



What is this factsheet about?

This factsheet outlines Western Health's principles for minimizing health care worker movement during COVID-19. At Western Health, the health and safety of our staff, patients, volunteers, visitors and community is our highest priority. The guidance in this factsheet will be continuously reviewed to ensure it aligns with Department of Health and the Chief Health Officer's advice.

Who should read this?

Western Health employees, volunteers, students, university partners and contractors.

What does the term 'movement' mean?

Movement refers to the flow of health care workers and health service employees **within** a health service, that is, staff moving from one clinical ward to another or across sites operated by the same health service (e.g. moving from Footscray to Sunshine hospital), **between** health services and into other sensitive places.

Guidance relating to restricting the movement of health care workers relates to two general contexts:

- Restriction to the movement of all Western Health Staff, relating to movement within and across Western Health sites, and between different health services; and
- Movement from a designated COVID streaming area.

Additional requirements also apply to healthcare worker movement in the following circumstances:

- Movement in the context of a hospital COVID-19 outbreak
- Movement in the context of hotel quarantine and ports of entry
- Movement between Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

Restrictions to the movement of all Western Health staff

Movement between sites

- Where possible, and where it does not impact on the provision of quality care, staff should work at **one site only**. Staff should only move across sites for the provision of clinical care, and if planning to do so should seek permission from the relevant Executive Director
- Due to current workforce demands across the Victorian health system (including for delivery of urgent COVID-19 testing and vaccination activity) there may be a need for workforce to move between campuses and facilities to support essential clinical and COVID-19 service provision
- Where movement is required, this should be conducted with appropriate risk mitigations in place (i.e. surveillance testing, attestations etc.).

Movement within a site

- Provide consistent staffing for a patient or area, to limit the number of staff who come into contact with a given patient
- Where feasible rostering practices to cohort healthcare workers into sub-teams (e.g. Team A and Team B within a workgroup)
- Only healthcare workers who are essential to the delivery of care should enter areas designated for the care of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Working from home

Where practical, staff performing non-clinical or non-patient facing roles should continue to work from home in line with public health directions

Staff attestation

At the start of each shift, all staff must complete the daily staff attestation and declare all sites at which they have worked. The declaration involves staff declaring whether they have completed a shift or shifts at another hospital in the 14 days prior to making the declaration including:

- a) The name of the relevant hospital; and
- b) Whether a shift, or any shifts, were on the roster of a COVID streaming area.

If staff cross sites during a shift they are required to repeat the staff attestation at the new site.

Surveillance testing

All staff are required to comply with surveillance testing requirements (see details below).

Vaccination

Vaccination is strongly recommended for all staff and a first dose is mandatory from 15 October (or evidence of appointment before 1 November) to continue working.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

All staff are required to follow the Western Health PPE guidelines and comply with the PPE requirements of the area/ ward/ setting to which they are moving.

Working across different health services

There are currently no additional restrictions to staff working between different health services, **unless** they have worked in a COVID streaming area, with a COVID-19 positive or high risk suspected patient, or have worked in a hospital with an outbreak.

Staff who work for more than one employer must declare they work at other sites by notifying their manager AND by emailing westernhealthhr@wh.org.au OR by completing this online declaration <https://bit.ly/3fTcLHI>.

Restrictions to movement of staff working in COVID streaming areas

What is a COVID streaming area?

A COVID streaming area means any patient treatment area in a hospital dedicated to treating a confirmed case or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Which health services have COVID streaming areas?

Designated COVID streaming areas include:

- Sunshine Hospital
- The Alfred Hospital
- Box Hill Hospital
- Royal Melbourne Hospital
- The Northern Hospital, Epping
- The Royal Children's Hospital
- The Royal Women's Hospital – Women's Health Patients Only
- Monash Medical Centre, Clayton – Maternity Patients Only
- Epping Private Hospital
- La Trobe Private Hospital

What are the requirements for a COVID streaming area rostered worker?

All healthcare workers working in a COVID streaming area are required to:

- Be fit-tested for N95 personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Wear appropriate levels of PPE (P2/ N95 respirator at a minimum)
- Be fully vaccinated (with second dose at least 12 days prior to commencing work)
- Be compliant with current surveillance testing requirements (see details below).

Movement of COVID streaming area workers

If working in a COVID streaming area, healthcare workers (clinical and non-clinical) may work in a different hospital or health service, as long as they are participating in a staff surveillance testing program and are compliant with completing the daily staff attestation (see details below).

Staff attestation

As required for all healthcare workers, staff working in COVID streaming area workers must comply with the relevant attestation requirements which requires disclosure of any shifts worked on the roster of a COVID streaming area within the past 14 days.

Surveillance testing

All staff must be compliant with current surveillance testing requirements (see details below).

Vaccination

All staff must be fully vaccinated (with second dose at least 12 days prior to commencing work).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All staff must be fit-tested for P2/ N95 PPE and wear appropriate levels of PPE (P2/ N95 respirator at a minimum). Staff moving from working in a COVID streaming area to non COVID streaming area are required to follow the Western Health PPE guidelines and comply with the PPE requirements of the area/ ward/ setting to which they are moving.

Staff movement in the context of a hospital outbreak

Staff exposed to a hospital outbreak will be contacted by the Public Health Unit who will determine the degree of exposure and associated directives for the staff member, for example, the need to quarantine, seek COVID-19 testing and any further restrictions to movement required.

Staff movement in the context of hotel quarantine and ports of entry

Staff who have undertaken a **placement at, worked in, or volunteered at**, a hotel quarantine site and/ or other port of entry must not work in a different site or healthcare setting within 14 days unless they have:

- completed 3 consecutive days off since undertaking a placement, working or volunteering in hotel quarantine; and
- return a negative COVID-19 test within 48 hours before working at Western Health; and
- provide evidence of the negative test result to their manager prior to commencing work

Staff who have been **released** from hotel quarantine following international or interstate travel, should not return to work for at least 7 days after completing quarantine and after they have returned a negative COVID-19 test 7 days post leaving hotel quarantine.

Staff who have been **released** from hotel quarantine through the Frontline Worker Accommodation program are not subject to any additional quarantine periods or conditions and can return to work.

Staff movement in the context of moving between Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria

Travel to/ from metropolitan Melbourne and rural/regional areas to provide authorised healthcare services is permitted, as long as the individual has not been advised to self-quarantine and has not been based at a health service experiencing an active outbreak in the previous 14 days. This includes visiting medical, nursing and allied health clinicians and junior doctors undertaking training rotations.

COVID-19 surveillance testing

Staff who provide direct care or have contact (even transient contact) with COVID-19 positive or high risk suspected COVID-19 patients are required to participate in COVID-19 surveillance testing. Please refer to the 'COVID-19 Asymptomatic Staff Screening Surveillance Testing Guideline' on the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#) for further information.

References

Department of Health and Humans Services. (2021). *Movement of healthcare workers and health service employees during coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (18 September 2021)*. Retrieved from: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiMv_jGlo_zAhUz83MBHeapAUYQFnoECBMQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhhs.vic.gov.au%2Fguidance-movement-workers-during-covid-19-doc&usg=AOvVaw06zry7Q5sX6rKE8_mtrNSZ