

Australian Capital Territory

# Public Health (Diagnosed People and Household Contacts) Emergency Direction 2022 (No 8)

Notifiable Instrument NI2022–440

made under the

**Public Health Act 1997, s 120 (Emergency actions and directions)**

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## 1. Name of instrument

This instrument is the *Public Health (Diagnosed People and Household Contacts) Emergency Direction 2022 (No 8)*.

## 2. Commencement

This instrument commences at 11:59pm on 8 September 2022.

## 3. Public Health Emergency Direction

I, Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, consider it necessary or desirable to alleviate the emergency declared under the *Public Health (Emergency) Declaration 2020 (No 1)* [NI2020-153] (the **declared emergency**) on 16 March 2020, to give the directions as set out in this instrument.

## 4. Duration

This direction is in force for the period ending on the day the declared emergency (as extended or further extended) ends, unless it is earlier revoked.

## 5. Revocation

This instrument revokes the *Public Health (Diagnosed People and Household Contacts) Emergency Direction 2022 (No 7)* [NI2022-346].

Dr Kerryn Coleman  
Chief Health Officer

8 September 2022



# Public Health Emergency Direction

## *Public Health Act 1997*

*Made under the Public Health Act 1997,  
section 120 (Emergency actions and directions)*

I, Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer, consider it necessary or desirable to alleviate the emergency declared under the *Public Health (Emergency) Declaration 2020 (No 1)* [NI2020-153] (the **declared emergency**) on 16 March 2020, to give the directions as set out below.

The purpose of this Direction is to require people who are diagnosed with **COVID-19** through a **COVID-19 test** to self-isolate, and for a **household contact** of a diagnosed person to undergo quarantine in order to limit the spread of **COVID-19**. This Direction requires a person who returns a positive result from a **rapid antigen test** to complete an online form notifying the ACT Health Directorate of the positive result which allows the Directorate to provide appropriate advice to the individual on self-isolation requirements together with care, support and treatment options.

### **Grounds for directions**

I consider the directions are necessary or desirable to alleviate the **COVID-19** emergency on the grounds that—

- (a) **COVID-19** poses a serious public health risk to the Australian Capital Territory.
- (b) the World Health Organization declared the Omicron variant of **COVID-19** to be a variant of concern on 26 November 2021.
- (c) the Omicron variant of **COVID-19** is highly transmissible and remains the dominant variant globally and in the Australian Capital Territory following its introduction on 3 December 2021.
- (d) the BA.4 and BA.5 sub-lineages of the Omicron variant are the dominant sub-lineages in Australia, being more prone than BA.2 to escaping immunity provided by vaccination and earlier **COVID-19** infection, and are associated with ongoing infections and community transmission.
- (e) Evidence has demonstrated that reinfections may occur as early as 28 days after recovery from a previous **COVID-19** infection.
- (f) the Australian Capital Territory has experienced persistent community transmission since the original outbreak of **COVID-19** on 12 August 2021;
- (g) there is a necessity to limit the impact of **COVID-19** in the Australian Capital Territory to mitigate the burden on persons who are most vulnerable to severe disease and the Australian Capital Territory's public health system, which includes continued monitoring and support for the public health response.

In making this Direction, I have had regard to relevant human rights and I am satisfied that the limitations imposed as a result of this Direction are both demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society and necessary to protect the ACT community from the serious public health risk posed by **COVID-19**.



