Agriculture Coordination Group

Unite & Recover

Seasonal workers and quarantine

Frequently asked questions

What is a seasonal worker business?

Most agricultural businesses in regional areas will be seasonal worker businesses.

A seasonal worker business is:

- an agribusiness, commercial fisheries business or labour hire firm that employs seasonal workers or workers under the Australian Government Pacific Labour Scheme or the Australian Government Seasonal Worker Programme (PLS/SWP workers)
- an accommodation facility that houses or is available to house seasonal workers or PLS/SWP workers.

A seasonal worker is a person who travels to or within Queensland for work as it becomes available, requiring them to move and stay in temporary accommodation. A seasonal worker can be a person who has come from overseas to travel and work temporarily in Australia, or an interstate resident seeking work in Queensland, or a Queenslander resident working away from home.

For example, a Queensland resident staying in temporary accommodation that is not their permanent place of residence would be a temporary worker (e.g. someone from Cairns who has travelled to Bowen for a few days for agricultural or commercial fishing work).

If all of your employees live locally and return to their permanent place of residence at the end of each shift, you are not considered to be a seasonal worker business.

Seasonal workers can be unskilled or skilled, including highly specialised skills.

You are included as a seasonal worker business if you employ:

- anyone from outside Queensland
- anyone on a Seasonal Worker Program, Pacific Labour Scheme or Working Holiday Maker visa stream.

Questions about density

How many people can be in a workplace at any one time (what are the occupant density requirements)?

Seasonal worker businesses can have 1 person per 2 square metres indoors, so far as is reasonably practicable, for areas open to or used by visitors or staff. The 1 person per 2 square metre rule does not apply to sleeping areas or outdoor areas.

Where it is not reasonably practicable for a business to meet the 1 person per 2 square metres measure (e.g. food processing activities undertaken in climate controlled rooms) then alternative risk mitigation measures must be in place and documented in a COVID Safe Work Plan (e.g. Health Management Plan).

What are the occupant density rules for accommodation facilities?
Accommodation facilities that only house seasonal workers, and any other guests, can have 1 person per 2 square metres indoors, so far as is reasonably practicable, in communal areas. Accommodation facilities have no occupant density rules for sleeping areas.

However, hostels, bed and breakfasts, backpackers, boarding houses, short-term rentals and short-term accommodation that house seasonal workers and other guests at the same time must follow the occupant density requirements in the *Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction or Impacted Areas Direction*. Guests should continue to practice physical distancing by staying 1.5 metres away from others.

I cannot meet the density requirement in my intensive production business, but already have other measures in place to protect staff. What does this new direction mean for me?

The direction requires that a seasonal worker business must comply with the density requirement of no more than 1 person per 2 square metres, so far as is reasonably practicable. In some intensive industries such as meatworks or packing sheds, workers are required to work more closely together, and it is not reasonably practicable to meet this requirement. If you have already put measures in place to ensure as much distancing as possible between your workers, and you also have other health and safety measures in place, such as full-face shields and three-layer balaclavas that are used in boning rooms and these are documented in your work health and safety plan, then you have met the requirement as far as is practicable.

What is outdoors?
An outdoor area has fixed or temporary boundaries but is not fully enclosed. It is open to the elements and has natural air flow. To reduce the risk of COVID-19, there should be as much natural and unrestricted air movement as possible for most of the time the area is in use.

An outdoor area can include a veranda, balcony, deck, patio or similar structure that might be connected to an external wall of a building and have a roof, awning or eave. It might also include a rotunda, tarpaulin or shade structure situated in a larger open space.

An outdoor area does not include:

- atriums that are internal to a building
- a temporary or permanent marquee except in the circumstances where walls/panels are lifted for the duration of the event
- a tent, like a circus tent or performance tent.

When curtain walls, panel walls or other fittings are used to fully enclose an area to protect from the elements, it should be considered as indoor. Sometimes Queensland weather means that curtain walls, panel walls or other fittings are used for short periods to partially enclose an area for patron comfort and safety. If a business is in doubt, it should operate as if it is an indoor space.

