

Use of break rooms and rest areas

Updated 26 August 2022



Western Health

COVID - 19

Be Safe – Be Smart – Be Kind

Who should read this factsheet?

All Western Health staff including employees, students and contractors.

What is this factsheet about?

This factsheet outlines strategies to minimise COVID-19 transmission when Western Health staff are using break rooms or rest areas.

Break room and rest area infection prevention strategies

At Western Health all staff are encouraged to adhere to these infection prevention strategies when using break rooms, to help minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

- If you are unwell stay home
- Keep your distance from others
 - o Keep at least 1.5 meters from others
 - o Choose a single break area where possible and do not visit the break rooms of other areas
 - o Ensure the door to the break room remains closed
 - o Consider using the marquee break areas
- Maintain good hygiene
 - o Wash your hands before and after eating
 - o Sharing of communal meals or snacks is not permitted. Any catering provided should be individually wrapped and portioned
 - o Manage your personal protective equipment (PPE) safely
 - Keep your mask on if temporarily entering a break room for something like making a cup of tea that will then be consumed elsewhere
 - Personal protective equipment worn in a clinical area needs to be disposed of in the clinical area, within a clinical waste bin (yellow liner). Single use eye protection should be discarded or reusable eye protection should be cleaned prior to exiting the clinical area. Refer to the PPE - Face Shield and Safety Goggle Usage QRG (available via the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#))
 - A new mask and new clean eye protection (if applicable) should be donned to go to non-clinical spaces such as the café or marquee
 - If entering the break room to eat or drink, please dispose of your mask in the waste bin and dispose of your single use eye protection or clean your reusable eye protection (if applicable) and perform hand hygiene. Refer to

the PPE - Face Shield and Safety Goggle Usage on the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#)

- When PPE is removed, it is ESSENTIAL to maintain at least 1.5 metres physical distancing.
- Once you have finished eating and drinking, please perform hand hygiene and immediately put on a new mask and new eye protection eye protection (if applicable).
- Masks and reusable eye protection should not be placed on surfaces in areas where food and drink are consumed. Doing so poses risks of contamination of surfaces where food and drinks are prepared, stored or consumed. If this does occur, surfaces should be immediately cleaned with Clinell wipe/s.
- Always complete the break room QR code or COVID-19 Room/ Space Log sheet unless you are entering temporarily e.g. to fill up a drink bottle. If using a shared pen staff should clean the pen with a Clinell wipe and perform hand hygiene before and after completing the log sheet.
- Keep the environment clean
 - Prior to and after eating/ drinking please clean and disinfect the high touch surfaces you have used (e.g. table, chair, fridge door handle etc.) with Clinell wipes or equivalent cleaning products.
 - Meal rooms with a dishwasher should use cycles that wash using a detergent. Single use crockery/cutlery is only to be used if there is no dishwasher. Alternatively, staff may bring their own crockery/cutlery.

Staff who are close contacts

Staff who have returned to work as a workplace, social or household contact must wear an N95 mask and must not utilise indoor shared break areas with their mask off until 7 days following their exposure.

A number of outdoor break areas are available across the Health Service as outlined below.

The exception to this is Night Shift staff where Managers are encouraged to utilise a rostering system for available break areas to enable staff returning to work following an exposure to use an indoor break area on their own. It is recommended that when using break areas, staff remove their masks only for the period of time they are eating and drinking.

SUNSHINE:

- WCHRE courtyard
- Courtyard near coffee cart and retail pharmacy
- Marquee outside Portable Building 1

FOOTSCRAY:

- Ground Floor Courtyard

- Level 1 outdoor courtyard

WILLIAMSTOWN AND SUNBURY

- No outdoor areas as both sites have shaded outdoor areas suitable for breaks

BACCHUS MARSH

- Palliative care garden

MELTON

- Marquee next to generator room

Preparation of break rooms

Occupational Health & Safety will allocate each break room to a key contact person. The allocated person will:

- Use the checklist in Appendix 1 to assess and prepare the break room to ensure the space meets the Western Health principles for reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- The number of seats available within the break room must reflect the ability to maintain seating 1.5m apart. Excess chairs should be removed or stacked and secured together with cable ties. Please contact the COVID-19 logistics team via email Covid19-Logistics2@wh.org.au if you need assistance to problem solve the removal of chairs.
- Signage should be placed on the table such as the keeping your distance poster
- Remove any shared condiments from the break room.
- Consider setting up additional spaces as break rooms. The need for physical distancing has resulted in less capacity for staff to use break rooms, as a result more staff are eating at their desks. Therefore please review available space to identify alternate areas for staff to take their breaks.
- Ensure staff from different clinical areas do not use the same break room.
- Create a break room QR code by clicking this link <http://qr.codes.wh.org.au>, selecting the relevant break room and printing out the QR code for display in the break room. If the break room is not listed please email qr-code-teamrooms@wh.org.au to request a QR code.
- For staff who cannot use a QR code, set up and store the 'COVID-19 Room/ Space Log Sheet' (available via the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#)) for at least 30 days.
- Ensure staff use the QR code (preferred) or complete the COVID-19 Room/ Space Log sheet every time they enter a break room. This will enable contact tracing in the event of a suspected or positive staff member.
- Consider increasing the number of break times in a shift to allow staggering of break times to reduce congestion in meal areas or external areas at key times.
- Monitor the use of the break room and reinforce the strategies recommended above.
- We are aware that the need for physical distancing can make it more difficult for staff to find a space to take their break. Eating in a solo office space can be a viable alternative. If eating in an office, ensure work surfaces are cleaned down before and after. Move keyboard away

from eating area to prevent cross contamination if eating at desk, as office keyboards are difficult to clean.

- Eating in a shared office or meeting room should be a last resort. Preferred locations to eat include break rooms, the marquee spaces, wellness hubs or outside weather permitting.
- If there are no appropriate alternatives and the office space/meeting room needs to be used as a break room, please set it up as per Appendix 1 to minimise risk of COVID transmission.
- Treatment spaces must not be used as break rooms.

Rest areas for staff:

Rest areas for staff, i.e. where staff may take naps or sleep, must follow the same principles as other break rooms. In addition, staff using rest areas must:

- Ensure that bed linen is changed after each use. Staff should place bed linen in linen skips prior to leaving the rest area.
- Not share blankets between staff
 - Remove and dispose of PPE items (including single use face shields and single use safety goggles) appropriately in sleeping areas and replace before resuming work. Refer to the PPE - Face Shield and Safety Goggle Usage QRG (available via the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#))

References

Department of Health (2022) *COVID-19 Best practice approaches for safe staff amenities for health services (23 February 2022)*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19-best-practice-approaches-for-safe-staff-amenities-for-health-services-doc>

Department of Health. (2022). *COVID-19 Best practice approaches for safe staff amenities for health services (25 September 2020)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/covid-19-best-practice-approaches-for-safe-staff-amenities-for-health-services-doc>

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Appendix 1: COVID-19 Break room preparation checklist

Please complete this checklist for each break room allocated to you. Resources, posters and signage referred to in this checklist can be found within the Western Health Resources section of the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](#). Please ensure posters and signage are printed in colour and laminated.

Actions	Check when completed ✓
Keep your distance from others	
Calculate the room capacity based on 1.5m spacing. Display keeping safe at work posters within the break room.	
Ensure the number of chairs available in the break room reflect the room capacity. Remove excess chairs or label chairs which should not be used. An example of a 'do not sit here' sign can be found in Appendix 2	
Position chairs 1.5 metres apart. Consider displaying 'Keeping Your Distance' poster/s (see Appendix 2; available via the Western Health Coronavirus Site) to reinforce 1.5 metre physical distancing.	
Ensure the room has a door which can be closed when in use	
Maintain good hygiene	
Ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available in the break room for staff to complete hand hygiene before and after eating	
Keep yourself and your colleagues safe and informed	
Set up bins to enable staff to discard masks outside of the break room before entering (if in a clinical area, this MUST be a yellow infectious waste bin without a lid)	
Display signage How To Wear a Medical Mask Safely for the do's and don'ts when using surgical masks	
Have new masks available within the break room to enable staff to don as they exit or if spending an extended time in the room while not eating	
Set up a break room QR code and COVID-19 Room/ Space Log Sheet in the break room (available via the Western Health Coronavirus Site). The log should be completed by all staff who use the break room. Staff should record their name, contact number & entry and exit times	
Display a poster reminding staff to check-in using the QR code or to fill in the log sheet (example in Appendix 3)	
Keep the environment clean	

Set up hygiene station/s with Clinell wipes or equivalent cleaning products for staff to use at doffing and donning areas

Display signage for hygiene stations

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Appendix 1: Example of a 'Do Not Sit Here' sign and Keeping Your Distance poster

To order the 'do not sit here' signs please contact Covid19-Logistics2@wh.org.au. To access to 'keeping your distance' poster please visit the [Western Health Coronavirus Site](https://www.westernhealth.wa.gov.au/Coronavirus).



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Appendix 2: Example of a please remember to check in sign



Please remember:

All staff who use the
break room **MUST**
check in via the QR code
or log sheet.

Thank you