⚠️ **As of 11:59pm Friday June 24, mandatory double-vaccination requirements for most workers will be lifted. Visitor caps to care facilities will be removed subject to negative Rapid Antigen Tests. Masks will no longer be required in airports, but must still be worn on public transport, taxis, ride share, planes and in sensitive settings such as hospitals and care facilities.**

- **Masks** are only required to be worn in limited high risk settings including:
  - Visiting a hospital or care facility, in any healthcare setting including allied health
  - On public transport, in taxis or rideshare vehicles, in tourism vehicles and on commercial flights
  - Working in high risk settings – healthcare, aged care, justice settings
  - After being tested for COVID-19 whilst awaiting results
  - If the person has COVID-19 or is a household contact whenever leaving the house in line with quarantine, isolation or testing requirements.

- **QR Code Check**-in is no longer required at any venue in Victoria. Venues are no longer required to maintain attendance records in any form.

- **Close contacts, isolation and quarantine:**
  - If you test positive for COVID-19 you are required to self-quarantine for seven days from the day you took your test.
  - Household contacts are exempt from self-quarantine, provided they:
    - wear a mask indoors if aged 8 and above,
    - avoid hospitals and care facilities, and
    - receive a negative rapid test on five of the seven days after exposure.
  - You are exempt from testing or quarantine for 12 weeks after you've had COVID-19.
  - **From 11:59pm Friday June 24,** Positive cases may leave home to drive a household member directly to or from education or work without leaving their vehicle.

- **Religious gatherings (including weddings and funerals)** The only requirements are that all venues maintain COVID-safe plans.

- **Work and Vaccination requirements:**
  - All work places must have a COVID-safe plan in place.
  - **From 11:59pm Friday June 24,** rules requiring general workers (including religious workers) to work from home unless they are double-vaccinated are lifted. Employers can consider setting COVID-19 vaccination policies as part of their own workplace conditions.
  - To protect the most vulnerable during winter, three COVID-19 vaccine doses are still required for workers in residential aged care and disability care, healthcare, and custodial and emergency services, including police.
  - In line with other jurisdictions around Australia, COVID-19 vaccination policies will be the responsibility of individual workplaces to consider as part of their workplace conditions

- **Cleaning** – Workplaces and other venues exposed to a positive COVID-19 case do not have to undertake any form of deep cleaning.

- **Pubs/Restaurants/Cafes/Entertainment Venues** are all open with no restrictions or check-in requirements.

- **Retail Goods and Services** are open with no restrictions.

- **Community Facilities** may open without restriction, provided they maintain a COVID-safe plan.

- **Hospital Visitors** must wear a face mask and follow the rules and policies set by each hospital.

- **Aged Care Visitors**
  - Residents can see any number of people, provided they test negative on a rapid antigen test that day.
  - If a test is unavailable, a person can only be present for limited reasons such as end-of-life visits.
  - Centres may introduce their own visitor rules to respond to local risk.

- **Childcare, Early Learning and Schools** – open. **From 11:59pm Friday June 24,** the requirement for all education staff to be triple-vaccinated will be lifted.

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THESE COVID FAQs are prepared with great care, based on the best available advice at the time they are written. We try to provide guidance as soon as possible to give all councils of the church time to act in accordance with Covid-safe requirements. However whenever restrictions change, the detail is increasingly either absent from government information or is updated after these FAQs are published. Where this is the case, we deliberately err on the side of caution.

For further information visit: **https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au.** Should you have any further questions please email **Synod's Crisis Management Team.**

MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Victorian Multi-cultural Commission Coronavirus (COVID-19): In-language advice and information at **https://www.multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-language-advice-and-information.**

Ethnolink have information available in 51 languages at: **http://www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-%2019-coronavirus-translated-resources/**

The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: **https://Covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/**

The Victorian Multicultural Commission have release multi-lingual resources including:

- Audio messages: **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**
- Posters (JPG / PDF): **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**
- Social Media banners: **https://cloud.think-hq.com.au/s/m9SX3ntGGqr7Sai**

GATHERINGS & CHURCH COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

With an increased likelihood that at some stage an attendee at a gathering will be COVID positive, there are a number of requirements and considerations which still apply for all Church Councils:

COVID-safe plans. It is still a mandatory government requirement that a COVID-safe plan be maintained. Given the changes outlined in these FAQs, all current COVID-safe plans will need to be reviewed and updated as required.

Vaccination Status records. As of 11:59pm Friday June 24 religious workers are no longer required to be double-vaccinated. Should this government requirement be reinstated in the future, it would be prudent to retain any records of the vaccination status of workers/volunteers for the time being.

VACCINATION STATUS
As of 11:59pm Friday June 24 the requirement for most general workers and volunteers, including religious workers, to be double-vaccinated will cease.

However, in line with other jurisdictions around Australia, COVID-19 vaccination policies will be the responsibility of individual workplaces to consider as part of their workplace conditions.

Therefore, as part of their duty of care to all members, each Church Council may consider the appropriateness of maintaining vaccination requirements within their own gatherings, and to which roles, if any, such requirements should continue to apply. Should further advice be required, please feel free to consult your presbytery and/or **Synod's Crisis Management Team.**

As 0f 25/06/2022

REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH COVID-19

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or are a household contact of someone with COVID-19:

- Get a rapid antigen test.
- If you are unable to access a rapid antigen test, get a PCR test.
- If you can't get a PCR test, stay isolated until you can access either type of test.

