

# MANAGING THE RISK OF COVID-19

**Wearing  
Masks  
Mandatory in  
Victoria**

**How do  
Breathable  
Raincoats  
Work?**

**Do All Racks Have  
to be Secured With  
2 Bolts?**

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Required to  
Receive Expert  
Advice?**



# What's New in August?

Welcome to the August Safety News.

This month, Stephen Weber explores how to manage the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Gary answers the question of why you can still get wet while wearing expensive breathable gear and we discuss how many bolts are required to secure storage racks safely.

We also share with you information regarding the first gross negligence conviction in Western Australia.

***Stay Safe!***



**Andrea Rowe**

## Safety Webinar – August 11<sup>th</sup> at 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August at 10am** for the next of our free monthly webinars to keep you up to date on workplace health and safety.

Gary and the team present short informal sessions of only 20 to 30 minutes on topical issues and to answer your questions.

[Register here](#)

*Missed our last webinar? [View here](#)*

## SAFETY ACTION TEAM



**Gary**



**Stephen**



**Katie**



**Ben**



**Miriam**



**Sarah**



**Kirill**

# Best Practice for Managing the Risk of COVID-19

With the recent second round of stage 3 restrictions in Victoria, it is increasingly clear that COVID-19 is going to be a long-term factor in how we undertake our business for the foreseeable future. Safety Action has undertaken several reviews recently assisting organisations to have best practice processes in place for managing the risk of COVID-19.

**The fundamental position should be for staff to work from home**

## Coronavirus Safety Plan

Companies need to develop a COVID-19 safety plan, consult with and communicate this to all staff, which includes the following:

### Guidance for staff regarding COVID-19 Vulnerable individuals

Guidance to self-identify as a **COVID-19 vulnerable individual** or if concerned about their exposure to a vulnerable individual to inform relevant HR manager. Records to be maintained confidentially and risk assessment undertaken.

Vulnerable persons include:

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

### Flexible physical workplace presence



- Vulnerable workers should be encouraged to remain working from home.
- Those who exhibit/have been exposed to some symptoms, should self-isolate for 2 weeks or until a negative test result is provided.
- Any person who is unwell for any reason should take sick leave.

### Staff with COVID symptoms or suspected exposure

The workplace should have a process to follow if an employee has COVID symptoms, or suspects they have had a COVID exposure (first or second hand), which should also provide:

- Clear guidance on employees leave entitlements during these periods of time.
- Rights of the company in relation to workers presenting to site with potential COVID symptoms e.g. to send the employee home, to undertake medical assessment and present a clean medical certificate prior to returning to work.

**Policy in relation to dependants** i.e. employee leave entitlements if children are required to stay at home.

### Social distancing rules:

- Avoid shaking hands, avoid face to face contact (less than 15min),
- carpooling policy (max 2)
- Team meetings done virtually wherever possible, with maximum meeting time less than 2 hours.
- Remove excess seating from work areas, offices, reception etc to prevent maximum occupancy from being exceeded or 1.5m distancing not being maintained.
- Reposition desk allocation to ensure staff maintain 1.5m separation.



### Policy in relation to visitors:

- Physical attendance to sites to be prohibited as far as possible
- Visitor to confirm they are healthy, have not travel in last 14 days, do not have any known COVID symptoms etc
- Diary of visitor attendance to site to be in place, with record of all persons interacted with in close proximity and/or for longer than 15 min.

### Health Monitoring



Undertake health monitoring at arrival on site, such as:

- Temperature Checks, with clear cut off criteria and process in event of recorded high temperature.
- Declaration of fitness for work at sign in,
- Ideally a person monitoring persons entering the workplace for symptoms.

### Separate employees into work teams

- Designate work groups with as few staff members as possible throughout their operations, which are to remain constant and not change during pandemic period.
- Where one person is suspected of infection the team can be stood down until a negative test result is returned.
- Teams should still maintain 1.5m distancing as much as possible.
- Ideally visually mark each work group e.g. via a coloured sash, for ease of identification and monitoring of segregation practices.

