AUGUST 2020

BUSINESS EVENTS VICTORIA

COVIDSAFE

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

BUSINESS EVENTS VICTORIA
Principles for COVIDSafe Business Events

Objectives

This Business Events Victoria COVIDSafe *Best Practice Principles* document for business events provides a framework and reference point for the industry to work together to deliver safe and responsible events:

➢ It sets out public health principles, key considerations and provides strategies to assist in the delivery of business events ;

➢ It aims to guide Venues/Suppliers and Event Organisers, providing links to resources and protocols during the event planning and design cycle, to increase safety precautions throughout the attendee or delegate journey.

1. Stay up to date on Current Restrictions in Victoria

States and territories around Australia are at different stages of restrictions and re-opening. Restrictions in Victoria are evolving and it is important to stay up to date on the current restrictions that are relevant for your business type and operating location within the state. Please refer to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website for the summary and information on permitted work sites by industry.

As of 10 August, the summary of restrictions are as follows:
Stage 4 restrictions across metropolitan Melbourne
Stage 3 restrictions throughout regional Victoria

2. Commitment to Framework for a COVIDSafe Guideline for the Business Events Industry

Businesses should recognise the importance of developing and implementing a COVIDSafe Plan (National COVID-19 Commission Advisory Board) to keep your workforce safe and virus free by developing safe work practices and consider how you can reconfigure your operations to adapt to ongoing restrictions.

Businesses in Victoria that are allowed to operate under current restriction levels in Victoria must have a COVIDSafe Plan in place that:

➢ Prevent the introduction of COVID-19 in your workplace;

➢ Ensure the level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce;
➢ Prepare for and respond to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace; and
➢ Demonstrate how you will meet all the requirements set out by the Victorian Government, including higher-risk industries or workplaces that have additional requirements of employers and employees.

Businesses need to develop safe work practices and consider how they can reconfigure their operations to adapt to ongoing restrictions. It is highly recommended to develop this plan now to ensure you are able to restart when it is permissible.

a. Businesses need to take responsibility to ensure personal and employee safety

Industry stakeholders are encouraged to adopt best-practice personal safety and hygiene regimes as outlined by DHHS as it relates to the [Principles for COVIDSafe ways of living](#).

Good personal hygiene protects everyone including yourself and reduces the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and now more than ever is a crucial element of event operations. Please refer to [Safe Work Australia for the Health and Hygiene checklist](#).

b. Venues and Suppliers will commit to a COVIDSafe Business Operating Plan

Venues and Suppliers are responsible for adopting a [COVIDSafe Plan](#) to prepare for and respond to health, hygiene and safety requirements that includes but is not limited to the following:

➢ Procedures on arrival and at the building entrance;
➢ Capacity management and physical distancing;
➢ External and internal signage;
➢ Food and beverage service;
➢ Medical services;
➢ Ventilation;
➢ Environmental hygiene and sanitation practices;
➢ No-touch policies; and
➢ COVID-19 safety training for staff members and contractors.

As a reference, Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre have put in place a VenueSafe Plan and measures to prepare for re-opening. To read more about MCEC's response to COVID-19, please visit mcec.com.au/venuesafe.

As restrictions ease in Victoria and businesses are allowed to restart in future, ensure that you are up to date with information and relevant guidelines that are in place specific to your business, including the Hospitality and Tourism Guidelines on the Business Victoria website (when available).

c. Environmental Hygiene Checklist and COVID Clean Training

Event organisers, venues and suppliers must work together to ensure strict hygiene protocols:

- ➤ Contactless sanitation stations throughout the venue;
- ➤ Contactless access through doorways;
- ➤ Sensor faucets in toilet facilities where possible;
- ➤ Cleaning, disinfecting and monitoring of all high-touch areas such as lifts, escalators, handrails, door handles where contactless protocols is not possible;
- ➤ Hygiene best practice signage;
- ➤ Physical distancing signage;
- ➤ Cleaning protocols for delivery and receiving goods at loading docks;

Please refer to the Safe Work Australia Cleaning checklist.

Venues and suppliers are encouraged to undergo the COVID Clean Practicing Business module, a national program to provide Australian businesses with the information and systems to develop COVID-19 cleaning procedures and support businesses in their efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 and provide an assurance to delegates and visitors to their venues and premises. For more information on COVID Clean online training Victorian businesses, visit VTIC Covid-19 webpage or email accreditation@vtic.com.au.

