

Building and construction industry FAQ

Can two workers travel together in a work vehicle i.e. van, ute, truck or a car?

Two workers who usually work together may travel in the same vehicle to and from worksites as required, as in this situation the vehicle is an extension of their workplace. Workers traveling together should implement appropriate hygiene practices, including open vehicle windows where possible and regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces.

For example, two plumbers can travel in a van together to carry out plumbing work at a construction site. Or a builder and apprentice can travel in a ute together.

Under Queensland's home confinement, movement and gathering direction can multiple workers i.e. two electricians attend a residential property to undertake repair work whilst the residents are there?

The [Home Confinement, Movement and Gathering Direction](#) specifically states that workers are not prevented entering a place of residence and they are not counted as visitors. Therefore, work can occur with multiple tradespersons on site as well as the property's usual residents.

Prior to entering the premises workers should request information about whether people who reside at the premises are healthy and that no one is being quarantined or self-isolating. Whilst working at the property workers should follow workplace social distancing and hygiene practices as per published guidance.

For example, a building company performing a kitchen renovation that requires three workers on site, can do so as long as they have social distancing and hygiene measures in place.

To safely perform my trade, I regularly need to work in closer proximity (less than 1.5 metres) with another person. Is this allowed?

In the building and construction industry to safely perform some trades workers may regularly work closer than the recommended 1.5 metres social distancing.

For example, wall and ceiling plasterers. In this example plasterers who regularly work in close proximity with the same colleague(s) may continue to do so. To help protect themselves workers should follow appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices.

Should the regular inspection and maintenance of essential services within buildings continue to occur during the pandemic?

The regular inspection and maintenance of essential services within buildings should continue to ensure the ongoing safety of both occupants and the broader community.

For example, fire safety systems both fixed and portable are critical to the health and safety of occupants in high risk buildings such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools and short-term accommodation. Inspection and maintenance of essential services must be completed in accordance with applicable legislation and the relevant Australian Standards and as designed. Workers performing the inspection and maintenance of essential services should follow workplace social distancing and hygiene practice.

Additional information for large construction sites

Can lunchrooms on large construction sites remain open?

Yes. Site managers should consider additional measures including regular cleaning throughout the workday, ensure workers practice social distancing and hygiene measures and stagger mealtimes and breaks to limit the number of workers using lunchroom facilities at any given time. To assist workers in the process, furniture in lunchrooms should also be spread out.

Can construction sites still hold toolbox talks with workers onsite?

Toolbox talks are an important mechanism for keeping workers informed of their health and safety obligations relating to COVID-19.

Where possible conduct toolbox and other meetings online, for example through an app. If not, conduct such meetings in wide open spaces to enable workers to keep the required physical distance of at least 1.5 metres.

What other measures can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 on construction sites?

Limit physical interactions between workers, workers and clients, and workers and other persons at the site (e.g. deliveries) and use other methods such as mobile phone or radio to communicate.

Limit worker numbers on site where possible. For example, by splitting shifts into AM and PM, staggering start times to prevent workers congregating outside the construction site prior to their shift, limiting the number of workers in the hoist/lift at any one time and creating additional specific walkways through the construction site to help maintain physical separation.

Further guidance is available at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/information-for/industry-and-businesses/resources-and-fact-sheets-for-industry>

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/preparing-workplaces-covid-19/building-and-construction-minimising>