



Guide to re-opening public galleries in Victoria

Version 7.0



Planning to re-open

As COVID-19 lockdown regulations that apply to galleries are lifted, it is important to ensure that your re-opening is well planned and adheres to official guidelines.

Re-opening will not be a simple return to business-as-usual. It is important to follow the advice of Government and health authority guidelines when planning a safe return for staff, volunteers and audiences.

This document outlines some of the important aspects that should be closely considered when planning the re-opening of galleries.

As new information comes to hand, we will update this guide and make it available from our website: www.pgav.org.au/resources.

1. Adhere to Government advice

The Victorian Government has announced that from **11:59pm on Sunday 6 December**, Victoria moves to **COVIDSafe Summer** restrictions as part of the **Coronavirus (COVID-19) roadmap to reopening**. Galleries can open to the public subject to a range of requirements, including:

- Galleries must have a COVIDSafe Plan to open.
- Galleries can have **up to 50%** of the maximum capacity stated in their occupancy permit, **up to 1,000 patrons**.
- Galleries can have up to **1000 people** per space, subject to a density quotient of **1 person per 2 square metres** when using electronic record-keeping (e.g QR Code technology), or **1 person per 4 square metres** if using manual record-keeping.

- **Seated areas within galleries** can have up to 75% of the maximum seated capacity.
- **Non-seated outdoor gallery activities** are subject to a density quotient of 1 person per 2 square metres when using electronic record-keeping, or 1 person per 4 square metres if using manual record-keeping.
- Galleries with a maximum capacity of 500 or more people must **publish their COVIDSafe Plan on their website**.
- Any activity or event that **exceeds 1000 people** is subject to the **Public Event Framework**. This involves submitting plans to the Victorian Government for approval in advance. Information is available here: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/public-events-information-for-organisers>
- Face masks must be carried at all times and worn by visitors at galleries and all workers whenever physical distancing of 1.5 metres from others cannot be maintained. Exemptions apply when eating and drinking.
- Display signage at each public entry to each space indicating maximum capacity and COVIDSafe hygiene and physical distancing requirements.
- Soap and hand sanitisers must be available for all workers and visitors before and after any interactive or hands-on experiences.
- Galleries must keep records of worker (contractors and delivery workers) and visitor details for contact tracing where a person attends a gallery for longer than 15 minutes. **Electronic record keeping is strongly recommended for this purpose** – including the Victorian Government’s free QR Code Service. See page 4 & 5 of this guide for further information.
- Gallery retail may re-open subject to the [Retail \(Goods and Services\) Guidelines](#).
- Gallery cafes may re-open subject to the [Hospitality Guidelines](#).
- Workforce bubbles - keep groups of workers rostered on the same shifts at a single worksite and ensure there is no overlap of workers during shift changes. Limit or cease the number of workers working across multiple work sites.

Refer to the Victorian Government’s **Industry Restart Guidelines Museums and Galleries (Indoor)** for guidance on the COVIDSafe Summer requirements: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-sector-guidance-arts-and-recreation-services>

For information on developing a **COVIDSafe Plan**, including templates, visit the Victorian Government’s coronavirus website: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/COVIDsafe-plan>

For other updates on restrictions in Victoria, visit the Department of Health and Human Services website: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>.

2. How to make your space COVID-19 safe

It is important to demonstrate that you are adhering to health precautions including maintaining 1.5 metres physical distancing between people and adhering to increased hygiene requirements.