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My business has indoor and outdoor areas, what rules do I need to follow?
You must follow the requirements for indoors and outdoors in the different areas. Patrons must check in for both the indoor and outdoor sections of your business.

Indoor areas must not have more than 1 person per 2 square metres so far as is reasonably practicable. Outdoor areas can have an unlimited number of people and do not have an occupant density limit (Seasonal Workers International Quarantine Plans and Checklist Direction | Queensland Health).

Questions about contact information requirements and Check In Qld App

When do businesses need to collect contact details?
From 3 September 2021, seasonal worker businesses must make all reasonable efforts to collect contact information using the Check In Qld App about all people who enter the premises (including staff), unless an exception applies.

Businesses do not need to request information from:
- a person entering in an emergency to provide emergency services
- a child under the age of 16 years who is not accompanied by a responsible adult.

Contact information does not need to be collected if it presents a risk to someone's safety, for example, a risk of violence to staff or other patrons.

What if someone cannot use the Check In Qld app or does not have a smartphone? / What if someone has trouble checking in?
If someone is having trouble with the QR code, ask them to enter the 6-digit number from your QR code poster.

If staff members, visitors or contractors do not have access to or cannot use the Check In Qld app, businesses can enter customer contact details via the business profile mode of the Check In Qld app to check them in.

What if someone doesn't want to use the Check In Qld app?

Under the Public Health Direction of the Chief Health Officer, seasonal worker businesses must make all reasonable efforts to electronically collect contact information on all staff members, visitors and contractors at the time of entry.

If a staff member, visitor or contractor entering the business does not want to use the Check In Qld app, the business can enter their contact details via 'Check In Qld Business Profile mode.'

Each staff member, visitor and contractor must be asked to check in unless the seasonal worker business enters their contact details for them via 'Check In Qld Business Profile mode.'

Seasonal worker businesses must register their business for the app and ensure the code is easily available for customers to check in.

Seasonal worker businesses must make all reasonable efforts to clearly display the Check In Qld app QR code at each entry that is used by staff members, visitors and contractors.

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What is the Check In Qld app?
The Check In Qld app is a contactless, free, secure and convenient way for people to sign into Queensland businesses. The app helps protect the community by assisting with faster contact tracing. Find out more about the Check In Qld app.

Why is the Check In Qld app important?
The use of the Check in Qld app is being expanded to help Queenslanders and Queensland businesses stay COVID Safe. In the event of a community outbreak, the app allows contact tracers to rapidly identify close contacts, track and trace faster, and minimise any further risk to the community and impact on business.

It will make it easier for businesses to meet the requirements for the collection of customer contact details and is easy for customers to use. The check-in automatically captures a person's contact details, and the date, time and location.

What if I can't collect contact details using the Check In Qld app due to lack of internet availability or unexpected circumstances?
If you can't collect contact information using the Check In Qld app due to unexpected issues with your internet service, because your business is located in a place that does not have mobile internet data connection, or because someone is unable to use the electronic system (e.g. because of age, disability or language barriers), you must collect and keep contact information using another electronic method such as a spreadsheet or paper-based form.

For each visitor, this information must include:

- name
- phone number
- email address (residential address if unavailable)
- date and time period of the visit.

You must also use best endeavours to transfer any non-electronic information to an electronic system within 24 hours and comply with the requirements for collection and storage. If asked, this information must be provided to a public health officer within the stated time.

I already have an electronic system in place to collect records. Do I have to change my system?
If you operate a seasonal worker business, from 3 September 2021, you must now use the Check In Qld app.

If your farm has a biosecurity management plan with 'Farm Check-in', anyone entering the farm will need to check-in to both the 'Farm Check-in' and the 'Check In Qld app'.

If your business has another check in system in place and you wish to continue using this system for your own records, anyone entering the business will need to check-in with both your existing system and the 'Check In Qld app'.

I need to maintain my own sign in system so I know who is on site and my staff might stop using it if they also have to use the Check In Qld app. What options do I have?
As use of the app continues to expand, your staff, visitors and contractors will be expecting to be asked to enter their details via the Check In Qld app.

