

# ZOOS VICTORIA

# COVID-19 SAFE PLAN

**Our Zoos are closed**

ZV COVID -19 Safe Plan Document Control		
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To note: This is a working document and will be updated regularly to reflect government and health advice. Future phases in this plan should be used as a guide only, and each phase will be reassessed dependent on restrictions and advice received.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of a COVIDSafe Plan is to provide clear direction to both our staff and volunteers on how we will re-open in a responsible manner adhering to government guidelines as defined by [WorkSafe Victoria and the Victorian Chief Health Officer](#). Our objective is to ensure we manage the risks of a person (staff, visitors, volunteers or contactors), contracting or spreading COVID in any Zoos Victoria managed property through the following key principles:

## 1.2 Current restrictions and related Reference Documents

### Current restrictions:

On Wednesday 11 August 2021, the Premier announced a further 7 day lockdown starting from 11.59pm on 12 August 2021. The restrictions continue to be:

Our zoos are currently closed. Zoos Victoria is considered to be an authorised workplace but only essential staff are required on property.

Non essential staff should stay at home unless:

- shopping for necessary goods and services (one person per household, once per day, a support person can accompany if required)
- caregiving or compassionate reasons
- authorised work or permitted education, or work interstate
- exercising (up to two hours, with one other person or members of your household)
- receiving a COVID-19 vaccination

The key messages are:

- Our properties will remain closed for the next 7 days
  - We will be refunding all booked tickets, activities and experiences
- Only essential staff will be on property (animal care staff, customer engagement team and operations staff). All staff that can work from home must work from home and all volunteers are to stay home.
- COVID Safety
  - Exposure sites continue to grow. If staff have been to one of the exposure locations, they must get tested and isolate until they get their results. Further information can be found here: [coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites](https://coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites)
  - If staff have any COVID-19 symptoms, they need to get tested and isolate until they have the results.
  - Further information can be found in Property COVID Safe Plans.

### Reference documents:

- Melbourne Zoo COVID Operational Plan
- Werribee Open Range Zoo COVID Operational Plan
- Healesville Sanctuary COVID Operational Plan
- Corporate teams COVID re-opening Plan
- ZV Management of a suspected or confirmed COVID case protocol
- ZV COVID Fitted Face Mask protocol
- ZV Disease Risk Analysis
- Industry Restart Guidelines Outdoor Attractions and Experiences, September 2020, Victorian Government

- Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA) guidelines Operating during COVID

## 1.3 Objectives

The objectives that apply to the COVIDSafe Plan are to:

- Ensure the safety and well-being of our staff, visitors and animals
- Re-gain the support of our members and visitors
- Rebuild our financial position
- Ensure we reduce the risk of the introduction and spread of coronavirus (COVID) in our workplaces
- Maintain records of everyone who comes to the work premises
- Ensure the appropriate level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn at our work premises
- Activate our processes to respond to a suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID) at the work premises, if required
- Continually review our responsibilities and obligations.

## 1.4 Governance

- Delivery of each phase of the Zoos Victoria COVIDSafe Plan will be directed by the Victorian Government and the ZV Board.
- The Zoos Victoria COVIDSafe Plan is approved by SET and delivered through operational plans for each of the three Zoos Victoria properties.
- Zoos Victoria COVID Committee of the Board provides guidance and input to the executive.

## 2. Ensuring the safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors and animals

### 2.1 Guiding Principles (Key strategies)

1. Ensuring that physical distancing and fitted face mask requirements are met by staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors and others visiting any of our workplaces
2. Instituting good hygiene procedures and practices for everyone entering our properties
3. Implementing and maintaining a heightened cleaning schedule to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus
4. Ensuring anyone who is ill or showing symptoms, or who has been instructed to quarantine or self-isolate does not come to the workplace
5. Providing information, training and supervision on how the risks of COVID are to be managed and ensure all processes and procedures are applied by all staff, volunteers and contractors
6. Providing visitors with information and instruction on what they need to do to minimise the risk of transmission during their visit
7. Ensuring the safety of our animals is actively considered and managed during the re-opening process
8. Providing and using personal protective equipment (PPE) as directed by the CHO – including but not limited to face masks
9. Keeping records of our people working or visiting our zoos for the purposes of contact tracing and the management of any infections

#### Modified rosters

Following the announcement today from the Premier regarding the extension of the current lock down and the increasing numbers of community transmissions , we are minimising the risk of whole teams being unable to work by separating staff into non-overlapping Teams A and B and moving to a 4/3 to help keep all our staff and animals safe and minimise the risk of the spread of the COVID Delta strain.