Staff, volunteers and visitors should feel safe while in your space. It is recommended that galleries follow the '**six principles of COVIDSafe workplaces**' to create a safe environment and ensure you comply with current restrictions:

- Ensure physical distancing (1.5 metres)
- Wear a facemask when physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Practice good hygiene
- Keep good records and act quickly if staff become unwell
- Avoid interactions in close spaces
- Create workforce bubbles

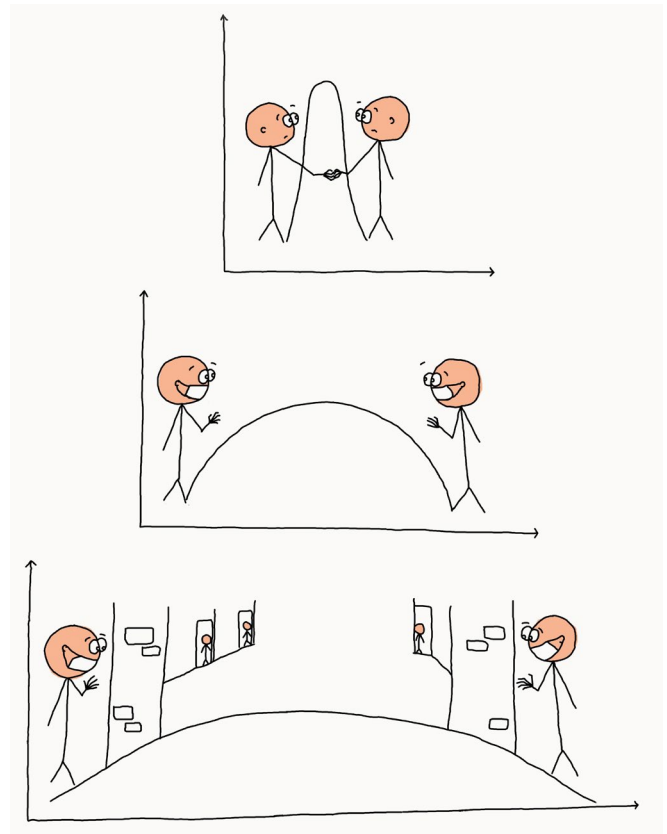
More information on these principles can be found here: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/six-principles-covidsafe-workplaces>

Calculate the limit of people you can have in your space, as determined by the two square metre rule if using electronic record-keeping, or the four square metre rule if using manual record-keeping. Calculate the area of the space (length multiplied by width in metres) and divide by 2 or by 4 – depending on method of record-keeping. This will provide you with the maximum number of people you should have in the space at any one time according to the four square metre rule.

Apply the two or four square metre rule to back of house operations – depending upon the method of record-keeping, including office spaces, collections stores, preparation areas, and loading bays. If your space is limited, consider staggering staff work hours or schedule your staff to work on site on alternate days. You may need to redesign the layout of the office space and your workflows to enable staff and volunteers to keep at least 1.5 metres. Safe Work Australia has more information: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/office/physical-distancing>

Monitor and control the number of visitors in your premises at all times, ensuring to stay within your limit. To control numbers, you may consider:

- Timed tickets (even on free admission) to limit on the number of visitors at any given time.
- Entry for select groups at particular times, including members and people considered vulnerable to COVID-19 infection (e.g. over 70 years).
- Galleries must keep records of visitor details for



contact tracing where a person attends a gallery for longer than 15 minutes. Galleries must collect the following information: first name, contact phone number, time and date in which they visited, and the areas of the premises that they attended. These records must be securely stored then destroyed after 28 days.

- Galleries can register to use the **Victorian Government's free QR Code Service** for electronic record-keeping. See: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/qrcode>

Set out guidelines for interactions between staff, volunteers and visitors. Ensure these are communicated to your staff and volunteers and display them in a clear and obvious place for visitors to see when they enter.

Put systems in place, such as:

- Queue markers outside your premises and at queuing points and counters, to help keep your visitors comfortable and to avoid confusion.
- Clearly mark separate entry and exit points and circulation pathways if possible. If this is not possible, use tape, bollards or other markers to clearly delineate the pathways to enter and exit.
- Clearly display your gallery's COVID-19 health and safety protocols and conditions of entry on your website, online ticketing platform, social media platforms and at all entrances to your gallery. Email this information to your organisation's mailing lists, members/friends.

Consider physical distance controls, such as screens, to protect staff and visitors at social interaction points.



Consider keeping doors open to avoid multiple people touching door handles (only if appropriate and safe).

