

Fact Sheet

Preparing for a Second Lockdown: HR Must-Knows

For the webinar associated with this fact sheet, visit
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hM7TsXVI5v8>

Are you worried we are headed for lockdown again? It's important to be prepared and to be clear on the HR must-knows for business. Consider using this fact sheet and the information in the webinar as a "checklist" to ensure you and your business are in the best position possible to manage increased restrictions.

ESSENTIAL: COVID-Safe Check for Business

Businesses should have a COVID-Safe plan in place prior to any reopening as well as moving forward. The plan will provide information and guidelines for staff, customers and visitors about being COVID-safe in your workplace.

A COVID-Safe Plan template, as well as industry specific guidelines and materials can be downloaded for businesses. Business can check, test and promote their COVID-Safe credentials. They will also be able to display on their premises badges to show they have been approved.

See: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/covid-safe-businesses>

Work Health & Safety Obligations

No matter where your staff are working, you are responsible for WHS obligations in the same way as always. Make sure you have good policies and procedures in place, and check that your staff are following them. This is an essential area where business owners and managers can lead the way. It can also be a significant risk to your business and your staff if WHS obligations are not fulfilled.

Keep in mind that if you are considered an 'essential service' and your staff contract COVID-19, they may be able to lodge a workers' compensation claim that does not require them to prove that they were infected whilst at work.

If your workers' compensation premium is over \$30,000 per annum then any lost time due to a claim will potentially significantly impact your premium.

What does work look like for you, now?

- Things will not look like they did back in February 2020 and are unlikely to return to "normal" anytime soon, if ever.
- Consider the following questions carefully:
 - Do your premises still accommodate staff and customers safely? Are they still appropriate to your business now? Can you meet the current guidelines for social distancing?
 - Do you have the necessary cleaning and sanitation procedures in place?
 - Can you arrange rotating rosters of staff to minimise numbers on the premises at any one time?
 - Are your staff asking to work flexibly? Be mindful of your obligations to consider staff requests for flexible work.

This information and advice is general in nature, based on our interpretation of current legislation and policy, and does not take into account your specific circumstances. You should consider whether the information is appropriate to your needs and seek professional advice if required.



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- Are you communicating regularly and clearly with your staff, managing team dynamics and expectations moving forward? How are you dealing with staff that might have been more or less productive in recent times?
- What impact could an increase in restrictions have on your business? Are your supply chains secure? Can you easily and quickly change your staff team size and/or composition if required?
- Are you prepared for the short, medium and long term? Now is the time to ensure you have your employment 'ducks in a row':
 - Employment contracts
 - Accurate position descriptions
 - Policies and procedures

These documents must not be a mountain of paper that sits on the shelf gathering dust, but rather dynamic and meaningful guidelines and expectations that everyone understands.

Financial Considerations

- **Our Webinar on Thursday 23 July 2020 will look at the Government economic outlook and analyse what it means for employers – tune in at 5:30pm or catch up anytime on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) or [our website](#).**
- Keep an eye on the news for funding announcements that can affect your business. We will be giving an update every Monday at 9:15am on developments throughout the week, and breaking news when it happens. Follow [Pinnacle People Solutions' Watch Page on Facebook](#) for notification of these updates.
- Look at grant opportunities for funding to get professional advice and support, such as the NSW Government Small Business Recovery Grant: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-small-business-covid-19-recovery-grant>
- Talk to your accountant/bookkeeper and ensure you're clear about cashflow forecasting for your business.
- Have you maximised the opportunities for your business to reduce non-staff-related overheads, such as changes to leases, negotiations with landlords and suppliers, outsourcing, etc?
- Is your business receiving JobKeeper? Are you prepared for the end of the program? Now is the time to:
 - Plan for the end of JobKeeper enabling directions on 27 September 2020. This means that any arrangements in place regarding stand downs, changes to hours or locations, etc which have been made under the JobKeeper legislation will cease overnight. You therefore need to consider what you may need to put in place now for after these directions cease.
 - Check your staff entitlements accrual and ensure you have accurate records. Keep in mind that staff must continue to accrue entitlements at their usual rate, even if their hours/days have been reduced under JobKeeper (and also if they've taken annual leave on half pay), unless you have negotiated an agreement with your staff under the standard Fair Work Act provisions.
 - Consider carefully what your business can manage financially if circumstances are not significantly improved by the end of the program.

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Setting up your most valuable asset for the future

- Consider your staffing levels, and whether they are sustainable into the uncertain future:
 - What staff can you keep?
 - What staff do you want to keep?
 - What are your options to temporarily or permanently change your workforce quickly and effectively? Get to know your options well (stand down, redundancy, permanent or temporary changes to hours/days/location agreed with staff) and plan for them, so you're meeting your obligations.
 - Beware the potential pitfalls of moving from employees to 'independent contractors' – are they truly independent?
 - Do you have your best team moving forward? Deal with any conduct or performance issues now, and do so lawfully.

What should I do right now?

- Make sure you understand your obligations in relation to your staff.
- Keep records and put everything in writing – make sure you're meeting your record keeping obligations.
- Check all of your employment contracts, or put employment contracts in place. Go beyond the lawful requirements – check that you have good termination clauses, post-employment constraints, return of property requirements, debt settlement through termination pay, etc.
- Make sure that you have good, relevant policies on performance, conduct and redundancy.
- Deal with performance or conduct issues now and do so lawfully and to minimise your risk – the behaviour you walk past is the behaviour you accept.

Need help? Contact Pinnacle People Solutions for tailored advice and support for your business by email to admin@pinnaclepeoplesolutions.com.au or call 1300 856 231

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