### Management of Break Times and Areas

- Breaks to be scheduled, taken within teams with sufficient time to clean down surfaces and prevent cross group interactions

- Communal food and cutlery to be removed.
- Adjust chairs at tables to ensure separation distances maintained.
- Place hygiene products on tables to ensure ease of cleaning before and after use.
- Assign a representative from each work group, rotating each shift, who is responsible for cleaning down break rooms before and after use.



## Hygiene

- Risk assessment of site PPE requirements e.g. masks, gloves, gowns. Note: Ensure method of distributing PPE is managed to reduce risk of contamination i.e. separate masks from box to prevent touching next mask when picking one out.
- Disinfectant throughout site.
- Where possible, secure doors open to reduce physical contact.
- Shared equipment and work areas disinfected prior to and after every use and
- Increased cleaning regime including:
  - Daily cleaning of all work areas surfaces
  - Pre-use and after-use wipe down of touched surfaces e.g. photocopier stations,
  - Personal hygiene

## Reception

- Hand sanitizer at reception
- Designated drop off point for **couriers and deliveries**, with disinfection before and after touching delivered items.
- Space chairs in waiting area to maintain a separation of 1.5m
- Display COVID-19 signage at reception including:
  - Safe hygiene practices, maintain 1.5m separation as much as reasonably practicable
  - Summary of COVID-19 common symptoms and requirement to not attend work if presenting with any of the symptoms
- Install an infrared thermometer station at reception with all persons to undertake a self-assessment and to not attend work if temperature exceeds 38°C, install signage directing workers to undertake assessment on arrival and to disinfect hands immediately after assessment.



## Signage

- Signage displayed throughout site with protocols for managing risk of COVID-19 including:
  - Common COVID-19 symptoms
  - Hygiene and other cleaning practices
- Maximum occupancy (1 person per 4m<sup>2</sup>)
- Markers along walkways to indicate 1.5m separation.
- Free resources can be found at [Safe Work Australia](#)

## Monitoring and Inspections

- Leaders to undertake daily review of COVID controls
- COVID controls being complied with e.g. masks, break schedule
- One-on-one reviews of team members to confirm understanding of COVID policy and requirements

## Mental Health Support

- Managers to undertake daily check in with staff working from home to monitor their ongoing mental health, with support for staff suspected of stress or increase mental health risk.
- Managers to have frequent conversations with staff about their mental health,
- Managers to be trained in mental health risks, signs and strategies for supporting workers.
- Company to provide mental health support e.g. EAP programs, Beyond Blue etc.

## Monitor Government Information

- Monitor the Department of Health, Safe Work Australia and State WorkSafe authorities for new information
- Communicate with staff on any government protocols.

# New COVID-19 Incident Reporting Regulations

Contact us on 03 8544 4300 or via [Email](#) to book a COVID-19 site audit with Safety Action to ensure you have compliant and best practice procedures in place. In response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases in Victoria and slow reporting, the State Government on July 28<sup>th</sup> 2020 commenced temporary regulations to make the reporting of COVID-19 cases to WorkSafe Victoria by employers mandatory

[Read the bulletin to learn more](#)

# How Breathable Raincoats Work

Plastic raincoats are waterproof but because they trap virtually all vapour inside, the wearer can get saturated with moisture and sweat, particularly if they exert a lot of energy eg heavy manual tasks or hiking. That is why you don't see serious hikers or skiers wearing cheap plastic coats.

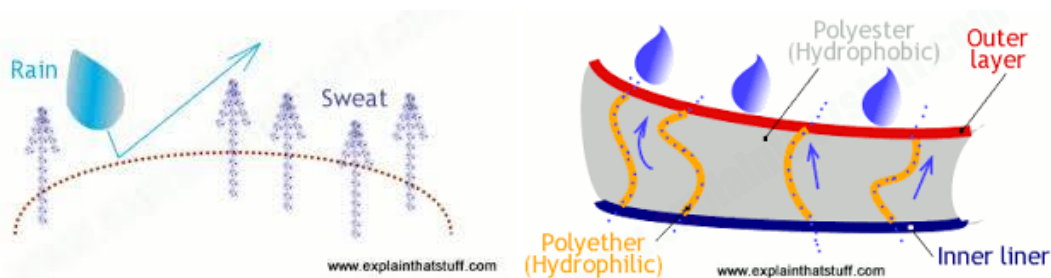
A person recently asked why they got wet wearing an expensive breathable gear.