Consider floor stickers in lifts and lift waiting areas to establish safe distances, and undertake regular cleaning of high touch surfaces like panels / buttons. See Safe Work Australia: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/office-physical-distancing#heading--8--tab-toc-lifts>

Close, redesign, or remove hands-on exhibits and interactives.

Remove or reconfigure seating that does not abide by physical distancing protocols.

Display safety posters around your venue to help communicate community messages about physical distancing, hand hygiene, cough and sneeze behaviour. COVID-19 signage and safety posters can be downloaded from the Safe Work Australia website at: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/signage-and-posters-covid-19>, and there are safety posters in a range of languages available here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Avoid handling cash or credit cards. Alternate options could include:

- Tap-and-go/PayPass options
- Square Reader or CommBank Albert EFTPOS tablet
- Coin donations into a donation box (cash should be removed and stored at the end of the day by a staff member/volunteer wearing appropriate protective equipment. Cash can also be cleaned by wiping with disinfectant or washing in soapy water).

Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched, regularly, and have a cleaning and disinfecting schedule in place, that is visible to the visiting public. See <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning>

Pay particular attention to all high contact areas such as:

- doors and handles
- toilets (if regular cleaning cannot be maintained, consider closing access)
- point of sale and EFTPOS systems
- counters and displays – including display cases
- interactive displays and touch screens (consider removing these if regular cleaning is not possible)
- handrails - especially on stairs
- back of house and staff-only areas, including keyboards and telephones

Have hand sanitiser near all entrances to your venue, at the cash register and next to any other high-contact points. Make sure hand sanitiser is at a height and in a position where it cannot be reached by small children.

Ask employees, contractors or work-related visitors that attend your gallery for more than 15 minutes to complete a COVID-19 Workplace





Attendance Register prior to entering and upon leaving the gallery. Galleries are required to keep electronic records – which capture the date, name, contact number, check-in and check-out times, relationship with business (ie employee, contractor, inspector etc) and areas visited. A template can be downloaded here: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/COVID-workplace-attendance-register.docx>

Additionally, it is recommended galleries implement a **Pre-shift declaration** – enabling workers to declare at the start of the shift that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms, haven't been in contact with a confirmed case, and are not currently required to self-isolate or self-quarantine.

General visitors attending exhibitions are required to provide their contact details. Preferably this should be done online prior to arrival, otherwise an electronic record (e.g. QR Code) or 'visitor's book' at reception may be useful for this purpose. (Note: manual record-keeping effects your patron cap, refer to page 2). You must record: first name, contact phone number, time and date they visited. These records must be kept for 28 days and then destroyed after that time period. See the requirements for recording visitor contact details here: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/record-keeping-contact-tracing-covid-19>

Employers should encourage, but not mandate, all staff and volunteers to download the COVIDSafe app to enable contact tracing if required.

If your gallery operates a café, you can reopen subject to the **Retail (Goods and Services) Guidelines**: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-sector-guidance-accommodation-and-food-services>

If your gallery operates a retail space, the Victorian Government has provided guidelines on making your retail space safe and helping your customers feel confident to shop with you. View restrictions for the retail industry here <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-sector-guidance-retail-trade-goods>

3. Preparing the gallery and collection stores for re-opening

With galleries shutting down suddenly and with little preparation, it's a good idea to thoroughly inspect for any damage or issues caused by the vacancy prior to re-opening. This is also the time to implement physical distancing and hygiene measures across your gallery and back of house areas.

Arrange safety inspections and servicing for exit doors, emergency power supply, smoke alarms, sprinkler systems and fire-isolated stairs.

HVAC systems should be checked, filters will need to be changed regularly and disposed of safely in sealed bags. Factor more frequent filter changes into your building maintenance schedule.

The PGAV has sought advice on air conditioning and HVAC measures to reduce the air borne transmission of COVID-19. We will update this guide when information is available.

Do not disinfect or sanitise your collection items or artworks as it could damage them.

Clean perspex display cases with soap and water, while **glass display cases** are best cleaned with a disinfectant that has 70% ethanol or iso-propanol alcohol.