## PART 1 — SELF-ISOLATION - COVID-19 DIAGNOSED

### *Directions*

1. This Part applies to a **diagnosed person**.
2. On becoming a **diagnosed person**, the person must, until **cleared from self-isolation**—
  - a. if the person is at **designated premises** —self-isolate at the premises; and
  - b. if the person is not at **designated premises** —
    - i. travel directly to **designated premises** to self-isolate at the premises; or
    - ii. travel directly to a hospital if the person requires medical treatment and after leaving or being discharged from the hospital, travel directly to **designated premises** to self-isolate at the premises; and
  - c. communicate to any person with whom they may come into contact that they are required to self-isolate because they are a **diagnosed person**; and
  - d. notify any person who is a **household contact** of their status as a **diagnosed person**; and
  - e. not leave the **designated premises** other than:
    - i. in an emergency;
    - ii. to undertake a **COVID-19 test** at a **COVID-19** Testing facility, operated by the ACT Government; or
    - iii. to seek treatment for **COVID-19**, as advised by a staff member of the **ACT COVID-19 Care@Home Program**, ACT Health, or by a medical practitioner; and

*Example:* An emergency may include needing to obtain urgent medical treatment, fleeing a serious risk to life or health, or escaping a risk of harm related to domestic and family violence.
  - f. not permit any other person that does not reside at the **designated premises** to enter the premises, unless for medical, law enforcement or emergency purposes;

*Note:* A person who ordinarily resides at the same premises and intends to enter the premises is a **household contact** to whom Part 2 applies.
  - g. take reasonable steps to notify the following people that the person has become a **diagnosed person**:
    - i. the employer, or person who otherwise engaged the **diagnosed person** to perform work, if the person attended a workplace during their **infectious period**;



- ii. the operator, or a staff member identified to receive notifications of diagnosed persons, of an **education setting** if the person attended during their **infectious period**; and
- iii. the operator of a **high risk setting** if the person attended during their **infectious period**.

*Note: It is also recommended that a diagnosed person notify any person who is a low, moderate or high risk contact that they have become a diagnosed person. A person exposed to COVID-19 is advised to following the guidance published by the ACT Health Directorate at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>.*

3. A **diagnosed person** is **cleared from self-isolation** at the end of the 5th day after the day the person undertook the **COVID-19 test** that resulted in them becoming a **diagnosed person**.

*Example:* A person undertakes a **rapid antigen test** on 1 October which returned a positive result to **COVID-19** and reported this to ACT Health via the online form, and the person subsequently undertook a **PCR test** on 2 October which also returned a positive result to COVID-19. The person became a diagnosed person on 1 October, which is day 0, so the person must self-isolate until the end of 6 October.

*Note:* A person who has been **cleared from self-isolation** must wear a face mask in accordance with the *Public Health (Mandatory Face Masks) Emergency Direction 2022 (No 5)* until the end of the 7th day after the person undertook the **COVID-19 test** that resulted in the person becoming a **diagnosed person**.

4. A person who tests positive to **COVID-19** as a result of a **rapid antigen test** may be declared to no longer be a **diagnosed person** if the person:
  - a. has completed a **COVID-19** online declaration in accordance with paragraph 6 of this Direction; and
  - b. within 2 days of becoming a **diagnosed person** undertakes a **PCR test** which returns a negative result, and the person notifies ACT Health of the negative result; and
  - c. is notified that they are no longer considered to be a **diagnosed person** by:
    - i. a **public health officer**; or
    - ii. a staff member of the **COVID-19** Response Operations Branch operated, by ACT Health.

*Note:* If a person has returned conflicting test results, then the person may seek a review by ACT Health of their status as a diagnosed person. ACT Health will consider whether an individual can be exempt from the remaining self-isolation requirements following an individual assessment.

## PART 2 — REPORTING A POSITIVE RAPID ANTIGEN TEST

### Directions

5. This Part applies to a person who is a **diagnosed person** because they have returned a positive **rapid antigen test**.
6. On becoming a **diagnosed person**, the person must complete a **COVID-19** online declaration at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>.