Our primary objectives are to protect people and to ensure the welfare of our animals. The following guidelines are to be used during periods of lockdown to ensure that we achieve both objectives. They are targeted at reducing the transmission risk between staff, and the possibility that we lose whole teams to illness or quarantine and are unable to care for our animals.

The following guidelines will be used during periods of lockdown.

#### General Principles

1. Create workforce bubbles wherever possible and practicable by:
  - separating staff into non-overlapping Teams A and B and moving to a 4/3 roster
  - stopping close contact between people on different teams (not sharing indoor spaces, physical distancing, not sharing vehicles)
  - reducing any team overlap (e.g. food rooms and vet departments)
  - limiting the number of people staff have prolonged close contact with
  - keeping pools of staff rostered on the same shifts
  - avoiding overlap in shift changes

- staggering start and finish times and breaks where possible for teams
  - high risk teams using different change rooms
  - reducing staff working across multiple sites
  - Vets to conduct digital assessments where ever possible
  - minimising the time spent indoors with others
  - having virtual or outdoor meetings only
2. Creating a backup capacity to ensure that there are staff available to undertake essential work in the event that a whole team needs to isolate.
  3. Staff who can work from home should work from home. If it is essential that they come on property then their movements should be limited to their work area only and **no visits** across the property.
  4. Maintaining regular and rigorous COVID cleaning and hygiene standards.
  5. Wearing and using Personal Protective Equipment including fitted face masks wherever possible.
  6. No staff movement between properties (with the exception of essential services such as Browse collection).
  7. Getting vaccinated. We highly encourage all staff and volunteers to get vaccinated as and when you are entitled to in accordance with Government notifications. Personal leave can be used to go and get vaccinated.

Further more detailed information in each of the Property COVID Safe plans. Additional back up plans or contingencies may also be implemented at each Property based on risk assessments.

## 2.2 Physical Distancing and Fitted Face Masks

The **physical distancing** measures will be determined by ZV Senior Executive Team in accordance with recommendations from the Victorian Government and CHO and may vary at different phases of the plan but current arrangements are:

- Visitation numbers will be capped at each property.
- Physical distancing will be based on people (staff and visitors) keeping 1.5 meters apart and a minimum spacing of 4m<sup>2</sup> per person with no overcrowded areas. Where this is not possible, the duration of the close contact will be minimised.
- Activities that encourage people to gather in groups will be managed as per guidelines.
- Indoor non seated spaces will be closed subject to restrictions on entertainment.
- Indoor seated spaces will be open subject to restrictions on hospitality or retail depending on the space.
- Online ticketing will be available.
- Minimise the risk of whole teams being unable to work by separating staff into staff bubbles and further manage physical distancing where possible.
- Meetings will be remote, less than 15 minutes duration or held outdoors.
- From Thursday 05 August if you can work from home, you must work from home.
- No carpooling between staff unless there is no alternative mode of transport

**Face Masks** - responsibility for wearing a fitted face mask rests with the individual. A fitted face masks must be carried at all times. ZV will take reasonable steps to ensure all staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors wear a fitted face mask as required.



Current requirements are:

- Staff are required to wear fitted face masks indoors and outdoors unless an exemption applies.
- A fitted face mask is not required if a person has a lawful exception.

## 2.3 Hygiene

Hygiene will be managed to the standards recommended by WorkSafe Victoria and the ZV Disease Risk Analysis.