Do not use large scale disinfecting methods such as spraying or fogging in your gallery as they may contaminate collection items.

It is critical that you manage dust levels during your gallery's closure, as dust can attract insects and moisture.

Use HEPA filter vacuums and wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for your own safety when removing dust from collection items and follow this recommended order for cleaning:

Step 1: dust objects;

Step 2: dust plinths; then

Step 3: vacuum and mop floors to reduce the spread of dust.

Seek the advice of a conservator if necessary. Visit the PGAV Consultant Directory to find a conservator: www.pgav.org.au/Consultant-Directory~3440

Inspect for mould throughout the building. Get air circulating through the spaces again.

Check insect blunder traps, record any movement and put out new ones to monitor insect and rodent activity.

Test gallery lighting as bulbs may have blown and tracks may have moved during your gallery's closure.

Undertake an audit of art works and update condition reports for items that have been on display during the shutdown, followed by art works in the collection store.

Clear preparation areas of items that were left out before the shut down, ahead of cleaning and disinfecting benchtops and other surfaces.

Alcohol-based hand sanitiser is highly flammable.

Store surplus hand sanitiser in your gallery's flammable storage cupboard and advise cleaning staff about safe handling. See: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/fire-hazards-when-manufacturing-or-storing-alcohol-based-hand-sanitiser>

4. Supporting staff and volunteers

It is important that your staff and volunteers feel safe in their workplace and are protected from potential contact with COVID-19.

Measures to support your staff and volunteers include:

Communication – management should ensure that everyone is informed and kept in the loop with protocols and safety measures.

Check your colleagues and volunteers wellbeing and ask for feedback on the new measures.

Consider alternative work arrangements, such as workforce bubbles or staggered working hours if space is limited, or if employees or volunteers have specific requirements.

Provide access to hand washing facilities and hand sanitiser for all employees and volunteers.

Always maintain physical distancing and good hygiene measures such as:

- **Stay home** if you are sick, even if your symptoms are minor, and seek medical advice if you have a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath (call your doctor or the nationwide service **healthdirect** on 1800 022 222).
- **Stay 1.5m away** from other people (two arms' length).
- **Wear a fitted face mask** that covers the nose and mouth, where physical distance of 1.5 metres cannot be maintained (exclusions apply when eating or drinking). For information about face masks visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-vic-covid-19>
- **Avoid touching** your mouth, eyes, and nose with unwashed (or gloved) hands.
- **Regularly clean** your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water, or with alcohol based hand rub.
- **When you cough or sneeze** cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or a flexed elbow. Put tissues in the bin immediately.

Provide clear guidelines on how to respond to someone who does not adhere to your gallery's COVID-19 health and safety protocols and conditions of entry. This may include reporting it to a supervisor or staff member in higher authority. Work Safe Victoria has information and posters about preventing violence and aggression in the workplace: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-violence-and-aggression>

Advise employees and volunteers of the Support Act Wellbeing Helpline – providing free, 24/7, confidential mental health and wellbeing support for artists and arts workers. Call: 1800 959 500.

Vulnerable workers are at greater risk of more serious illness with COVID-19. They include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 65 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 70 years and older, and
- People with compromised immune systems

If your employees include vulnerable people, you will need to undertake a risk assessment to identify and mitigate their risk. Safe Work Australia



has information and templates: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/delivery-drivers/vulnerable-workers>

Before reinstating Volunteer Programs, it is strongly recommended that you comply with public health authority guidelines and Workplace Health & Safety legislation and check your safety measures with your gallery's insurer. In the interests of your volunteers' health and wellbeing, your organisation may choose to delay re-opening to the public or implement a staged return to roster.

It is recommended that galleries:

- Prepare written guidelines for your volunteers so that they are aware of all of your organisation's COVID-19 precautions and measures.
- Provide your volunteers with a copy of these guidelines and prominently display them in their work areas.
- Discuss the guidelines and your volunteer return to work strategies with your volunteers to ease any issues, concerns or anxieties they may have.