*Note: a **diagnosed person** who has difficulty completing a **COVID-19** online declaration may contact ACT Health for assistance completing the declaration.*

7. If the **diagnosed person** is a child, then a parent, guardian, person with parental responsibility or carer of the child must complete a **COVID-19** online declaration at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>.
8. Paragraphs 6 and 7 do not apply to the following people:
  - a. a detainee at a correctional centre; or
  - b. a young detainee at a detention place; or
  - c. a resident of a **residential aged care facility**.
9. If the **diagnosed person** is a person listed in paragraph 8, then the person, or a person collecting the **rapid antigen test**, must inform the operator or a staff member at the premises that the person has returned a positive **rapid antigen test**.
10. If the director-general responsible for a correctional centre or detention place becomes aware that a detainee has returned a positive **rapid antigen test**, then the director-general must as soon as practicable:
  - a. notify the ACT Health Directorate that the person has returned a positive **rapid antigen test** and become a **diagnosed person**; and
  - b. provide the ACT Health Directorate with the **diagnosed person's**:
    - i. name;
    - ii. date of birth;
    - iii. date the positive test was taken;
    - iv. address for isolation as a **diagnosed person**; and
    - v. relevant contact details to enable the **diagnosed person** to receive **clearance** from self-isolation as appropriate.



11. If the owner, operator or controller of the **residential aged care facility** becomes aware that a resident has returned a positive **rapid antigen test**, then the owner, operator or controller of the **residential aged care facility** must as soon as practicable:
  - a. notify the Health Directorate that the person has returned a positive **rapid antigen test** and become a **diagnosed person**; and
  - b. provide the Health Directorate with the **diagnosed person's**:
    - i. name;
    - ii. date of birth;
    - iii. date the positive test was taken;
    - iv. address for isolation as a **diagnosed person**; and
    - v. relevant contact details to enable the **diagnosed person** to receive **clearance** from self-isolation.

## PART 3 — QUARANTINE - HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS

### *Directions*

12. This Part applies to a person who is a **household contact** of a **diagnosed person**.
13. The person must complete a **COVID-19** online declaration at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>.

### *Exemption if complying with Risk Mitigation Requirements for Household Contacts*

14. The person is not required to comply with paragraph 15 during the **period of quarantine** if the person complies with the **Risk Mitigation Requirements for Household Contacts**.

### *Requirement to quarantine*

15. The person must:
  - a. if the person is at **designated premises** when they become aware they are a **household contact**—undertake a **period of quarantine** at the premises; and
  - b. if the person is not at **designated premises** when they become aware they are a **household contact**—travel directly to **designated premises** to undertake a **period of quarantine**; and
  - c. not leave the **designated premises** during the **period of quarantine** other than to undertake a **COVID-19 test** from an ACT Government **COVID-19** Testing Centre, or in an emergency; and

*Example:* An emergency may include needing to obtain urgent medical treatment, fleeing a serious risk to life or health, or escaping a risk of harm related to domestic and family violence.



- d. not permit any other person that does not reside at the **designated premises** to enter the premises during the **period of quarantine**, unless for medical, law enforcement emergency purposes or **essential support services**.
16. A **period of quarantine** for a **household contact** means a period that begins on the day the person becomes aware they are a **household contact** of a **diagnosed person** and ends on the earlier of the following:
- a. if the **diagnosed person** is declared to no longer be a **diagnosed person** pursuant to paragraph 4, at the time they are declared to no longer be a **diagnosed person**; or
  - b. at 11:59pm on the 7th day after the **diagnosed person** undertook a **COVID-19 test** which returned a positive result.
17. An **authorised person** may direct a person to comply with this Part if they reasonably believe that the person is a close contact of a person diagnosed with **COVID-19** and it is necessary for the person to undertake a **period of quarantine** or otherwise comply with the **Risk Mitigation Requirements for Household Contacts**.
18. Any person directed by an **authorised person** under paragraph 17 must comply with this Part as if they were if they were a **household contact**.

## PART 4 — RECOVERED CASES

### **Directions**

19. This Part applies to a **recovered case**.
20. Until the end of the 7th day after the **recovered case** undertook the **COVID-19 test** that resulted in them becoming a **diagnosed person**, the person must:
- a. not attend a **high risk setting**, unless the operator of the **high risk setting** has been notified of the person's status as a **recovered case** and has provided written approval for the person to attend the **high risk setting**; and
  - b. not attend a **care facility**, unless the service provider for the **care facility** has been notified of the person's status as a **recovered case** and has provided written approval for the person to attend the **care facility**.