Key elements will be:

- Hand washing facilities will be available to everyone on properties
- Hand sanitiser will be available at key locations for staff and visitors
- Physical contact will be discouraged
- No cash transactions
- Hygiene messages will be communicated through posters, signage, and verbally at appropriate locations (e.g. toilets, staff rooms, admissions areas)
- Physical distancing indicators within the visitor queuing area
- Sanitiser and usage signage available in visitor spaces
- Sanitisers located at all property entries and all food areas
- Limit number of people in enclosed spaces, including retail
- Additional staff on properties for disinfection of public area touch areas
  - Hand rails
  - Seats and tables
  - Toilets and taps including bubblers
  - Glass viewing windows
  - Air lock doors
  - Retail Stores

## 2.4. Staff General

- Create workforce bubbles wherever possible and practicable by separating staff into non-overlapping Teams A and B and moving to a 4/3 roster.
- Limit the number of people staff have prolonged close contact with. This includes wherever possible and practicable, keeping pools of staff rostered into Team A and B, avoiding overlap in shift changes and reducing staff working across multiple sites.
- All staff, volunteers and contractors must use the Victorian Government QR Code Service from 19 April 2021 to maintain electronic record keeping.
- From Thursday 05 August if you can work from home, you must work from home.
- Staff are to stay at home if not well and to get tested for COVID. HR to be alerted if COVID positive OR in contact with positive/suspect case of COVID. The ZV Management of suspected or confirmed COVID case protocol will be implemented in these circumstances. This may include the closure of an area or the complete closure of the zoo depending on the circumstances and in consultation with DHHS for the purposes of deep cleaning and contract tracing.
- Practice physical distancing and hand hygiene - wash OR sanitise hands frequently.
- Use own equipment where possible, including tools and stationery.
- Where practical, staff should use own personal utensils. Any shared utensils should only be used after wash in hot dishwasher.

- If tools and equipment are shared, wash with warm soapy water or sanitised wipes in between use.
- Cleaning staff to focus on disinfecting surfaces including handles and high touch areas on rounds.
- Daily review and replenishment of surface sprays and cloth/towel for staff areas.
- Cleaning of staff areas by each team for surfaces, door handles – each area has a cleaning kit.
- Daily review and replenishment of disinfection information for all staff areas.

## **2.5 Cleaning**

Each property will develop a cleaning regime that ensures all visitor and staff areas are cleaned to WorkSafe Victoria and the ZV Disease Risk Analysis. Additional cleans of touch points and bathrooms in visitor areas will be scheduled during the days to minimise the risk of disease transmission and to inspire confidence in our visitors.

## **2.6 Managing illness**

Staff will be asked to stay at home if they become ill or have symptoms. They should get tested for Coronavirus.

ZV has developed an Incident process which will be followed if an employee, volunteer, contractor or visitor is diagnosed with COVID

Victoria’s Chief Health Officer has advised that people who fall into the following ‘higher risk’ categories should stay home wherever possible for their own protection, as they a higher risk of experiencing severe symptoms:

- people aged 70 years and older
- people aged 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees aged 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical condition(s)
- people with compromised immune systems

Staff that fall into any of the above risk groups will be asked to continue to work from home or take leave unless they can be reasonably be protected from the possibility of being exposed to the virus at work. Staff that have unavoidable contact with people in any of the above risk groups will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Each property will manage First Aid to ensure that there are sufficient First Aiders to maintain service with the separation of staff into established group bubbles. To reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission, First Aiders will receive additional training and PPE.

## **2.7 Staff information, training and supervision**

Staff (including where necessary volunteers and contractors), will be provided with access to all plans and documents, will be trained in the implementation of all COVID safety measures and will be properly supervised.

## **2.8 Provide visitors with information and instruction**

Each property will develop and install appropriate signage to inform our visitors about the physical distancing, fitted face masks and hygiene measures being taken at that property, and how we are asking them to support these measures.

Our website and social media tools will be used to inform visitors of the measures at each property.

Information signage will include:

- General ZV Physical Distancing and Fitted Face Mask signage at all property entries (ZV Brand)

- Signage at each closed experience/area – ZV Branded
- Signage at each sanitisation location /area – ZV Branded
- Decals at all potential queuing areas – ZV Branded
- No cash signage at all retail and catering - ZV Branded
- Instructions for how to book admission online- ZV Branded
- One way entry and exit through precincts – ZV Branded

All visitors and staff must use the Victorian Government QR Code Service to maintain electronic record keeping.

