

Toolbox Talk

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Maintaining a safe workplace has always been our priority and this is especially important during a pandemic. It's why we've developed a [COVID-19 Vaccination Position Statement](#). This statement explains what we're doing to stop the spread of the virus and ways we can all work COVIDSafe.

Below is a summary of the main points, but you can read our statement in full, [here](#) and find all the information you need at our [Information Hub](#).

Vaccination and working at Programmed

We are encouraging all Programmed workers to get vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines are proving to be an effective way to reduce the spread of the virus and its impact on lives and livelihoods.

Some of our people will need to be vaccinated to be able to work

You may be required to get vaccinated to work for several reasons:

1. **Government** health orders make vaccination at your workplace compulsory
2. **Our Customers** have made vaccination compulsory for workers
3. **Programmed** has identified your workplace as a high-risk setting (see below)

A high-risk setting could be aged care, in-home care, or food processing works—or, it could be a Programmed office if COVID-19 is circulating in the community.

A heightened and ongoing risk of COVID-19 in the community

While some groups working in high-risk settings are required to be vaccinated now, others, such as office workers, are likely to need to be vaccinated to return to their office when they reopen, as the virus continues to circulate in our communities.

It's why we're encouraging you to get vaccinated now, so you can keep safe and keep working, which is important for mental health and financial security.

We'll continue to keep you informed of changes affecting your work and you can always visit our [Information Hub](#) to view up-to-date resources and FAQs.

Position Statement: COVID-19 Vaccinations



The Programmed leadership team have been considering our approach to the complex issue of COVID-19 vaccinations and workplaces.

We have done this in response to the highly contagious Delta strain of the virus which has not been defeated by prolonged lockdowns in NSW, ACT, Victoria and New Zealand, and the complex legal and regulatory frameworks that exist around the issue of managing the safety and wellbeing of our employees through the pandemic.

Programmed has consistently applied a risk management approach to all areas of health and safety and the pandemic is no different. This is necessary as, unlike the flu, to which COVID-19 is regularly compared, the regulators have designated COVID-19 a workplace health and safety matter. As such, we must consider and take all practicable steps to minimise the risk of harm to our employee from performing their work. Unlike many workplace hazards, COVID-19 follows our people into the community and their homes increasing the complexity of management.

In addition to Programmed's obligations under health and safety legislation, we are presented with a range of other factors such as Health Orders requiring workers in certain industries to be vaccinated to be allowed to work, and customers who are mandating that only Programmed employees who have been vaccinated are permitted to work on their sites.

Vaccination is only one control in managing the risk associated with COVID-19. Other forms of control, such as wearing facemasks, practising social distancing, proper hand cleaning and sanitising, and checking in with the QR codes everywhere we go are others. The clear health advice being offered is that vaccination is an effective addition to the suite of controls which reduce transmission and, in addition to minimising the negative health impacts of COVID-19.

Programmed's position remains that we strongly encourage all employees to get vaccinated as soon as they possibly can.

We recognise that getting appointments outside of working hours may be challenging, so you should speak to your manager about vaccinations during working hours if you are having difficulty obtaining an appointment. Should you encounter any of the mild side effects from a vaccine, such as cold symptoms, that prevent you from working, you may use your personal sick leave while you recover.

With so many of Programmed's work activities involving close interaction with customers, members of the public, contractors, and health care recipients, we are particularly concerned about the health and safety of our people and those who cannot, for medical reasons, be vaccinated. In line with this, Programmed is implementing of the following measures with regards vaccination status to minimise the risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of our people. In the case of employees who work:

- In an industry or worksite covered by a health order, only vaccinated employees will be permitted to attend site for work (e.g. residential, aged care/ some airports, etc.);
- On a worksite where a customer has mandated that only vaccinated workers are permitted only vaccinated employees will be permitted to work; and
- In a workplace where Programmed has assessed the risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19 to vulnerable people is high, only vaccinated employees will be permitted to work (e.g. in-home aged or disability care);
- In a workplace where Programmed has assessed the risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19 is high, only vaccinated employees and contractors will be permitted to work (e.g. food processing);
- In a Programmed office environment (which is enclosed and may present a higher risk of transmission), **where COVID19 is circulating in the community**, only vaccinated employees and contractors will be permitted to work onsite. As levels of community transmission and vaccination rates change, a range of controls for unvaccinated or medically exempt employees will be applied to limit the risk of contracting the virus. This may include not being able to attend the office for work, arrangements for remote working where possible, and wearing of masks and/or rapid antigen testing protocols may be implemented.