*Example:* A **diagnosed person** was **cleared from self-isolation** at 11:59pm on 6 October. The person must comply with paragraph 20 until 11:59pm on 8 October.

*Note:* A **recovered case** must wear a face mask in accordance with the *Public Health (Mandatory Face Masks) Emergency Direction 2022 (No 5)* until the end of the 7th day after the person undertook the **COVID-19 test** that resulted in the person becoming a diagnosed person.

21. A **recovered case** is not subject to the directions in Part 1 or Part 3 of this Direction.

*Note:* A person who is declared to no longer to be a **diagnosed person** under paragraph 4 is not a **recovered case** and will need to comply with Part 3 of this Direction if they become a **household contact**.



## PART 5 — MISCELLANEOUS

22. An **authorised person** may ask a person for any information necessary to determine whether the person is subject to this Direction, including to produce proof of identification.
23. Any person must comply with any request made under paragraph 22 by an **authorised person**.
24. An **authorised person** may direct a person who is subject to this Direction to do such things as are reasonably necessary to comply with this Direction.
25. Any person subject to this Direction must comply with any request under paragraph 24 by an **authorised person**.

## PART 6 — EXEMPTIONS

### *Exemption*

26. The Chief Health Officer may, in writing and subject to any conditions that the Chief Health Officer considers necessary, exempt a person from this Direction, or a stated requirement under this Direction, on compassionate or other grounds that the Chief Health Officer considers reasonable and appropriate.
27. If the Chief Health Officer exempts a person from this Direction, or a stated requirement under this Direction that person must comply with the conditions of the exemption.

## PART 7 — MATTERS RELEVANT TO THIS DIRECTION

### *Guidance*

28. Information for people who test positive for **COVID-19** can be found at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>
29. Information for people who are exposed to **COVID-19** can be found at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au>.
30. Information about **COVID-19** testing can be found at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au>.
31. Guidance about symptoms of **COVID-19** can be found at <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>.
32. Risk mitigation guidance for a **diagnosed person** is provided in Attachment A.
33. **Risk Mitigation Requirements for Household Contacts** is provided in Attachment B.





## Definitions

For the purposes of these directions:

34. **Authorised medical officer** has the same meaning as in the *Public Health Act 1997*.
35. **Authorised person** means an authorised person under section 121 of the *Public Health Act 1997* and includes an **authorised medical officer**.
36. **ACT COVID-19 Care@Home Program** means the Care@Home Program managed by the Division of Medicine at Canberra Health Services.
37. A **care facility** means the following premises:
  - a. any premises that an **in-home and community aged care provider** provides services to, and any premises that a disability service provides services to;
  - b. any premises that a **disability service** provides services to.
38. **Cleared from self-isolation**, means a person who is no longer required to self-isolate in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Direction.
39. **COVID-19** means the coronavirus disease 2019, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.
40. **COVID-19 test** means:
  - a. a **rapid antigen test**; or
  - b. a **PCR test**.
41. **Designated premises** means:
  - a. the person's usual place of residence or other premises that is suitable for the purposes of self-isolation or quarantine; or
  - b. if the person is not normally a resident of the Australian Capital Territory, a hotel or other premises that has been approved in writing by the Chief Health Officer or an **authorised person** for the purposes of self-isolation or quarantine; or
  - c. a room allocated on check-in at any hotel, serviced-apartment, or similar accommodation approved in writing by the Chief Health Officer or an **authorised person** for the purposes of self-isolation or quarantine; or
  - d. if the Chief Health Officer, in writing, states another place—the stated place.
42. **Diagnosed person** means a person who has undertaken a **COVID-19 test** and returned a positive result.

43. **Disability service** means a service provided to a person with a disability which is funded or provided:
- under the National Disability Insurance Scheme under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* of the Commonwealth; or
  - by the ACT Government for the primary purpose of providing support to people living with disability, including the Special Needs Transport and Flexible Bus Service operated by the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate.