A seasonal worker business that entered the contact details for their staff, visitors and contractors via the 'Check In Qld Business Profile mode' would not also need to also ask

their staff to use the Check In Qld app. However, the business must enter the details into the app without delay.

Where do I need to put the QR code poster?

Your staff members, visitors and contractors are required to check in when they enter your business. You must display your Check In Qld app QR code at all entries used by staff members, visitors and contractors.

On a farm, you can put the poster at the most convenient point(s), which may be at the farm gate and/or the main administration building or work shed. If you have a check-in point for biosecurity reasons, you should put the Check In Qld poster at the same location.

My business has multiple locations – do I need to set up multiple codes?

Each Check In Qld QR code is assigned to a physical address so each location/venue of a business will require a separate registration and QR code. Each physical address/location must also have a unique descriptor as duplicate display names cannot be processed. For example, Peter Smith's Avocado Farm (Mareeba) and Peter Smith's Avocado Farm (Bundaberg).

My business is a very large venue – do I need to set up multiple codes?

A business may have multiple codes. This may be useful if your business is very large such as a large farm, meatworks, packing shed, or a business where customers only go to certain areas, not the whole venue.

For example:

- farm packing shed
- farm administration building
- meatworks boning floor
- meatworks cutting floor
- meatworks packing.

If you have multiple codes set up, you should ensure that workers are able to check in at each location as they move around the business during the work day. Should a person with COVID-19 be identified as attending your business, multiple check-in codes can assist your business in separating out workers that are close contacts and must quarantine from those who were not exposed and who can continue to work.

How can I tell if someone has checked in?

Staff members, visitors and contractors can display the successful check in screen to you on entry to your venue. You can approach them and ask to see their check in history in the app to verify that their check in was successful.

Do my staff have to check in every day on the app?

Yes, your staff should check in every day through the Check In Qld app. This will help ensure that they are included and quickly contacted if any contact tracing takes place.

If you have multiple codes set up, you should ensure that workers are able to check in at each location as they move around the business during the work day.

What happens if my staff or visitors don't have a smartphone or can't provide their information electronically?

The staff member, visitor or contractor should immediately advise the business if they do not have access to the Check In Qld app. A staff member from your business can record their details using the business profile of the Check In Qld app.

Do staff have to check in again after having a break?
Staff do not have to check in using the Check In Qld app when they go on break if they don't leave the work premises or move between areas. If staff go offsite they will be required to check in again when they return.

Questions about COVID Safe Checklists

Where can I get a COVID Safe Checklist?
You can download the COVID Safe Checklists for seasonal worker businesses from the Queensland Government website.

What do I have to do under the Checklist?
Queensland's COVID Safe Future roadmap sets out general requirements that will assist in managing the risks of COVID-19, including the need for businesses to have a COVID Safe Checklist. The Checklist sets out what you need to do to safely operate your business. This includes:

- collect contact tracing information using the Check In Qld app
- comply with occupant density limits of 1 person per 2 square metres, as far as is practicable
- follow an enhanced cleaning regime
- maintain health and hygiene, including through making hand washing facilities available
- direct staff to stay home if they are sick or become unwell at work
- follow a workplace health and safety risk management framework.

Do I need to submit my COVID Safe Checklist or get it approved?
No, you do not need to submit your Checklist or get it approved.

I already have a health management plan, do I still need a checklist?
Yes, the Checklist sets out the general requirements for you to safely operate your business.

One of the requirements is to follow a workplace health and safety risk management framework, that outlines how the risk of COVID-19 is managed. Your existing health management plan is an example of a risk management framework that meets this requirement.

I am not a seasonal worker business as I only employ family / locals, do I still need to have a Checklist and follow the requirements?
All businesses in Queensland have obligations and responsibilities under Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation.

Every workplace must have a plan to help protect its staff, customers and visitors and to prepare for a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in your workplace. This plan is your Work Health and Safety plan that all businesses are required to have and maintain. It does

not need to be submitted to the Chief Health Officer for approval and should be made available when requested.

Although you are not required to have a COVID Safe Checklist, the Checklist may be useful in meeting your workplace health and safety requirements.