* Businesses that are not currently accredited through the Quality Tourism Framework will need to sign up and complete Accreditation Level 1 to access the COVID Clean module. Accreditation fees have been waived until December 2020.

3. Plan and Implement Business and Safety Practices to Protect Staff, Stakeholders and Delegates

a. Implement COVIDSafe practices and processes

Training Plan
- ➤ Develop training plan that addresses and is aligned with a COVIDSafe plan as it relates to Venue and Event Organiser, including putting in place a clear chain of command in dealing with contingencies and issues;

➢ Implement training for all staff before and at pre-determined timelines during the event; and
➢ Develop checklist for staff as part of training plan.

Crowd Management and Physical Distancing
➢ Clearly communicate expectations before and during the event regarding physical distancing requirements, hand hygiene, cough/sneezing behaviour and staying home if Staff or Attendee is unwell;
➢ Stagger arrivals, departures and breaks where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entry and exit, and in common areas;
➢ Rethink every touch-point of the event. Modify registration process to reduce contact on-site, e.g. encourage online and self-service registration, pre-printed or self-printed name badges. Spread self-registration kiosks throughout registration areas to reduce congestion and improve the continuous flow of attendees to ensure a safe pathway for arrival;
➢ Plan and ensure that conference rooms, event spaces and seating distribution will be set up for physical distancing to establish 1.5 metre separation and maximum gathering requirement is not exceeded;
➢ Plan and provide barriers, markings and spacing aids, such as visual cues to facilitate physical distancing, manage capacity, and flow directions where attendees would typically congregate;
➢ Manage number of attendees in any specific space to comply with current restrictions in Victoria;
➢ Keep plenary and break-out sessions to under 2 hours in duration;
➢ Modify practices and programming to reduce how long attendees are in contact with each other and how many attendees come into contact with each other;
➢ Consider cohorting attendees in designated social circles/bubbles, if possible, to limit exposure risk (e.g. same attendees partake in the same conference sessions);
➢ Monitor real-time movement of people and have mechanisms in place for corrective action; and
➢ Consider virtual options as contingency or to facilitate programming and limit physical attendance, such as live streaming the event, recording a podcast or video, etc.

Health and Hygiene
➢ Minimise contact, such as having cashless transactions at registration desk;
➢ Plan for conference and meeting catering and refreshments to be individually served or as individually packaged meals;
➢ Promote physical distancing and good hygiene practices at key points, such as at bathrooms;
➢ Ensure meeting spaces, shared equipment and amenities will be cleaned frequently, before and after use;
➢ Ensure spray sanitiser and wipes are made available at all contact points;
➢ Display hygiene measures and sanitation requirements;
➢ Encourage and enforce these measures;
➢ Ensure role and routine clarity for all personnel, including on-the-day point of contact for managing issues and concerns; and
➢ Ensure medical facilities are available on-site.

Food Service Safety
➢ Staff training on food safety practices;
➢ Increased cleaning and sanitisation;
➢ Handwashing protocols;
➢ Contactless ordering;
➢ Plated and seated service or individual packaged services; and
➢ Food safety plans and record keeping.
Please refer to [Victoria State Government resource on Food Safety](#).

b.   Enable Effective Contact Tracing

Fast and effective contact tracing is a key pillar of containment strategy and to stop the spread of COVID-19. Event organisers should be proactive to make it easier for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to trace attendees if needed.

Recording people's movements will help DHHS to do this quickly and efficiently. Event organiser will undertake best practice policies to encourage attendees to use the record keeping mechanisms at conferences and meetings to enable contact tracing processes, if needed.

Event organisers are encouraged to:

➢ Educate attendees pre-event and throughout the duration of event on record keeping expectations and mechanisms at the event;
➢ Consider ways to guide best practice behaviours through event design;
➢ Start the tracking process at the registration entry-point of the event and design continual monitoring through rooms and trade/exhibition spaces;
➢ Consider utilising self-service kiosks and technology such as near field communication (NFC) or QR code scanning at vital points on the event layout for movement information capture and reporting;
➢ Educate and influence attendees to take responsibility for their own record keeping;
➢ Incorporate record keeping mechanisms at events for attendees, using options such as self-selected technology or the COVIDSafe App; and
➢ Notify attendees that attendance information will be collected for the purpose of contact tracing and may be disclosed to DHHS should the need arise.

c.   Retaining Records

Event organisers are encouraged to retain attendance records that can be supplied to DHHS should they need to contact trace. Operators are encouraged to retain records of attendees for a minimum of four weeks, this being the minimum period necessary to support effective contact tracing.

d. Encourage a culture of adhering to best practice COVID-19 Risk Management

Event Organisers are encouraged to:

➢ Utilise leadership, influence, education and best practice to ensure DHHS guidelines on hygiene and adherence to event policies put in place by event organisers are upheld in delivering the event (pre, during and post event).