*Example:* the ACT Community Assistance & Support Program funded by the ACT Health Directorate constitutes a **disability service**.

44. **Education setting** means:
- an early childhood education centre;
  - school;
  - college;
  - university; or
  - any other institution at which education or training is provided.

45. **Essential support services** means support without which a person would experience a deterioration in health or wellbeing, including assistance with, or provision of, the following:
- personal care;
  - meal preparation;
  - exercise or physiotherapy; or
  - other critical support.

*Note:* People requiring assistance or support for **COVID-19** testing purposes are covered under this definition and provision of medical or other critical supports.

46. **High risk setting** means:
- a hospital;
  - a residential aged care facility;
  - a correctional centre;
  - a detention place; and
  - residential accommodation facilities that support people who require frequent, close personal care and who are vulnerable to severe disease.



47. **Household** means people who reside at the same residential premises and were present in the household during the **infectious period** of the person diagnosed with **COVID-19**.
48. **Household contact** of a person diagnosed with **COVID-19** means a person who is a member of the same **household** as a **diagnosed person**.
49. **Infectious period** means the earlier of the following:
- two days prior to symptom onset for the person diagnosed with **COVID-19**, or
  - two days prior to undertaking a **COVID-19 test** which returned a positive result for **COVID-19**.
50. **In-home and community aged care provider** means:
- an approved provider for whom a home care subsidy or a flexible care subsidy is payable under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth); or
  - a service provider of a Commonwealth-funded aged care service, as defined in the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018*, delivering services outside of a **residential aged care facility** setting.
51. **Period of quarantine** for a person under Part 3 means the period applying to the person under paragraph 16.
52. **PCR test** means a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction to diagnose **COVID-19**.
53. **Public health officer** has the same meaning as in the *Public Health Act 1997*.
54. **Rapid antigen test** means a rapid antigen test approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration of the Commonwealth for use in Australia to detect **COVID-19**.
- Note:* Rapid antigen tests which are approved for use in Australia are listed at <https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia>.
55. **Recovered case** means a **diagnosed person** who has been **cleared from self-isolation**, and no more than 28 days have elapsed since the person was **cleared from self-isolation**, but does not include someone who is declared to no longer to be a **diagnosed person** under paragraph 4.
56. **Residential aged care facility** means a facility at which accommodation, and personal care or nursing care or both, are provided to a person in respect of whom a residential care subsidy or a flexible care subsidy is payable under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth).



57. **Risk Mitigation Requirements for Household Contacts** means the risk mitigation requirements for a **household contact** found at Attachment B and <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/guidanceforhouseholdcontacts>.

**Dr Kerryn Coleman**

Chief Health Officer

8 September 2022

## **PENALTIES**

A person commits an offence if a COVID-19 direction is in force and the person fails to comply with the direction: see s 120B of the *Public Health Act 1997*

### **Maximum Penalty:**

In the case of a natural person, \$8,000 (50 penalty units).

### **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

For further accessibility information, visit: [www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility](http://www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility)

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## ATTACHMENT A

### Risk Mitigation Guidance for Recently Cleared Diagnosed People

The risk mitigations outlined below apply to all diagnosed people, regardless of variant and vaccination status.

#### General Advice

It is recommended that a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 remains at home and minimises contact with other people until their symptoms are improved or they are feeling much better. Even if after completing the mandatory five day isolation period, a person should remain at home if they continue to have symptoms.

#### Advice to Social Contacts

- A diagnosed person should tell social contacts with whom they have spent time that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19. You should tell the people you have spent time with in the 2 days before you started having symptoms or had a positive test result taken (whichever came first).