Let's look at what makes breathable waterproof clothing and coats?

The cheapest and most common method for making "breathable" material is to spray a coating of polyurethane or ePTFE (expanded Polytetrafluoroethylene) on the surface that keeps large droplets of water out but allow smaller moisture droplets to pass through.

This process is referred to as Moisture Vapor Transmission (MVT). These products are typically water-resistant, but not waterproof.



Images showing how the Gore-Tex layer allows moisture to pass through, but not water droplets

The more expensive brands, like **GORE-TEX®**, laminate a permanent breathable coating to the base material. Laminated coatings are more durable as the sprayed on coatings more easily wear out and lose flexibility and can peel off.

Returning to the person who got wet although they were wearing a breathable raincoat.

The breathable coatings allow water vapor to pass from the hot humid side (interior), out to the cooler (exterior side). If you wear breathable coats in environments that are hotter and more humid on the outside than the inside, the moisture can pass the other way and the wearer may get so wet they think the raincoat is leaking.



However, under those circumstances, you would be sweating so much it would not make sense to wear the raincoat at all.



Example of breathable suits for emergency personnel which are also rated for chemical protection

***Note: Most breathable products are not intended for chemical protection, but some are, so make sure you check with the manufacturer.***

I hate it when the voices in my head  
go silent...  
I never know what they  
are planning!





# Businesses Required to Receive Expert Advice

From the new ISO 45001 to requirements set in state government prequalification standards it is increasingly clear that businesses are required to demonstrate, at all levels of the organisation, that they are informed about health and safety, and that the advice they receive is from a trained and competent source.



All directors and managers can no longer point to their safety manager to represent the business's knowledge of OHS, all managers must:

1. Have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities for health and safety, not just for their own area of responsibility but how their role fits within the whole organisation's health and safety program,
2. Have a fundamental understanding of health and safety legislation, and the organisations health and safety system
3. Demonstrate how they are informed of changes to legislation for both their operational environment and health and safety and
4. Be able to demonstrate how they identify, assess and control hazards within their workplace.

Organisations are also required to:

1. Demonstrate they have a compliant health and safety system in place to identify, assess and control all hazards;
2. Demonstrate they are monitoring changes to operational and health and safety legislation, standards and best practice activities to ensure their systems and processes maintain compliant and
3. Demonstrate their system is monitored by, and the advice they receive is coming from, a competent source. This source could be:
  - a. A designated safety manager or co-ordinator with appropriate Tertiary qualifications in health and safety, or
  - b. A designated safety manager supported by an expert external resource.

## Services that Safety Action can offer to demonstrate this requirement:

- Our free monthly newsletter providing guidance on OHS issues and topics;
- A subscription service to our quarterly legislation updates, demonstrating the monitoring of changes to health and safety legislation, standards etc.

- Safety Partnerships, where for a monthly fee our highly trained and qualified safety experts will work with you on specific topics, issues or concerns to ensure your safety system is running as effectively as possible.

The government requires businesses to be proactive about their health and safety system and you will need to provide evidence of this on a long term and ongoing basis, it will not be sufficient to enact these processes when crunch time occurs. '

**Call us on 03 8544 4300 or [email](#) us now to see how Safety Action can help move your business forward.**

## Victorian MFB and CFA are now Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)

On 1 July 2020, Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) was launched – bringing together all MFB and CFA firefighters.

If you are looking for MFB information such as Dangerous Goods forms, some of the old links no longer work.

You can navigate to the pages you need from the new website [here](#).

## Wearing Masks for COVID-19

The Victorian government has made wearing face coverings mandatory whenever people leave home. This includes while at the workplace, including offices, factories, warehouses, shops etc.