## 2.9 Animals

A risk assessment of the possibility of transmission of the coronavirus has been conducted and recommendations implemented by properties.

An assessment of the pre-conditioning of collection animals to the return of visitors has been conducted and the recommendations implemented by properties.

### 2.9.1 Animal Areas for Animals at Risk (Non-Human Primates, Big Cats, Otters, Meerkats)

- 1) Keepers must wear a face mask when within 1.5m of an 'at risk' animal. If you are spending prolonged periods in a closed room with an 'at risk' animal with little air flow (e.g. gorilla/orang/baboon/arboreal/big cat dens) then you should wear a fitted face mask. If you touch your face or mask during a training session you must wash your hands again.
- 2) Discard or wash fitted face masks if they are dirty or damaged
- 3) When possible handle the fitted face mask by the ear tabs/strings. If you touch the central panel you must wash your hands.
- 4) Wash hands before entering an 'at risk' animal area and immediately prior to preparing food or doing a training session.
- 5) Gloves are only to be worn in same circumstance as BAU. When worn, gloved hands must be washed immediately prior to preparing food or doing a training session with an 'at risk' animal.
- 6) Hand sanitiser can be used if no hand washing station is available at exhibits (e.g. a tamarins, snow leopards). If hand sanitiser is unavailable then a box of gloves should be held at the exhibit to be worn only immediately prior to entering the exhibit or handling food.

## 2.10 Visitation

All three zoos are currently closed.

## 2.11 Catering

All catering outlines are currently closed.

# Appendix 1 – Covid Contractor Management Guidelines

**These guidelines apply to Property and Corporate contractors.**

## **Restrictions while on site**

- Contractors entering site are to not have travelled or knowingly been exposed to anyone who has tested positive. Health and display of COVID-19 symptoms will be monitored closely
- A designated toilet block will be provided. Whilst walking to this toilet please do not stop to interact with zoo employees or animals. Please do not walk around any other areas of the zoo, we promise to welcome you back post COVID-19 to enjoy our animals. - Contractors will be restricted to vehicle access specific to each site.
- The only animal slide leading into the dens will be plated on the outside to seal the air flow
- Contractors will not have any direct access to keepers and/or will be allocated an appropriate point of contact in line with staff rostering schedules and team allocations.
- Contractors will be encouraged to call their allocated contact, communicate or deal with any issues at hand.
- Weekly site meetings will not be possible. In lieu of onsite meetings a request from zoo for weekly progress photos and a tele conference meeting will be proposed.
- Access hours will be site specific, due to changes in our availability to have people on site to accommodate a 5pm finish we would request that contractors please leave site when the keepers vacate the area.

## **Checklist for Contractors**

### **Are you a returned traveller from an international trip within the last two weeks?**

In this case, you will need hotel quarantine for a period of 14 days.

### **Have you been in close contact (as defined below) with a confirmed case and you have not completed the required self-quarantine period.**

Close contact is defined as face-to-face interaction of more than 15 minutes or a group meeting lasting more than two hours with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 in the 24 hours before they showed symptoms, or once they showed symptoms. In this case, you will need to self-isolate at home for the quarantine period (currently 14 days).

### **Do you have cold or flu-like symptoms?**

If you are a returned traveller or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive to COVID-19, you will be required to leave the zoo. And should follow current government advice to self-quarantine.

However, if you have not met these circumstances and are just feeling unwell within the workplace Zoos Victoria would require that the work is postponed until contractors are well.

### **Are you aware of ZV's Physical Distancing Requirements?**

- Minimum Individual Contact (MIC) – No congregating in an enclosed / closed space room of greater than 2 hours.
- No direct face to face conversations.
- Reducing staff density in all areas ie: office, work, lunch areas.
- Leave specific doors and windows to be left open to allow increased air flow.
- Avoiding shaking hands.
- Increase hygiene measures and clean work spaces thoroughly throughout the day. And please be reminded to wash your hands frequently.
- If work requires you to work longer or closer than the minimum individual contact please speak to your ZV contact that has engaged the work to determine if the work can proceed.