#### Facemasks

- The Public Health (Mandatory Face Masks) Emergency Direction 2022 stipulates the requirements for when a diagnosed person must wear a face mask.
- The Direction requires that a diagnosed person aged 12 years or over **must** wear a facemask in an indoor space that is not their own home on days 6 to 7 after their COVID-19 test that resulted in the person becoming a diagnosed person. This includes any students in Year 7 to 12 attending school.
  - Mask wearing for students in primary school is at the discretion of the student and their parents/carers, and is not recommended for children in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECECs) or Preschool to year 2.
  - The *Public Health (Mandatory Face Masks) Emergency Direction 2022* outlines the exclusions from the mask wearing requirements (for example, people who have a physical or mental health illness or condition, or disability, which makes wearing a face mask unsuitable are not required to wear one). These can be found in the Public Health Direction which is accessible here:  
<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/act-public-health-directions>



### **Entering a high-risk setting and working within a care facility**

- This Direction stipulates that a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must not attend a high risk setting or undertake work in a care facility on days 6 and 7 after their COVID-19 test that resulted in them becoming a diagnosed person.
- The restriction applies for both work purposes or for visitation purposes, unless prior approval has been granted to the person by the relevant facility or employer.
  - In seeking an approval to enter a high risk facility, an individual should notify the facility or employer that they have returned a positive COVID-19 test within the last 7 days.
  - If approval is granted, the diagnosed person should comply with any conditions of entry or additional safeguards which are required by the relevant facility.

### **Information for high-risk settings and care facilities**

- In assessing whether a staff member or visitor who has completed their COVID-19 isolation period but is less than 7 days since their positive COVID-19 test (i.e. in the 2 days after completing their 5 day isolation period) should be granted approval to visit or work in your facility or service, the first consideration should be whether there are any suitable alternatives (eg work from home or videocalls).

#### ***If face-to-face attendance is required for work purposes, consider:***

- If the person's symptoms have improved or they are feeling much better. If not, they should continue to stay at home.
- If the staff member is essential to face-to-face service delivery.
- Your work health safety obligations, which may include undertaking an assessment of any additional risk that is involved.

#### ***If a visit is essential and cannot be postponed, consider:***

- If additional risk mitigation measures can be adhered as outlined below (e.g. mask wearing when working indoors. An N95/P2 mask is preferred if available.)



*Additional risk mitigations required to return to work may include:*

- Ensuring compliance with relevant face mask requirements.
  - An N95/P2 mask is preferred, if available. Additional appropriate PPE should be worn according to task/setting
- Limiting work to a single site or area where possible. If multiple sites are visited in a day (e.g. provision of home care services), ensure separate PPE is used for each site.
- If possible, have staff work in lower risk face-to-face alternatives e.g. redeploy staff to care for lower risk clients or lower risk tasks
- If possible, avoid working in areas with high risk of spread or where there are large numbers of people especially at-risk of severe disease e.g. unvaccinated elderly people, settings where isolation is difficult such as dementia support units.

*Additional risk mitigations required for a visit may include:*

- Wearing a face mask on site. An N95/P2 mask is preferred, if available.
- Minimising time spent in indoor communal areas and spend most of their visiting time in the resident's room or an outside area.
- Maintaining [COVID Smart behaviours](#), like physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

**Information for Work Places**

- ACT Health has developed guidance to support employers to conduct a risk assessment following a COVID-19 workplace exposure and to provide advice on related actions. This Guidance has been updated to include additional advice for employers on the key considerations for employees diagnosed with COVID-19 to return to work following their 7-day isolation period.
- Persons conducting a business or undertaking (employers) and workers should be aware that additional work health and safety obligations apply under the Work Health and Safety Act 2022. These work safety obligations apply independently of the advice in the ACT Health Guidance.
- The Guidance is available at: <https://www.act.gov.au/business/keeping-your-business-covid-safe>.

## ATTACHMENT B – RISK MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS FOR HOUSEHOLD CONTACTS

### Application

These risk mitigation requirements apply to all household contacts (someone who lives with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19).