Position Statement: COVID-19 Vaccinations



To assist in preparing for a re-opening of borders and economies, it is expected that evidence of vaccination status will be required to be presented in order to perform work. As such, Programmed will be seeking to obtain and store our employees' vaccination status for this purpose. ProSafe has been set up to capture your vaccination status and this has been configured to maintain your privacy and security. An instructional guide that can assist you in recording and uploading evidence of your vaccination status as not vaccinated, partly vaccinated, fully vaccinated or prefer not to say, is available [here](#).

It is understood that accessing vaccination appointments can be difficult, but we expect that to be resolved by the end of the year and that all employees who wish to be vaccinated will be. Should you have an impediment to being vaccinated, such as a medical condition or religious objection, you should speak to your manager or human resources advisor. For any other questions please speak to your manager or Regional Health and Safety Representative.

Programmed will continue to monitor the COVID-19 environment and will adjust our position to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our people. We recognise that these are uncertain and rapidly changing times and we remain committed to supporting and protecting the health and wellbeing of our employees, contractors, customers and communities.

Should you need any further information or have any questions, please visit our [Information Hub](#).

We will keep you informed of any changes to this approach as soon as practicable.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Frequently Asked Questions

7 October 2021

Prepared for:

Programmed

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

What is Programmed's position on vaccination?

Programmed is committed to maintaining a safe workplace which is why we've developed a COVID-19 Vaccination Position Statement to outline what we're doing to reduce the spread of the virus and ways our people can work COVIDSafe.

Below are the key points from our COVID-19 position, you can read the full statement [here](#).

Programmed views COVID-19 vaccinations as an important measure to reduce the risk of severe symptoms in the event any of our employees or contractors contract the COVID-19 virus. It is on this premise we encourage all our employees to get vaccinated.

The re-opening roadmap to a COVIDSafe community that the Australian and New Zealand governments are implementing relies heavily on a double-dosed vaccinated population and it is likely that many industries and workplaces, lifestyle activities, and venues will only be open to those who are fully vaccinated.

In addition to this, with so many of Programmed's work activities involving close interaction with customers, members of the public, contractors, and health care recipients, we are particularly concerned about the health and safety of our people and those who cannot, for medical reasons, be vaccinated. In line with this, Programmed is implementing the following measures.

In the case of employees who work:

- In an industry or worksite covered by a health order, only vaccinated employees will be permitted to attend site for work (e.g. residential, aged care/ some airports, etc.);
- On a worksite where a customer has mandated that only vaccinated employees are permitted only vaccinated employees will be permitted to work;
- In a workplace where Programmed has assessed the risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19 to vulnerable people is high, only vaccinated employees will be permitted to work (e.g. in-home aged or disability care);
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- In a Programmed office environment (which is enclosed and may present a higher risk of transmission), **where COVID19 is circulating in the community**, only vaccinated employees and contractors will be permitted to work on site. As levels of community transmission and vaccination rates change, a range of controls for unvaccinated or medically exempt employees will be applied to limit the risk of contracting the virus. This may include not being able to attend the office for work, arrangements for remote working where possible, and wearing of masks and/or rapid antigen testing protocols may be implemented.

As a Programmed employee, do I have to get vaccinated?

Choosing to get vaccinated is a personal choice. Programmed is encouraging all of our employees to get a COVID-19 vaccination and register your vaccination status because it can help to:

- reduce the risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19
- reduce the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces and in communities
- keep you working - some workplaces require you to be vaccinated
- get us all back to the people, places and activities we love

In some Programmed workplaces, employees will need to be vaccinated to be able to work. That's because health orders, Programmed, or of our customers have made COVID-19 vaccination mandatory in these spaces.

If there is a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19 at work, we may invite only vaccinated employees to work on site. Your manager will keep you informed of any changes affecting your work.

Is COVID-19 deemed a workplace health and safety risk?

Yes, across Australia and New Zealand, COVID-19 has been determined by all workplace safety regulators as a workplace hazard. Employers must implement appropriate controls to minimise the risk of transmission and contraction.

Programmed **has** closely adhered to workplace health and safety regulators and government health advice on COVID-19 precautions since the commencement of the pandemic. This has mainly included control measures such as mask wearing, social distancing, hygiene controls, discouraging work in the office when sick, monitoring high risk exposure sites and working from home.

As an employer we have a duty under Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Given that the health effects of the Delta variant can be more severe than previous COVID-19 strains, in line with our vision of Zero Harm, we want to reduce the risks of COVID-19 related harm to our employees as best we possibly can. This is why Programmed is committed and strongly encourages **all** of our employees to get vaccinated.

Do COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of transmission to others?

[Research](#) shows the AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccines reduce the transmission of the virus by 40-60%.

Aren't existing COVID-19 controls such as masks, good hygiene and sanitising good enough for the Delta strain?