Cloth Mask



Disposable Mask

**Visit our website [here](#) for more information.**

# Do All Racks Have to be Secured with 2 Bolts?

Steel pallet racking is common in most storage areas these days, and part of the structural safety of the racks is provided by bolting the baseplates to the floor.



Large set of storage racks



Baseplate with 2 bolts

Previous standards for pallet racking only required one (1) bolt per baseplate, but the current Australian Standard *AS 4084: Steel Storage Racking* specifies a minimum of 2 bolts per baseplate, where the racking is serviced by mechanical equipment.

The main reason for requiring 2 bolts is prevent twisting of the (uptight) column if it is struck by a forklift, as the load capacity of the columns reduces dramatically if there is any buckling or twisting, and can cause the whole rack set to collapse.

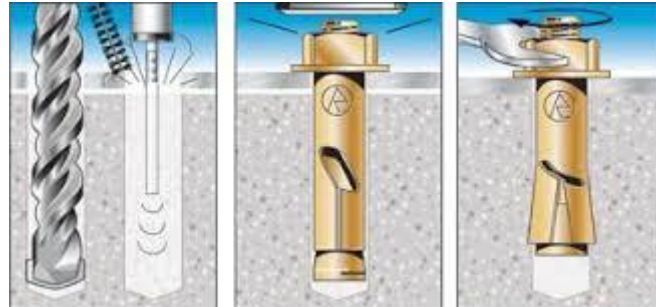


Example of a rack collapse

Therefore, you can accept only 1 bolt per baseplate if the racking is not loaded and unloaded with mechanical equipment such as forklift trucks.

## Do We Have to Use Special Bolts?

Many rack installers secure their baseplates with inexpensive and readily available expandable bolts eg "DynaBolts". These are bolts which expand in diameter when the nut on the top is tightened. See diagram below.



A reader has asked are dyna bolts OK for securing baseplates to the floor, or do the regulations mandate concrete screw in bolts or other methods?

### Performance of Baseplate Bolts

The relevant Australian Standard AS 4084, does not specify the type of bolts that may be used, but it does specify the performance eg minimum strength of the connection of the upright to the floor.

Baseplates must be secured to the floor and be capable of sustaining:

- a) 5kN in tension eg about 500kg force pulling up on the bolt; and
- b) 8kN in shear eg about 800kg force horizontally such if struck by a forklift.

**CAUTION:** Packaging for dyna bolts will likely display their design shear and tension capacity, but if the bolt is set into poor quality mortar or low strength concrete the design strength of the baseplate will not be achieved.

***For a quote to conduct an independent inspection of your racking by a qualified structural engineer, or training for your team call us on 03 8544 4300 or [email us](#)***

## Dreamworld – Why No Manslaughter Charges?

You may have heard that Dreamworld park owner, Ardent Liesure, has been charged with three breaches of S.32 of the Qld WHS Act over the tragic fatal accident on the Thunder River Rapids Ride in October 2016.

S.32 relates to reckless endangerment, and some people are wondering why they have not been charged under Queensland's industrial manslaughter laws?

In essence, the Queensland industrial manslaughter laws commenced after the accident and were drafted to only deal with death of workers, and therefore death of visitors, general public or park customers is excluded.



*We will keep you updated as this important case progresses.*

## First Gross Negligence Conviction

A WA firm, Resource Recovery Solutions Pty Ltd, has become the first business to be found guilty of **gross negligence** under the WA OSH Act 1984.

A labour-hire worker got caught in an unguarded conveyor roller in 2016, causing his arm to be amputated at the shoulder.



An unguarded conveyor

The firm had previous convictions including for unguarded conveyors in 2015 and a fatality in late 2016, when a roof over-loaded with debris collapsed on another labour-hire worker.

Because the current conviction dates to 2016, the maximum penalty is only \$500,000, but similar cases from 2018 onwards will attract higher penalties eg \$3m for a first offence and \$3.5m for any repeat offences.