A person does not have to comply with this document if they have not been in contact with the person who tested positive to COVID-19 while they were infectious (eg. they were away from home during the infectious period). A person is infectious in the 48 hours before they have symptoms, or 48 hours before they tested positive (if they did not have any symptoms).

If a person has been exposed to COVID-19, but is not a household contact, they should refer to the information for people exposed to COVID-19 on the ACT Government's COVID-19 website, available at: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>.

If a household contact has previously been diagnosed with COVID-19 and received clearance from the self-isolation period in the last 28 days, they do not have to comply with these risk mitigation requirements if they subsequently become a household contact.

### Timeframes

A household contact must comply with these mitigation requirements for a period of seven days from the last time someone in their household tested positive for COVID-19 (the date of collection of the test is day 0).

### Leaving the home – Context

A person who is a household contact is at highest risk of contracting COVID-19, compared with other exposures. This reflects the nature of the contact between individuals within a household. For this reason, quarantine requirements have been maintained for household contacts.

Household contacts should seek to minimise their movements in the community wherever possible and only leave their home when necessary for activities which cannot be postponed or delayed.

Household contacts are only able to leave their homes if they **do not** have symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to follow the risk mitigations outlined further below.

Examples of when a person may need to leave their home could include, but are not limited to the following:

- in an emergency, including to receive urgent medical care
- to undertake work or study, if a person is unable to work or study from home
- to access childcare or school, including schools, early childhood education and care settings and out of school hours care





- to shop for items like groceries, and other essential supplies, where delivery is not possible
- to exercise outdoors
- for essential animal welfare purposes, or
- to attend an unavoidable gathering (examples provided below).

An unavoidable gathering is an event where a household contact is unable to delay their attendance and cannot participate in remotely or in a contactless way. Examples may include attending a funeral or attending a community healthcare appointment that has been determined as necessary by the individual's health care provider.

Household contacts need to take personal responsibility in assessing the reason to leave home and whether this can be postponed or delayed.

### **General requirements for household contacts**

#### Symptoms

A household contact **must not** leave their home if they have, or develop, any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild.

If a household contact has, or develops, symptoms they must undergo a COVID-19 test and isolate until they receive a negative result.

- If a positive result is returned, the person **must** immediately comply with requirements for people who test positive for COVID-19 available at: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/information-for-people-who-test-positive-for-covid-19>.
- If a negative result is returned, and the initial test was a Rapid Antigen Test, it is recommended to have a PCR test and continue to isolate.
- If a negative result is returned, a household contact **should** stay at home until their symptoms resolve.

#### Testing

If a household contact is leaving their home regularly for work or study, they **must** take a COVID-19 test in the 24 hours before attending, and continue testing every 48 hours while they are a household contact.

They **must** also take a test in the 24 hours before leaving the home if attending an unavoidable event or visiting a person at risk of severe illness.

It is not necessary for a household contact who is asymptomatic to undertake a COVID-19 test prior to leaving their home for outdoor exercise or for brief periods (eg. grocery shopping), or where it is unlikely that a person will come into contact with large numbers of people



All household contacts **should** take a test on day 6 after becoming a household contact, unless they have been undertaking regular COVID-19 testing to attend work or study.

### Facemasks

Household contacts aged 12 or over **must** wear a facemask at all times in an indoor setting that is not their own home. This includes any students in Year 7 to 12 attending school.

- Mask wearing for students in primary school is at the discretion of the student and their parents/carers, and is not recommended for children in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECECs) or Preschool to year 2.

Masks are also encouraged in the home, wherever possible, to reduce the risk of transmission in the household.

The same exclusions that apply under the *Public Health (Mandatory Face Masks) Emergency Direction 2022* apply under this risk mitigation guidance (for example, people who have a physical or mental health illness or condition, or disability, which makes wearing a face mask unsuitable are not required to wear one). A household contact can also temporarily remove a face mask in certain circumstances. Detailed circumstances are outlined in the Public Health Direction, which is accessible here: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/act-public-health-directions>

### COVID Smart behaviours

#### Outside of Home

When outside of the home, household contact **should**:

- travel alone when leaving the home and avoid public transport or car sharing with persons outside of their household. If not possible, ensure a mask is worn and physical distancing is maintained.
- practise COVID Smart behaviours and maintain appropriate physical distancing from people not known to them.
- practise good hand and respiratory hygiene at all times.
- avoid crowded places where possible.
- avoid long periods in indoor spaces, where possible.
- avoid visiting and interacting with people who are at higher risk of severe illness.

#### At home

When at home, and where possible, household contacts should stay separated from the case(s) within their household to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Information about appropriate separation is detailed here:

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/covid-smart-behaviours>.

## Work and study

It is strongly recommended that a household contact works or studies from home where it is practical to do so, and where it suits the employee and employer, or the facility.

Household contacts **must** notify their employer and/or educational facility that they are a household contact. This will assist employers and educational facilities to determine whether the household contact can work or study from home, or can attend the facility, if mutually agreed.

In considering whether a household contact can return to work or study during the quarantine period, employers and educational facilities will need to assess any potential risks in accordance with work health and safety obligations and any other relevant guidelines or policies in place.

- Persons conducting a business or undertaking (employers) and workers, have obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. These work safety obligations apply independently of this risk mitigation advice and must be complied with.

If it is not practical to work or study from home, and where there is mutual agreement for the person to attend the workplace or facility, a household contact **must**:

- Undertake a COVID-19 test in the 24 hours prior to returning to work or study and then every 48 hours if ongoing attendance is required. Only leave home if they are asymptomatic and a negative result is returned.
  - If a positive result is returned, the person **must** immediately comply with requirements for people who test positive for COVID-19 available at: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/information-for-people-who-test-positive-for-covid-19>

## Visiting someone at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19

A person may be at higher risk of severe illness if they are:

- Aged 50 years and older and have additional risk factors
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander aged 30 years and older and have additional risk factors
- pregnant with underlying conditions
- living with disability with multiple conditions and/or frailty
- aged 18 years and older and unvaccinated

Information on additional risk factors for persons at higher risk of severe illness is available at: [COVID-19 treatments - COVID-19 \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/information-for-people-who-test-positive-for-covid-19)

If a visit is unavoidable, a household contact **must** test for COVID-19 in the 24 hours before the visit and only attend if a negative result is received.



During a visit the household contact **must** wear a mask at all times, and where possible the visit should also take place in a well ventilated area.

### **Entering a high-risk setting**

A high-risk setting includes residential aged care facilities, hospitals, correctional and detention facilities and residential accommodation that supports people who require frequent, close personal care and who are vulnerable to disease.

Household contacts are not permitted to enter a high-risk setting. This restriction applies for both work purposes or for visitation purposes, unless an approval has been granted to the person by the relevant facility.

- In seeking an approval to enter a high risk facility, a household contact **must** notify the facility that they are a household contact.
- In considering whether a person should be granted entry, whether an employee or visitor, a high-risk setting should assess any potential risks to employees or residents, in accordance with work health and safety obligations and any guidelines or policies in place.

If approval is granted, the household contact **must** comply with any conditions of entry or additional safeguards which are required by the relevant facility.

Household contacts may still access urgent medical care or aged or disability care services.

These restrictions apply for 7 days since the last time someone in the household tested positive for COVID-19 (the date of collection of the test is day 0).

It is also recommended that a household contact limits their entry into a high risk facility from days 8 to 14, and only enters if approved by the facility.

### **Further Information**

Information on the ACT's Public Health Directions -

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/act-public-health-directions>

Information on symptoms of COVID-19 and getting tested -

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/symptoms-and-getting-tested>

Information for people who test positive for COVID-19 - <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/information-for-people-who-test-positive-for-covid-19>

Information for people who are exposed to COVID-19 - <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19>

Information for employers on keeping their business COVID-safe -

<https://www.act.gov.au/business/keeping-your-business-covid-safe>