

Social distancing in shared accommodation guideline

The Australian agriculture industry faces a complex and dynamic challenge as the impacts of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic continue to unfold across Australia. This guideline contains advice on managing shared accommodation facilities that house seasonal workers, in order to reduce the likelihood of a COVID-19 outbreak. It is intended to facilitate thinking and decision-making about the health and safety of people in shared accommodation facilities.

For the most up-to-date information please visit covid-19.sa.gov.au

PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION AFTER 14 DAY ISOLATION

Employer Obligations - if you provide accommodation for your employees:

- Ensure the accommodation meets employer obligations under the *Work Health Safety Act 2011*:
 - Specifically:
If:
a worker occupies accommodation that is owned by or under the management or control of the person conducting the business or undertaking; and the occupancy is necessary for the purposes of the worker's engagement because other accommodation is not reasonably available;
The person conducting the business or undertaking must, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain the premises so that the worker occupying the premises is not exposed to risks to health and safety.

General principles

- Keeping accurate records of guests using your services is important to assist contact tracing efforts in the instance of a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Ensure that all accommodation complies with the State Coordinator's Directive on [Public Activities](#). Specifically, the total number of persons at premises **MUST NOT** exceed one person per 2 square metres and social distancing principles require a person to attempt to maintain a space of at least 1.5 metres between themselves and each other person present in the same place, at all times.
- Onsite accommodation should be off limits to anyone other than the persons living there.
- Adequate signage should be placed in shared spaces to inform everybody of their obligations to maintain social distancing, practice good hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
 - The federal government has generated several flyers and posters covering relevant information which can be found [here](#). Translated material can be found [here](#).
- Identify alternative accommodation facilities that can be used by those experiencing symptoms to self-quarantine. You may try working with other growers, or stakeholders for this, or contact your local council to see what their action plan is to deal with the increase of accommodation required in regional areas. Please click on [this link](#) for further information on what to do with a suspected case of COVID-19.

Social distancing

Social distancing principles require a person to attempt to maintain a space of at least 1.5 metres between themselves and each other person present in the same place, at all times. The total number of persons at a premise must not exceed one person per 2 square metres.

- Employers should consider decentralising the accommodation of their seasonal workforce as much as possible. The smaller the groups living together, the better.
- Consider reducing the number of guests per room in shared accommodation.
- Consider ways to reduce overcrowding, such as removing furniture from common areas.
- The movement of staff through shared accommodation areas such as kitchen, living, and bathroom spaces should be minimised where possible and space created so that social distancing requirements can be met.
 - If various groups do need to use shared facilities, a roster for individuals, or small groups could be implemented and ensure they clean and sanitise when leaving.
- If required, workplace teams should be accommodated together, minimising cross contamination between different working crews.
- If staying offsite, the employer should request workers share accommodation (if required to share at all), to keep the same staff together and avoid potential exposure to others who may be infectious.

Health and hygiene

- Increasing the signage about hygiene and social distancing in the bathrooms and common areas can help increase hygiene and cleanliness in shared accommodation.
- The federal government has generated several flyers and posters covering relevant information, which can be found [here](#). Translated material can be found [here](#).
- Provide hand washing stations with soap and water in all staff common areas, including at the entry and exit of the accommodation. Include appropriate signage to remind everybody of the need to hand wash regularly and of effective hand washing techniques.
- It is recommended that staff launder their clothes or uniforms daily, by following the directions on the label, and washing to the warmest temperature possible with detergent.
- Bed linen and towels should be laundered in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the hottest setting possible. Dry items completely.
- Crockery and cutlery should be washed in a dishwasher on the highest setting. If a dishwasher is not available, a hand wash in hot soapy water will suffice.
- Tea towels and dish cloths should be laundered and changed frequently.

Cleaning

- Premises/surfaces/equipment should be thoroughly disinfected before staff arrive, after they leave, and as often as possible during their stay.

Preparation of disinfectant solution for cleaning premises

- Gloves should be worn when handling and preparing bleach solutions.
- Protective eye wear should be worn in case of splashing.
- Bleach solution should be:
 - made up daily
 - used mainly on hard, non-porous surfaces (it can damage textiles and metals).
- Sufficient time is required to kill the virus, i.e., at least 10 minutes' contact time.

Household bleach comes in a variety of strengths. The concentration of active ingredient — hypochlorous acid² — can be found on the product label.

Table 1. Recipes to achieve a 1000 ppm (0.1%) bleach solution

Original strength of bleach		Disinfectant recipe		Volume in standard 10L bucket
%	Parts per million	Parts of bleach	Parts of water	
1	10,000	1	9	1000 mL
2	20,000	1	19	500 mL
3	30,000	1	29	333 mL
4	40,000	1	39	250 mL
5	50,000	1	49	200 mL

²Hypochlorous acid (HOCl) is a weak acid formed when chlorine (Cl) dissolves in water and dissociated to hypochlorite (ClO⁻) which is the oxidising disinfectant in bleach.

Use of disinfection

- Use freshly made bleach solution and follow manufacturer’s instructions for appropriate dilution and use (see above table for dilution instructions).
- Wipe the area with bleach solution using disposable paper towels or a disposable cloth and dispose of gloves and mask in a leak proof plastic bag.
- Wash hands well using soap and water and dry with disposable paper or single-use cloth towel. If water is unavailable, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub.
- Increase the cleaning and disinfection of common areas such as kitchens and bathrooms.
 - Pair the cleaning regimes with previously mentioned rosters for shared spaces, to ensure that staff are not using contaminated surfaces.

Routine environmental cleaning requirements can be divided into two categories:

