provisions in the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act*.

An employer and employee can agree that the employee takes a period of accrued annual leave or long service leave during a period when business is impacted. Information on [annual leave](#) and [long service leave](#) is available on the Wageline website

Some WA awards contain provisions which enable an employer to stand down an employee without pay in certain circumstances such as a stoppage of work by any cause which the employer cannot reasonably prevent.

For information on stand down provisions in these or other WA awards please consult the relevant WA award on the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission website [www.wairc.wa.gov.au](http://www.wairc.wa.gov.au) or contact Wageline on 1300 655 266 for information.

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.

There is still a lot that is unknown about the newly emerged COVID-19 and how it spreads. Two other coronaviruses have emerged previously to cause severe illness in people (MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV). The virus that causes COVID-19 is more genetically related to SARS-CoV than MERS-CoV, but both are betacoronaviruses with their origins in bats. While we don't know for sure that this virus will behave the same way as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV, we can use the information gained from both of these earlier coronaviruses to guide us.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures.

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread most often by respiratory droplets.

Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with imported goods and there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in the United States associated with imported goods. Information will be provided on the [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) website](#) as it becomes available

(Reference sourced Dept Health WA and AHPPC)

### **A few tips for Safer Workplace Practices**

- Maintain regular meeting with all staff members to reinforce all safety procedures that need to be carried out
- Hand sanitizers should be made available throughout the workplace and reception area in particular. These should also be available for installers or onsite workers who should maintain supplies in their vehicles. It is good practice to keep a supply on your person at all times.
- All tools used in the workshop should be cleaned with a suitable alcohol based solvent before and after use.
- Work surfaces and mobile phones should be cleaned throughout the day with a suitable sanitiser.
- All staff to cover their nose and mouth when coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose. Wash hands immediately following and take care to discard of used tissues appropriately.
- Prepare your own food for daily workplace needs at home rather than buy from fast food outlets or delis Always know who is handling your food
- Visitors to workplace premises, such as general public and representatives. You may consider placing a notice at your work premises to advise callers "You are entering a conscientious business and the necessary health practices must be followed" or something similar
- Practice social distancing—refrain from shaking hands and maintain a good distance away from all persons.
- Staff members are to stay at home if feeling unwell, or if anyone living with the staff member has flu like symptoms,

*These are just a few ideas, but if any of our members wish to share others, please email [eo@cmawa.com.au](mailto:eo@cmawa.com.au)*