



AUSTRALIAN  
**CAMPS ASSOCIATION**  
More people outdoors more often

# COVID-19 Guidance Document for Camps

## **Disclaimer**

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This document will be subject to change from time to time – please check the version and date stamp before use.

All actions taken by camps, outdoor activity providers and other users remain the responsibility of that person or organisation.

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## Introduction

The Australian Camps Association is the national peak body for camps and associated providers.

Camps provide a tailor-made solution to the mental and physical health problems associated with social isolation. There is no better way to reconnect with friends, fellow students and others than through the shared camp experience. Research<sup>1</sup> shows that camps for young people can help decrease anxiety, increase efficacy and improve connection with peers and with schools – all valuable outcomes as we re-integrate students into schools and the wider community.

Camps make a significant contribution to the Australian and local economies. There are around 570 camps across Australia offering around 67,000 beds in total. The total estimated turnover of camps in Australia is \$794M, 56% of which is derived from schools.

This practical guidance and advice document has been prepared to help camps manage the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission during and immediately following the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not exhaustive in its scope and will be updated as new information comes to light and as lockdown stages / social isolation measures change.

It has been collated using information previously published by a variety of sources both here in Australia and overseas.

The Australian Camps Association acknowledges these sources, which are listed at the conclusion of the document.

The ACA notes that Department of Education and Training (DET) directives relating to camps and excursions are different in each state, and that independent schools may choose to take a different approach to that directed by a DET. DET directives will be governed by advice from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

We also note that directives that apply to schools may not apply to community groups, who will be governed by the various federal and state mandates relating to social distancing.

<sup>1</sup> Outdoor Youth Programs Research Alliance – [www.oypra.org.au](http://www.oypra.org.au)

## **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

A coronavirus infection can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. The most common coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms reported are:

- fever
- breathing difficulties and breathlessness
- cough
- sore throat
- fatigue or tiredness.

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Close contact with an infected person.
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated by a person with the infection.

If you develop a fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath, you should seek urgent medical care. Your doctor will liaise with public health authorities to manage your care. You must remain isolated in your home, or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

For more information about the transmission and symptoms of COVID-19, see

[https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/04/coronavirus-COVID-19-frequently-asked-questions\\_10.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/04/coronavirus-COVID-19-frequently-asked-questions_10.pdf)

## **Camp Management Responsibilities to Staff**

Due to working in proximity to other people and the potential to come into contact with potentially contaminated surfaces, steps must be taken to reduce the risks of exposure for camp staff.

Employers have a duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. This includes preventing, and where prevention is not possible, reducing, risks to health and safety associated with potential exposure to COVID-19.

We recommend that all staff should complete an online training COVID-19 course, for example: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/how-to-protect-yourself-and-the-people-you-are-caring-for-from-infection-with-COVID-19>

## **Legal Duties**

Employers have duties under the OHS Act, which include that they must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees and independent contractors.
- Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of employees and independent contractors.
- Provide such information, instruction, training or supervision to employees and independent contractors as is necessary to enable those persons to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health.
- Monitor the health of their employees.
- Monitor conditions at any workplace under their management and control.

- Provide information concerning health and safety to employees, including (where appropriate) in languages other than English.
- Ensure that persons other than their employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the employer's undertaking.
- Consult with employees on matters related to health or safety that directly affect, or are likely to directly affect them.

Regardless of whether or not they are an "employer" for the purposes of the OHS Act, a person with management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace and the means of entering and leaving it are safe and without risks to health.

*Employees* also have duties under the OHS Act, which includes that they must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at a workplace.
- Co-operate with their employer with respect to any action taken by the employer to comply with a requirement imposed by or under the OHS Act.

### **Identifying Risks at Camps**

Employers must identify the level of risk to the health of employees from exposure to COVID-19 at their workplace.

This must be done in consultation with employees, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Some activities that may pose a risk of exposure to COVID-19 include:

- work that requires employees to be in close contact with others,
- using shared tools or equipment,
- sharing facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens and communal break areas.

