

WorkSafe IME Update

Victorian COVID-19 Stay Safe Directions, 29 October 2021



Dear Independent Medical Examiners,

Please note that Victoria's Chief Health Officer has introduced Stay Safe Directions for Metropolitan Melbourne (No 5) and Regional Victoria (No 15). The Stay Safe Directions (Victoria) commenced at 11:59pm on 23 October 2021, and can be found here:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

In accordance with the updated Directions, face-to-face examinations may resume from 29 October 2021, with the following requirements:

- Face masks must be worn by visitors and consultant specialists indoors unless an exemption applies.
- The Victorian Government QR Check-in system is compulsory – all visitors will need to follow this protocol upon arrival.
- COVID safe measures including social distancing and other health hygiene requirements are mandatory.

Whilst health providers are not obligated to conduct face-to-face examinations with unvaccinated injured workers, due to privacy restraints, authorised Agents and Self-Insurers are unable to enquire about an injured worker's vaccination status. However, it is open to health providers to impose COVIDSafe requirements as they see fit.

It is the responsibility of the examining practitioner to communicate their COVIDSafe requirements to the injured worker. It is recommended that a COVID pre-screening call take place between the examiner's rooms and the injured worker. This will provide the opportunity to communicate any COVIDSafe requirements prior to the assessment taking place. It is suggested that an injured worker's exemption status is also discussed during this call.

As face-to-face examinations recommence, it is possible that there may be an increased demand for these appointments. This may lead to authorised Agents' prioritisation of more urgent physical examination requests. In the lead up to the festive season, we may need to continue prioritising IMEs relating to eligibility and urgent decisions. We anticipate that this need to prioritise appointments over December and January may be impacted by IME availability over this period. We invite health providers who continue to consult over the festive season to make their availability known to authorised Agents.

Telehealth item codes remain active and telehealth should continue to be considered as an appropriate option for IME assessments.

Please investigate using telehealth when:

- A worker does not meet the COVID safe requirements to attend face to face assessment
- Face to face is not necessary and the IME can successfully be carried out via telehealth.

If you have any questions about individual assessments, or need to cancel an assessment,

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please contact the relevant claims manager. For **Psychiatry bookings only**, contact WorkSafe's bookings team to discuss bssc_ime@worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Please refer to Department of Health at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/health-services-and-professionals-coronavirus-covid-19> regarding providing services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions relating to IMEs please contact the WorkSafe IME team via provider@worksafe.vic.gov.au and for IIA related queries via impairment_assessment@worksafe.vic.gov.au.

Thank you for your attention,
Chantelle Parrott

Recovery Performance Officer
Worksafe Victoria