



Questions and answers for health services and residential aged care facilities regarding restricted postcodes

1 July 2020

For hospitals, healthcare services and residential aged care facilities statewide:

1. There is no restriction of patients from restricted postcodes attending healthcare facilities to seek medical treatment (this includes elective procedures and outpatient appointments).
2. There is no restriction on essential workers from restricted postcodes attending work where this is required in person. Those who can work from home, should work from home.
3. Symptom and temperature screening remain in place in all facilities. Staff and visitors from restricted postcodes who are well are encouraged to be tested. However, they are not required to be tested, and are not required to show evidence that they have been tested as a condition of their employment or visitation. Unwell people should not attend and get tested.
4. There are no changes to PPE guidelines.
5. We encourage staff and visitors from restricted postcodes to be tested for COVID-19. This is not a condition to them receiving care (including surgery), nor is it required for their employment.
6. Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay, should be minimised.
7. All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors – including those from restricted postcodes - are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.
8. Healthcare facilities should not request evidence of a visitor's address in order to prevent entry. If there is concern about behaviour in breach of restrictions, this should be referred to Victoria Police.

Frequently Asked Questions

Staff

Can hospital staff from restricted postcodes still attend work at their hospital?

Yes, staff can leave home if they need to travel to work, and cannot work from home.

I live in a restricted postcode and need to go to work at the health service, will I need some sort of documentation or use my ID pass if stopped to explain why I am traveling outside the restricted postcode?

Victoria Police will be enforcing restrictions in restricted postcodes. It is recommended that you carry identification with you, and indicate the reason for travel. Health services will not be policing the movement of people from restricted postcodes – that is for Victoria Police and authorised officers.

Are there any different PPE requirements for a staff member from a restricted postcode?

No, there is no change to our PPE guidelines with this announcement.

Does a staff member from a restricted postcode need to be tested for COVID-19?

This is not required, although we ask people who live and work in restricted postcodes to take action to stay safe and to get tested, even if they don't have symptoms. If they don't have symptoms, they are not required to self-isolate. Staff from restricted postcodes who request a COVID-19 test because they feel unwell should self-isolate.

Does a staff member from a restricted postcode need to be tested more regularly for COVID-19?

Staff should always seek to be tested if they are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19. For staff who have no symptoms, we ask them to take action to be tested at the moment, but we are not suggesting routine testing at regular intervals.

Can staff from non-restricted postcodes attend hospitals in restricted postcodes?

Yes, staff can leave home if they need to travel to work, and cannot work from home.

I am a clinical staff member who lives in restricted postcode and uses public transport to get to work, is this going to be allowed?

Yes, staff can leave home if they need to travel to work, and cannot work from home. This includes use of public transport.

Do I need to wear PPE to and from work and at all times at work?

You do not need to wear PPE to and from work. We encourage respiratory and hand hygiene. There are no changes to our PPE guidance in healthcare settings.

I live in a hotspot and have been told that I cannot do my work from home, will I still be paid?

Staff who live in a restricted postcode can leave home if they need to travel to work, and cannot work from home.

How do we manage our hospital staff who don't live in a restricted postcode but are working in a hospital or outpatient clinic in a restricted postcode?

Staff can still travel into a hotspot for the purposes of conducting their work.

How do we manage a patient, from a restricted postcode, attending one of our hospitals or outpatient clinics?

There are no changes to how you would manage this patient. We continue to recommend physical distancing, regular hygiene and cleaning, and appropriate use of PPE in all outpatient settings. People from a restricted postcode are permitted to leave home for the purposes of receiving medical care.

Patients

How do we manage one of our patients attending a hospital or outpatient clinic in a restricted postcode?

Patients are permitted to travel to restricted postcodes for the reasons of receiving care. They should not stop in the restricted postcodes for other reasons, unless those are permitted reasons.

What level of identification will be required to identify whether patients or visitors are from a restricted postcode?

Healthcare services are not required to identify where patients or visitors live. Healthcare facilities should not request evidence of a visitor's address in order to prevent entry.

Are there any changes to the elective surgery program as a result of lockdowns across these restricted postcodes? I.e. are all surgery patients tested pre-op from restricted postcodes – what if they are positive but require urgent surgery?

There are no changes to the elective surgery program, or the process for managing urgent care in a patient with COVID-19. All who live in a restricted postcode are encouraged to be tested for COVID-19, but this is not a requirement to proceed with surgery.

What is expected of hospital staff if a patient or visitor is believed to have breached the Directions applied to the restricted postcodes?

This should be referred to Victoria Police.

Are we going to test all patients coming for surgery from restricted postcode areas before they have their surgery?

There are no changes to the elective surgery program, or the process for managing urgent care in a patient with COVID-19. All who live in a restricted postcode are encouraged to be tested for COVID-19, but this is not a requirement to proceed with surgery.

PPE

Are there different PPE kit requirements for a hospital that is likely to receive a patient from that area?

There are no changes to our PPE guidelines.

Are there any different PPE requirements for a clinician treating a patient from a restricted postcode? (whether they come by ambulance or self present)

There are no changes to our PPE guidelines.

Testing

Does a member of the public presenting to ED for an unrelated condition need to be automatically tested for COVID-19 if they are from a restricted postcode (even if they are asymptomatic for COVID-19)?

All who live in a restricted postcode are encouraged to be tested for COVID-19, but this is not a requirement to receive care in the emergency department.

Visitors

Are visitors allowed to attend a hospital or an outpatient clinic in a restricted postcode?

Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors – including those from restricted postcodes - are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

Are visitors allowed to attend a hospital if they are from a restricted postcode but the hospital is not?

Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors – including those from restricted postcodes - are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

Are visitors allowed to attend an outpatient clinic if they are from a restricted postcode but the clinic is not?

Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors – including those from restricted postcodes - are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

Suppliers

Can suppliers/delivery drivers/vehicles/transport attend from restricted postcodes to non-restricted postcodes or reverse?

People can travel for work, if they cannot work from home.

Residential aged care facilities (RACF)

Should RACFs in restricted postcodes go into lockdown? I.e. cease new admissions, cease visits except for end of life and essential care and cease residents going out of the RACFs except for essential services?

No. Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors – including those from restricted postcodes - are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

Should RACFs outside the restricted postcodes cease to allow visits from those living or working in restricted postcodes except for end of life and essential care?

No. Facilities within restricted postcodes should communicate that visiting is discouraged, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

All other facilities, statewide, should discourage visitors from restricted postcodes, unless necessary. Visitors are permitted when required for care giving, and for compassionate reasons. The number of visitors, and the duration of their stay should be minimised.

Can RACFs who have residents returning from a health service in a restricted postcode area ensure residents have tested negative to COVID-19 before accepting them back into the RACFs?

There are no changes to current processes for managing return to RACFs for residents who are in hospitals