### **Controlling Risks**

Employers have a duty to provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of employees. This includes preventing, and where prevention is not possible, reducing risks to health or safety associated with potential exposure to COVID-19.

Management should provide information and brief all employees and contract staff, including catering and cleaning staff, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus to people in the camp setting.

### **Screening Staff and Groups**

Employers should implement a screening process to minimise the introduction of COVID-19 to a camp.

For example, by asking employees returning to the camp if they have travelled, been in contact with any confirmed cases of COVID-19 or if they have flu-like symptoms.

This also applies to groups booking the site. A written record of response should be kept.

To ensure person-to-person contact is minimised, screening should be done over the phone or by other non-contact methods.

### **Messaging for Stakeholders at Camp**

1. For parents of children attending camp - if your child is sick, they must not come to camp. You must keep them at home and away from others.
2. For children on camp - tell your teacher or a camp staff member if you are feeling sick.
3. For all adults (guests and staff) - the greatest risk of transmission in the camp environment is between adults. It is of utmost importance that camp staff, accompanying teachers and other adults maintain physical distancing between themselves and each other at camp.

### **Maintaining Personal Hygiene**

Ensure that you:

- Teach and reinforce washing hands  
[https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How\\_To\\_HandWash\\_Poster.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/How_To_HandWash_Poster.pdf?ua=1)
- Teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes among participants and staff.
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviours, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and tissues.
- Provide hand sanitiser at high traffic areas of the site (bathrooms, dining rooms, meeting areas, foyers, etc). Communicate with staff about hand sanitiser locations and encourage regular use.
- Display hygiene information in prominent locations (kitchens, dining rooms, bathrooms, sleeping areas, camp entrances). For a sample sign, see:

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-COVID-19-print-ads-simple-steps-to-stop-the-spread-coronavirus-COVID-19-print-ads-simple-steps-to-stop-the-spread.pdf>

- Provide hand washing facilities (whether permanent or temporary), such as a wash basin, clean running water, soap and paper towels, placed in strategic locations to ensure employees and participants can access them in a timely manner.
- Ensure that rubbish bins have touch-free lids (eg foot pedal bins).
- Implement an appropriate waste management system.
- Ensure all employees and participants follow good hygiene practices, including washing hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, covering coughs and sneezes, or coughing into their elbow or shoulder and avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

The aim is thorough and regular sanitation.

Thorough and regular cleaning needs to be undertaken of all transit areas, communal and meal break areas, shared facilities (eg bathrooms and kitchens) and shared equipment.

1. Clean, sanitise and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) multiple times per day and shared objects between use.
2. Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitised, or disinfected.
3. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from unauthorised people.
4. Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (for example, allowing pollens in or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
5. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of any disease or illness associated with water.

For detailed cleaning advice, see:

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-COVID-19-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-principles-for-health-and-residential-care-facilities.pdf>

## Physical Distancing - Indoors

An indoor gathering refers to a gathering within a single enclosed area (i.e. an area, room or premises that is or are substantially enclosed by a roof and walls, regardless of whether the roof or walls or any part of them are permanent, temporary, open or closed).

Stage 3 Restrictions do not allow gatherings to take place indoors or outdoors.

Stage 2 Restrictions require that the size of the premises allows for at least 4 square metres of space per person.

How to calculate the number of people for the size of your room

1. Measure the length of the room.
2. Measure the width of the room.
3. Multiply the length by the width to calculate the area of your room in square metres.
4. Divide the area of your room (calculated in square metres) by 4 to calculate the maximum number of people allowed.

Example

- Length = 8.25 metres
- Width = 10.6 metres
- Square metres:  $8.25 \times 10.6 = 87.45$
- Maximum number of people:  $87.45 \div 4 = 21$



Physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres between individuals should be implemented wherever possible.

- Plan for how physical distancing will be maintained during inclement weather (eg use of indoor meeting areas).
- Install temporary physical barriers (eg screens) where appropriate – eg meal service areas.
- Mark safe distances in common areas (eg bathrooms, dining rooms, accommodation areas, meeting spaces - on floors and walls).

