Safety Note

Updated: 25 May 2020

Meeting protocols to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Organisers and participants of meetings must consider the potential risk from COVID-19 and the safe conduct of meetings in the current environment. Strategies are required to:

(a) minimise risk of transmission to each other, and
(b) separating people in face-to-face meetings who are critical to operations due to their role, skill base, authority, or decision-making powers.

General Principles

- Stay home and do not attend in-person meetings if you feel unwell or are waiting COVID-19 test results.
- Practise physical distancing by:
  - Avoiding in-person meetings by using technology wherever practicable to meet with people.
  - Keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people.
- Ensure impeccable personal hygiene practices. Simple hygiene practices, such are frequent washing of hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser, not touching your face, and disposing of tissues in the bin immediately, can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.
- Discourage high risk groups (vulnerable persons) from attending face to face meetings, by arranging appropriate alternatives. Vulnerable persons are those persons at higher risk of serious illness. Where vulnerable workers undertake essential work, a risk assessment must be undertaken. Risk needs to be assessed and mitigated with consideration of the characteristics of the worker, the workplace and the work.
- Wherever possible, avoid unnecessary close contact with others during this period.

Recommendations / Actions for consideration

- Cease non-essential face-to-face meetings that involve close personal contact (less than 1.5m). Use alternatives to meeting in-person such as meeting online via Zoom or teleconference.
- If in-person meetings are considered essential, strategies must be in place to apply physical distancing and good hygiene practices, including,
  - Minimise the number of people in physical attendance.
  - Ensure the room is large enough to accommodate 1.5m between each person. Consider use of barriers to create space between workstations and seated areas – leave spare seats between participants.
- Consider alternative venues, book larger meetings rooms - meet outside in the open air, if possible.
- Reconsider the concurrent attendance of multiple staff from core skill groups at the same event to preserve the continuity of critical functions.
- Keep meetings as short as possible – well under two hours.
- Do not share equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including pens, keyboards, tabletops etc. Clean and disinfect shared high touch surfaces regularly.
- Provide and promote hand hygiene sanitisers for use on entry/exit, and provide suitable rubbish bins, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.

- It is essential to practice impeccable hand and respiratory hygiene. Avoid touching your face with your hands. Avoid handshaking and other physical greetings.
- Keep record of attendance.
- Remember – you should not be at work if you feel unwell or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.

Resource and links

WHS Qld - Coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace risk management
Qld Health – Social Distancing
WHO – Getting your workplaces ready for COVID-19