➢ Build in a rigorous risk assessment exercise during planning that considers :

a. Contingency decision to be made to restrict, modify, postpone, cancel, or proceed with holding an event;

b. Risk assessment to be undertaken, taking into consideration requirements by DHHS and utilising resources and guidelines, and evaluation of risk factors associated with the event should take into account an appraisal of the likelihood that the event may contribute to the spread of COVID-19 and that the health services capacity may be exceed by such spread;

c. Capacity to apply prevention and control measures, that is, the ability to implement actions that can reduce the risks associated with the event;

d. Recommend staff to complete the Staff COVID-19 health questionnaire before each shift;

e. Develop policies and plan for screening staff, attendees and volunteers for symptoms of and/or recent exposure (14 days prior) to COVID-19 before allowing them access to the venue or to attend the event;

f. Implement health screening at access points including hand sanitisation;

g. Develop plans, procedures, protocols that address how to safely care for attendees who develop COVID-19 related symptoms or who need care (e.g. injury or illness);

h. Establish an area/areas where attendees who become unwell during the event can be isolated;

i. Establish in-event health service plans to isolate and transport attendees, who become unwell or show signs and symptoms during the event, safely;

j. Plan to show how records of the risk management process are kept including:

- The identified hazards, assessed risks and chosen control measures (such as hazard checklists, worksheets and assessment tools used in working through the risk management process);
- How and when the control measures were implemented, monitored and reviewed;
- Who event organisers consulted with;
- Relevant training records; and
- Any plans for future changes.

➢ Develop a risk communication strategy aimed at keeping DHHS and key stakeholders informed about the health situation, key developments, and recommended actions; and

➢ Develop a preparedness and response plan that establishes a clear chain of command.

Event organisers can prepare, implement and measure this adherence using technology, risk management implementation, briefings, marketing, and incident reporting processes.

e. Safe operations of Coach Transfers and Transportation

Event organisers and coach operators must prioritise the health, safety and welfare of staff and delegates and are encouraged to work together closely and adhere to the principles of safe transfer of delegates in conjunction with business events.

Principles around health and safety on transport should be consistently adhered to in line with current restrictions in Victoria and COVIDSafe health, hygiene and cleaning requirements as it applies to venues and facilities:

➢ Be mindful of COVIDSafe capacity on board the vehicle and anticipate the expected number of attendees who will board;

➢ Delegates who are unwell should not board the vehicle;

➢ Maintain physical distancing on board including imposing seating restrictions between passengers and restricting access to areas immediately around the driver;

➢ Provide hand sanitisers or cleaning wipes on board;

➢ Alter the way attendees enter and exit the vehicle to allow for unidirectional flow throughout the vehicle;

➢ Where possible and appropriate, consider opening windows or adjust air-conditioning to improve ventilation;

➢ Consider the most efficient route to minimise duration of travel on board the vehicle.

4. Communication of this Best Practice and Principles Document

Event Organisers, Venues and Suppliers are encouraged utilise the principles and resources in this document for your COVIDSafe plans and to actively communicate your business' COVIDSafe plans as part of your client engagement. This will be one of the ways the industry can actively instil confidence back to clients to re-start planning for the future and confidence back to the sector and community overall.

Resources and References:

Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) [Recovery and Rebound Framework Synopsis for the Australian Business Events Industry](#)

Victoria State Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – [Victoria's Restriction Levels](#)

Victoria State Government Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) – [How to Stay Safe and Well](#)

National COVID-19 Coordination Commission principles for businesses [COVIDSafe Planning Toolkit](#)

Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) [Guiding Steps for the Victorian Tourism Industry](#)

Quality Tourism Framework (QTF) [COVID Clean Online Training](#)

Safe Work Australia guidelines for [Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines for Hospitality](#) operators

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications [Principles for COVID-19 Public Transport Operations](#)

World Health Organization [Key Planning Recommendations for Mass Gatherings in the context of COVID-19](#)

For more information:

BUSINESS EVENTS VICTORIA
www.businesseventsvictoria.com
info@businesseventsvictoria.com