For further information on supporting volunteers in the workplace see **Volunteering Australia's COVID-19: Information for Volunteer Involving Organisations resource**: <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/volunteer-involving-organisations-and-covid-19/#/>

5. Communicating your re-opening date

Re-opening your gallery is a momentous occasion, however responses will range from feelings of excitement to feelings of anxiety amongst your members, visitors and other key stakeholders. Communicating the health and safety measures your gallery is implementing and what they can expect when they visit will help reduce concerns.

When advising members, visitors, contractors and other key stakeholders of your re-opening date, be sure to include in your communications:

- **physical distancing and hygiene measures** that have been implemented at your gallery, including the retail space and café, to ensure the health and safety of visitors, staff and the community.
- **pre-booking their visit to the gallery** and any limit to the duration of their visit.
- **they are required to provide** their first name, contact phone number, time and date of their visit, and explain that this information will be held according to any relevant privacy law requirements.

- **the conditions of entry to the gallery** – a general one for visitors which includes the need to follow advice from gallery staff; and a separate set of conditions for contractors which includes a *COVID-19 Workplace Attendance Register* and how this information will be held according to any relevant privacy laws.
- **encourage, but do not mandate**, visitors and contractors to use the Australian Government's COVIDSafe app.
- **and a reminder to stay home if they are sick**, even if their symptoms are minor, and seek medical advice if they have a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath. Call **healthdirect** on 1800 022 222 or the dedicated Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 393.

6. Responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 infection

Galleries must have a response plan, as part of their COVIDSafe Plan, in case a visitor or worker with coronavirus (COVID-19) attends their premises. If a visitor or worker with COVID-19 has attended the gallery, you must:

- **Undertake a risk assessment** - determine what actions are required, including closing the gallery to undertake a comprehensive clean, and notification of close contacts. See the *Confirmed Case in the Workplace Information Pack*: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/confirmed-case-workplace#confirmed-case-in-workplace-information-pack>
- **Contact DHHS and WorkSafe.**
- **Derermine Hot Spots** – what areas of the gallery were visited, used or impacted by the person with COVID-19.
- **Clean the Premises** – closed the affected area before thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting. Consider engaging suitably qualified personnel to clean and disinfect the area. Download the Factsheet: *How to clean and disinfect after a COVID-19 case in the workplace*: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/preventing-infection-workplace#cleaning-and-disinfection-infection>

Additional Resources

Victorian Government's **Industry Restart Guidelines Museums and Galleries (Indoor)** – <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-sector-guidance-arts-and-recreation-services>

Victorian Government, Department of Health and Human Services – Victoria's Restriction Levels: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

Australian Government - Have a COVID-19 Plan: <https://pmc.gov.au/nccc/have-covid-19-plan>

National COVID-19 Coordination Commission - Planning tool to help businesses re-open and be COVIDSafe: <https://pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businesses-reopen-and-be-covidsafe>

Safe Work Victoria – Find the latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19) and preventing exposure in the workplace: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19>

Business Victoria Coronavirus (COVID-19) business support: <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-business-support>

Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared by the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) in partnership with Museums & Galleries Queensland (M&G QLD) and Museums & Galleries of New South Wales (MGNSW) to support the sector during COVID-19. It has been developed using the best available information at the time of publication. Users of this resource are encouraged to adhere to the advice and recommendations of Local, State & Territory and Australian Government, public health authority guidelines and their various stakeholders.

The content of this guide is for reference purposes only. It is current at the date of publication. This content does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Legal advice about your specific circumstances should always be obtained before taking any action based on this guide. Any risks related to gallery re-openings are borne by the galleries.

Image credits:

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p.4: Craft Victoria shop, interior designed by Karen Abernethy Architects, counter oxidised steel by Sean Godsell Architects. Photo Tatjana Plitt.
p.5: 1. Collection Store, Gippsland Art Gallery. Courtesy of Gippsland Art Gallery. 2. Cafe at National Gallery of Victoria Australia, Federation Square. Other images: United Nations COVID-19 Response on Unsplash.



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Museums & Galleries of NSW

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