

Health Care Worker Movement during COVID-19

Updated 19 April 2022



Western Health

COVID - 19

Be Safe -- Be Smart -- Be Kind

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 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.

Restrictions to the movement of 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 are permitted to move across sites for the provision of clinical care or essential management support, with appropriate risk mitigations in place (including, compliance with COVID-safe principles and PPE).
- Movement across sites is now permitted for additional reasons including:
 - education and training
 - high priority meetings
 - participation in research

For details on permitted activities and approval processes required, please refer to the 'Education, training and research' and the 'Keeping Safe at Work' QRGs on the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#).

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
- Requirement to use specified breakrooms

- 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

Healthcare workers who work at a Residential Aged Care Facility

Due to the vulnerable patient cohorts, healthcare workers should work at a single residential aged care facility where possible.

If working across multiple residential aged care facilities, it is strongly recommended that staff complete Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) in the 24 hours prior to changing sites and return a negative result before commencing their scheduled shift.

COVID-safe principles

Staff must comply with physical distancing and density quotients, where possible. Staff must comply with infection prevention and control practices, including hand hygiene.

Vaccination

Staff must be double vaccinated, as per Victorian government requirements, and are required to have had a third dose by 29 March 2022.

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. All clinical staff must be fit-tested for P2/ N95 PPE.

Working across different health services

There are currently no additional restrictions to staff working between different health services.

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>.

Staff movement in the context of a hospital outbreak

Staff exposed to a hospital outbreak will be contacted by the WH Infection Prevention team 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.

References

Department of Health (2022) *Movement of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic – Revised (13 January 2022)*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/guidance-movement-workers-during-covid-19-doc>

Department of Health (2022) *Pandemic COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination (Specified Facilities) Order 2022 (No.6)*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register>

Department of Health (2022) *Pandemic COVID-19 (Additional Industry Obligations) Order 2022 (No. 8)*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register>