

ASSISTANCE FOR COVID-19 IDENTIFIED BUSINESSES



With thanks to CCIQ for the support in preparing this document

Introduction

This guide has been developed by CCIQ after recent cases in Gin Gin and Eumundi. This is a first draft of the document and input is greatly appreciated, particularly as requirements change.

The Gin Gin business was notified by Queensland Health that they had a customer who had tested positive for COVID and had been in the store for 7 ½ minutes. They were given 30 minutes before the information was made public and the business was notified through friends on their own social media page.

This document identifies the key learning to date.

As your representative, QSEC will endeavour to:

- Contact the affected business as early as possible
- Keep in touch with you and your journey.
- Make sure you are in contact with the relevant health officials.
- Ensure you have contact with the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.
- Ensure you have the appropriate links for cleaning reimbursements.



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Are you a COVID-19 Identified Business?

- Hopefully, your business will only be closed for a short period of time, and the impact will be minimal.
- Your business may be required to undertake a deep clean and face a temporary closure and possible revenue downturn for during this time. Only close contact venues will be asked to close while cleaning can be completed. The business will be asked to organise cleaning either of a specific area or the entire venue. Casual contact venues will not need to undertake this process, unless instructed by the Public Health Unit.
- Unfortunately, you may also face social media and reputation impacts; rumors, gossip, and trolls (see Social Media section for more details).
- Orders may be canceled and there may be a downturn in trade for even days after the deep clean has been completed.
- For hospitality businesses this may mean the removal of all prepared food and the loss of all bookings during that time.

FIRST STEPS

1. Organise COVID tests for staff, particularly those who were in close contact with the COVID case.
2. Arrange for a [deep clean \(refer page 8\)](#) This can be done either by the business, following the guidelines developed, or by third party contracts that are available in most parts of Queensland.
NB: Even if this isn't a mandated objective, you should consider carefully to ensure your business minimises the impact of potential negative press, and support employee and client confidence.
3. Use [this template to notify your customers](#)

Staff

The Office of the Small Business Commissioner has a hotline: 13 QGOV (13 74 68) and a Disaster Resilliance Hub

When a business has been identified as a Contact Site, Queensland Health may require staff to have a COVID test, and those who were in close proximity to the COVID case may be required to isolate for 14 days. If you have been following the correct COVID procedures this may be reduced or minimised. Talk to the Queensland Small Business Commission for direct instructions 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

For many small businesses this has the potential to cause staffing issues, to the point where the business may not be able to operate at even part capacity, just simply because they don't have enough staff available.

All the information regarding testing can be found (currently) at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/testing-and-fever-clinics#testing-centre-map>

The staff will be worried and upset by what is happening to them. Encourage the business owner to keep in touch with the staff as much as possible. 14 days in quarantine is long time without family, friends, and support, so a check in every couple of days becomes a lifeline of sorts.

Remember: no-one should visit these staff physically, unless they wish to spend 14 days in quarantine as well.

Social Media

- Social Media will be a mix of support and outrage, support for the business, and outrage this has happened in their community.
- Some of the comments will be understandable, given the fear people have, while others will be opportunistic, seeking to do maximum damage, hence it will be more important than ever to check it regularly, or even turn off comments for a time to give you a break.
- If you choose to keep comments on, you should endeavour to answer questions as soon as possible to ensure proactive branding. Keep positive and model positive language to ensure your communication is clear and concise.
- If necessary, engaging a marketing person may be able to assist in the additional workflow.
- If you choose to engage, the following script is a proven method to de-escalate the situation.
- Hi <Persons Name>, thank you for comment and feedback. Please PM us directly so that we can better understand your feedback and work to resolve any issue you might have.

Rinse and repeat!

Run competitions, do samples, post photos of clean, Covid safe environs. Engage your local cheer squad (and your social enterprise community) to assist with social media support regarding re-opening, fantastic products. QSEC will encourage other members to share posts, keeping the wider community up to date. Book your local community members for a selfie and post positive messages of support. Remember to thank your hard working team!

Please note: your business may be listed on the Qld Health website for some time after you have reopened (14 days on the contact tracing site, and then a historic site). It will be important to provide confirmation that you have addressed the cleaning requirements and are safe to trade.

Handling Media

Mainstream media, particularly local media, will be sympathetic to the plight of the business. They are often looking to support local business and COVID is a great local story for them. It offers a great deal of scope and angle for their story, so much so that it is often a good idea to ask them what angle they are looking for. FAQ may be:

- How has your business been impacted?
- What has been the cost to your business?
- How are they and the staff coping?