Where it is not possible to undertake work tasks or deliver activities and maintain physical distancing (eg in the camp kitchen), other control measures need to be implemented. For example:

- Encouraging non-contact greetings.
- Minimise the number of person to person interactions that need to be completed within 1.5 metres.
- Minimise the number of individuals involved in activities that need to occur within 1.5 metres of each other.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) (eg gloves, masks, glasses).
- Where possible, conducting briefings or debriefings outdoors or in environments with enhanced ventilation.
- Where possible, arranging furniture to leave as much space as possible between participants.

### **Physical Distancing - Outdoors /activities**

Activity program designers should consider each activity and whether there is a safer alternative. If not, plan to undertake the activity with at least 1.5m distance between participants (including staff).

Plan the activity program to avoid the shared use of equipment or close contact wherever possible – eg plan a walk rather than an initiatives session.

### **Shared equipment**

Harnesses, paddles, PFDs, etc should not be used by more than one person. Where it is not possible to eliminate shared use:

- Provide cleaning products (eg alcohol spray or solution) where equipment is located.
- Keep cleaning products with equipment as it moves around activity sites.
- Ensure all staff and participants thoroughly wash or sanitise their hands before and after every use.
- Ensure all parts of the equipment (eg including buckles, clips) are wiped down before and after use.

The shared use of phones, desks, offices, computers and other devices should also be avoided. Where this is not possible, these items should be regularly disinfected.

Swimming pools should not operate at this time. Use of play equipment by children at camp is unlikely to appreciably increase the risk of exposure to the virus when compared with other activities undertaken in camp. Camps that provide play equipment should consider the following sensible precautions:

- Separating groups at play; for example, by staggering break times and avoiding overcrowding.
- Cleaning play equipment between use by different groups (or at least daily).
- Ensuring children wash their hands (or apply alcohol-based hand rubs) before and after using play equipment.
- Excluding unwell children and staff.

### **First Aid**

- Standard precautions should be adopted when providing first aid, for example gloves and an apron to use when dealing with blood or body fluids/substances.
- Always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after providing first aid.

### **What do to if a Staff Member or Participant is Suspected of Having COVID-19**

Where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in a camp, the camp should contact the National Coronavirus Helpline ([1800020 080](tel:1800020080)) which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for further advice.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case DHHS will contact the individual to identify the close contacts and the causal contacts. If the employee or participant has attended a camp while they were infectious and had close contact with other people, DHHS will contact the camp.

Employers should establish a response plan and procedure for suspected and confirmed cases, which should include:

1. Consultation and communication arrangements with staff (including casual and contractors), including making sure contact details are up to date.
2. Identify site locations for cleaning and disinfection.
3. Implement an appropriate cleaning and disinfection regime, which should be overseen by a competent person.
4. The competent person should advise that the cleaning and disinfection regime has occurred before re-entry to the affected areas.
5. Provide staff and upcoming groups with relevant information prior to re-entering the camp or visiting the camp.
6. Review and revise systems to ensure risks are effectively controlled, in consultation with staff.

Children or young people at camp experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough or sore throat) should be isolated in an appropriate space with suitable supervision, and collected by a parent/carer as soon as possible.

## **Acknowledgements / references**

International Camping Fellowship – CDC Guidelines for Camps USA

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/managing-risk-COVID-19-exposure-construction-industry>

[https://ais.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/730376/35845\\_AIS-Framework-for-rebooting-sport\\_FA.pdf](https://ais.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/730376/35845_AIS-Framework-for-rebooting-sport_FA.pdf)

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-advice-on-reducing-the-potential-risk-of-COVID-19-transmission-in-schools-24-april-2020>

[https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-COVID-19-what-you-need-to-know\\_7.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-COVID-19-what-you-need-to-know_7.pdf)

Australian Camps Association Member Resources – COVID 19

Christian Venues Association