The Delta variant is much more transmissible and infectious than previous strains. Whilst existing COVID-19 controls are still effective, transmission rates are increasing significantly faster than earlier COVID-19 strains.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fully vaccinated people can still spread the virus to others. However, vaccinated people appear to be infectious for a shorter period and have a much lower chance of developing severe illness. The greatest risk of transmission is among unvaccinated people who are much more likely to contract, and therefore transmit the virus. Further information is available [here](#).

Research data also suggests that the Delta variant causes more severe illness and increased number of hospitalisations than previous strains of COVID-19 in unvaccinated people which is why there is such encouragement for all individuals who qualify to get vaccinated.

If I or a member of my team contracts COVID-19 from work and suffers serious illness, would we be entitled to workers compensation?

You **may** be entitled to workers compensation if you sustain an injury because you have caught COVID-19 in the course of your employment. To be compensable, the virus must have been contracted while working **and** the workplace must be proven to be the main factor contributing to the employee becoming infected.

Due to the nature of viruses, identifying how and when you contracted the virus can be difficult.

Programmed is asking me to provide my vaccination status. Why is this?

As Australia and New Zealand work towards achieving vaccination targets as part of the roadmap to a COVIDSafe community, more and more industries, customers and employers are mandating that employees are fully vaccinated in order to perform work. Programmed must ensure that we adhere to these requirements. In order to do so, we need to make sure we know who is and isn't vaccinated.

How can I upload my vaccination status?

Different business units are using different tools to record employees' vaccinations. For example, Programmed Skilled Workforce is using Programmed GO and FastTrack to capture all of their casual employee's vaccination records.

The Programmed Health Professionals business is recording vaccinations through HR Link. For Programmed Group, Maintenance and Facilities Management employees, we are using ProSafe to securely capture vaccinations for office and field work teams.

Updating your vaccination status is important and easy. Read the instruction guide located [here](#).

Who can see my vaccination status data?

Only you will be able to see your own vaccination status records in ProSafe. Your line manager will receive a notification when a vaccination status is updated. The HSE team receives a weekly vaccination status report which does not include any vaccination records. The HSE team will work with operations to review the relevant reports when required for operational purposes only.

If a customer requires information regarding your vaccination status where it is an inherent requirement of your role, we will be required to share your vaccination status, but not the records themselves, with that customer. We are requiring any customers seeking this information to confirm in writing that they will comply with all privacy laws, including an obligation to ensure safe storage of the information. They will not further distribute the information and they will destroy the information when it is no longer required by them to comply with current laws.

Should I encourage my team and colleagues to get vaccinated?

Programmed acknowledges that vaccination is a personal choice. While we encourage all Programmed employees, who can get vaccinated to get vaccinated, we also respect the views of others. There are some people who don't want to get vaccinated and some people who cannot get vaccinated for medical reasons.

We do view the COVID-19 vaccination as an important measure that helps to keep our teams, their families and the community at large safe. The more our employees are protected the less likely any of us are going to suffer any severe ill effects of the COVID-19 virus and it's for this reason we encourage all our employees to get vaccinated.

For those who are vaccine hesitant, we encourage you to speak to your local GP and seek advice on your own personal circumstances.

Will Programmed require our contractors to be fully vaccinated?

Unless a public health order or Programmed customer mandates vaccination there is currently no requirement for contractors to be vaccinated or to record their vaccination status with us.

If vaccination is required in order for the contractor to do their work, then the contractor must provide evidence of their vaccination when presenting for work.

Will I still have to wear a mask in the office, if I'm fully vaccinated?

We'll continue to follow the advice of health authorities and safety regulators. Currently, there is no guidance on vaccinated employees having to wear a mask in the office.

Your manager will keep you informed of any changes, including whether you need to wear a mask at work.

Will Programmed implement Rapid Antigen Testing?

Some of Programmed's customers have implemented Rapid Antigen Testing at their sites and, as a condition of entry to work on these sites, our employees are required to be tested.

At this stage, Programmed will not implement Rapid Antigen Testing. Programmed's COVID-19 response position has always been aligned to the relevant Government advice and health directions. If there is a mandate on Rapid Antigen Testing, Programmed will of course adhere to these requirements.

We are, however, ensuring that we're prepared for such changes and are making arrangements with Programmed's existing pre-employment medical provider, InjuryNet, to allow us to request Rapid Antigen Testing services if this is required in the future.

Will Programmed's COVID-19 position change?

It is expected that Government policy will continue to evolve and that these policy changes will have a direct and indirect impact on Programmed's operations. We will continue to monitor any legislative changes and or health advice updates, assess and communicate if and how these changes may affect our operations.

Where can I find more information?

For FAQs, our full Position Statement, and all other up to date information, visit our [COVID-19 Vaccination Information Hub](#).