Local media are a great way to let people know when the business will reopen, if it already hasn't, and to thank locals for the support they have provided already (even if they haven't yet).

QSEC will look to provide updates to the media every few days or when circumstances change for the business. Even if they don't run a story, it keeps the business and their predicament front of mind.

If you don't feel confident in the media space, please let us know and QSEC can provide additional support.

Deep Cleaning

The following information is provided by Safe Work Australia(*). The document provides guidance on routine cleaning, as well as cleaning and disinfection following a case or suspected case of COVID-19 in a non-healthcare workplace

“For routine workplace cleaning in a non-healthcare workplace, physical cleaning with water and detergent is usually sufficient. Water and physical effort alone will not kill the COVID-19 virus.

A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus in workplaces when cleaning and should be used where there is a high volume of workers, customers or visitors that are likely to touch surfaces.

Cleaning and disinfection should also be undertaken after a person with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 has recently been at the workplace. Those cleaning an area of suspected contamination need to be equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes disposable gloves and safety eyewear to protect against chemical splashes. If there is visible contamination with respiratory secretions or other body fluids in the area, the cleaning staff should also wear a disposable apron.

Once cleaning and disinfection is complete, place disposable cloths, PPE and covers in a plastic rubbish bag, place it inside another rubbish bag (double-bagging) and dispose of the bag in the general waste.”

As soon as cleaning is completed, the business can open without any further confirmation from Queensland Health. A business may choose to delay reopening for other reasons, for example, staff are in quarantine so the business cannot operate.

The full document can be found at:

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/how-clean-and-disinfect-your-workplace-covid-19>

Full list of disinfectants approved for use against COVID-19:

<https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-use-against-covid-19-artq-legal-supply-australia>

Mental Health

- During this process the mental health of the business owners, the staff and the members of the community will be impacted.
- This is often the first experience a business will have with a COVID situation, and uncertainty and stress will be high.
- Often people will be reluctant to seek help, particularly in regional and remote communities. In these communities, people will have the opportunity to talk with friends and family. However during isolation, this may be significantly limited, exacerbating mental health issues.
- It's important people feel connected and not alone, so communication, even something as simple as a check in, is so vital.
- However as the days progress, professional help maybe required.

The following organisations have great resources for businesses to use as well as support numbers to call:

- <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/covid-normal.html>
- <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/covid-normal/small-business.html>
- <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/support/mental-health-resources>
- <https://www.cciq.com.au/coronavirus-information/free-resources/mental-health/>

Key Contacts

QSEC

Elise Parups CEO 0411 048 248

elise@qsec.org.au

Office of the Small Business Commissioner

13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Queensland Health

Non-urgent health advice: 13HEALTH (13 432 584)

Public Health Units (if after hours, PLEASE leave a message & someone will get back as soon as possible)

Public Health Units

| Unit | Phone | Fax |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Tropical Public Health Unit (Cairns) | (07) 4226 5 555 | (07) 4226 3095 |
| Central Qld (Rockhampton) | (07) 4920 6 989 | (07) 4920 6865 |
| Darling Downs (Toowoomba) | (07) 4699 8 240 | (07) 4699 8 477 |
| Gold Coast | (07) 5667 3200 | (07) 5667 3280 |
| Mackay | (07) 4885 5800 | (07) 4885 5819 (07) 4885 5818 |
| North West (Mt Isa and Gulf) | (07) 4744 7 178 | (07) 4744 71 92 |
| Sunshine Coast | 1300 017 190 | (07) 5202 9889 |
| Townsville | (07) 4433 6900 | (07) 4433 6901 |
| West Moreton (Ipswich) | (07) 3818 4 700 | (07) 3818 47 01 |
| Wide Bay (Bundaberg) | (07) 4303 7 500 | (07) 4303 75 99 |
| Wide Bay (Hervey Bay) | (07) 4184 1 800 | (07) 4184 18 09 |
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Kindness

There are still many unknowns in these types of situations.

Often Queensland Health is working with limited information or may be overwhelmed by the number of exposure sites, or possibly even both. While they will sympathise with the situation, they have little time for discussion.

The people working at Queensland Health will be doing the best they can. Their job is to protect the community as a whole and may not have business needs as a priority.

This is where organisations such as QSEC, CCIQ and the Office of the Small Business Commissioner come in handy. Our organisations raise both the concerns of the business, other peak bodies and with the relevant government departments at a senior level.

You are not alone - reach out to QSEC and others for the support you and your committee may need.