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- If you do not have symptoms and you are not a household contact, monitor for symptoms.

If you test positive on a rapid antigen test you must:

1. **report your result online** or call 1800-675-398 as soon as possible.
2. Immediately isolate for 7 days from the day you took the rapid antigen test.
3. Follow the **government checklist** and tell your contacts you have COVID-19.
   - Your household contacts no longer need to isolate for 7 days, providing they wear a face mask in all indoor situations (except at home) and providing they return five negative Rapid Antigen Tests during the first 7 days
   - Your social contacts must get tested if they have any symptoms
   - Advise your workplace or education facility that you have COVID-19.
4. **As of 11:59pm Friday June 24,** people who test positive to Covid-19 may leave home to drive a household member directly to or from education or work without leaving their vehicle.

As of 25/06/2022

MINISTERS IN HIGH RISK GROUPS

Ministers in high-risk groups should discuss with their medical practitioners, presbytery and Church Councils the appropriateness of their involvement in services and what additional safeguards may be required to protect their own health.

High risk groups include people who are:

- aged over 70,
- over 65 with chronic health conditions,
- immune-compromised, or
- Indigenous people over 50 with chronic health conditions

As of 28/10/2021

CHURCH/COMMUNITY HALLS

Community Facilities, including libraries, creative art spaces, halls may open without restriction, but must have a COVID-safe plan in place.

RENTED & HIRED FACILITIES

- If you rent hire or licence out property to more than one organisation or group on a casual or non-exclusive basis (eg support groups, community groups, classes) using our standard Hire Agreement (Victoria) whether one-off or recurring, the Responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance remains with the congregation as the responsible body. However, you may pass on the reasonable additional cost of cleaning or other necessary Covid-19 safety measures to the Hirer if you notify them in advance of the additional cost.
- If you rent out property to one organisation or group on an exclusive use basis (under a Lease or Licence), the responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance falls to the tenant.
- If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact **crisismanagement@victas.uca.org.au**

As of 23/04/2022

COVID-SAFE PLANS

Do we need to complete a CovidSafe plan and/or UCA Covid Recovery Action Checklist?

Having completed the Covid Recovery Action Plan Checklist, **https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8852/recovery-action-plan-checklist-v5** if you are keeping this up-to-date, This can be your Covid-Safe Plan. If you have not already done so, please send a copy of your plan to **elnura.dulakovic@victas.uca.org.au.**

You must be able to provide a copy immediately if requested by any authorised Health officer. There are substantial fines for every breach of current COVID-safe requirements, for which the congregation will be liable.

HOLY COMMUNION

How can Holy Communion services reflect COVID safe practices?

Careful consideration should be given to how Holy Communion can be conducted appropriately, including maintaining distance, hygiene and not sharing communion ware.

For congregations livestreaming worship, the Assembly guidelines remain in place until July 2022 and can be found at: **https://uniting.church/online-worship-communion/**

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For some thoughts on how to conduct Holy Communion in a COVID-safe manner read Rev Dr Sally Douglas' November 2020 article at **https://victas.uca.org.au/how-can-we-keep-holy-communion-covid-19-safe/**.

As of 19/11/2021

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING LICENCES

What does it cost for a Zoom meeting licence?

If you plan on using Zoom frequently and/ or require full functionality, Synod Ministries and Operations along with other Synods have negotiated with Zoom to purchase a bulk deal. As such we are able to provide Zoom licences for a cost of just $7.93 per month. If your presbytery or congregation is interested, please contact: **George.Delice@victas.uca.org.au**

You will need to provide: Number of licences required and the details of the contact person (including their email address).

As of 08/07/2020

OP SHOPS

Op Shops run by Uniting VicTas must follow guidance issued by Uniting.

- **As of 11:59pm Friday June 24** the government will no longer require all staff and volunteers to be double-vaccinated. However, "Employers can consider setting COVID-19 vaccination policies as part of their own workplace conditions", so please consider the appropriateness of maintaining vaccination requirements within your OpShop, and to which roles, if any, such requirements should continue to apply.
- Staff are no longer required to wear face masks.
- UCA Op Shops, as church workplaces, are required to complete sections A and B of the Recovery Action Plan Checklist to ensure that they are Covid-complient and a copy sent to **elnura.dulakovic@victas.uca.org.au**
- Failure to comply with all current COVID restrictions and requirements, including those above, may incur substantial fines if compliance audited by Health officials.

- Good hygiene should continue to be practiced, including regularly washing hands, using hand sanitiser whenever handling donated goods or cash.

VOLUNTEERS:
Where possible you should keep at least 1.5 metres between yourself and others at all times and practice good hygiene. If you are in a high-risk group, you can volunteer, however, consider minimising the number of different people you interact with. High-risk groups include people aged 70 years and over, people aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions, people with compromised immune systems and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50.

As of 25/06/2022

FIRST AID PRECAUTIONS

In the event of someone needing first aid treatment, are there any additional precautions required?

Anyone administering first aid should use general droplet and contact precautions, namely a face mask for the person they are treating which they should encourage the person to apply themselves, a face mask and gloves for the first aider, and goggles for the first aider (if available).
In the event that a first aider has a reason to suspect a person is infected with COVID-19, they should try to limit their contact with that person as much as they can, meaning they should avoid physical contact (e.g. checking pulses and performing physical assessments) unless absolutely necessary, such as performing CPR or putting people in a recovery position if they are unconscious and/or struggling to breathe.

As of 11/06/2020

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