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The Office of Local Government has provided an update in response to amendments relating to the Public Health (COVID-19 Temporary Movement and Gathering Restrictions) Order 2021, commencing 14 July 2021.

The Public Health (COVID-19 Temporary Movement and Gathering Restrictions) Order 2021 commenced 26 June 2021 and contains directions on staying at home in Greater Sydney (which includes the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour LGAs), entering Greater Sydney, and additional restrictions across New South Wales. The Order will be in place until the beginning of 31 July, unless extended or repealed earlier.

This guidance information is in response to a range of local government enquires and is provided for guidance only.

The Office of Local Government held a webinar for councils on 28 June 2021 to provide information on the latest Order. A recording can be found [here](#). Information on restrictions, including a map of LGAs, can be accessed [here](#). Stay up to date on the latest version of the Public Health Order [here](#). For more information please visit the [NSW Government](#) and [NSW Health](#) websites.

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## 1. Council administration buildings, depots and offices

The Public Health Order directs employers to allow an employee to work at the person's place of residence where it is reasonably practicable to do so. It is a matter for individual councils to determine how to comply with this direction, based on the relevant circumstances.

Furthermore, if you cannot work from home and you go to your workplace, you must wear a face mask (unless an exemption applies) in all indoor areas of non-residential premises. This includes in council vehicles in which more than one employee is traveling. You must also wear a face mask:

- At a COVID-19 safe outdoor gathering
- A controlled outdoor public gathering
- If you are on public transport
- In a major recreation facility such as a stadium
- If you are working in a hospitality venue, or
- If you are working in indoor areas of construction sites (there are certain exemptions to this requirement)

In Greater Sydney, from the beginning of 13 July, masks are required in indoor common property areas of residence premises (e.g. lifts and lobbies of apartment blocks).

It is required that councils ensure that adequate [physical distancing](#) continues to be maintained. For further information relating to face mask rules please visit [here](#).

### 1.1 Contractors

Councils must make a determination as to whether they consider the work being carried out as essential. Factors to consider include the nature of the work or service and contractual terms. If the work can be delayed without adverse impact on project deliverables, then councils are encouraged to do so.

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Councils are reminded under the Amendment Order that a person leaving Greater Sydney (who is at least 18 years of age) is required to carry evidence showing their address and produce that evidence if required to do by a police officer. This includes workers travelling from Greater Sydney to perform work in regional NSW.

Essential workers from the Fairfield LGA who work outside the Fairfield LGA are required to get tested every three days. From 17 July, a worker must be tested every 72 hours to continue working outside Fairfield LGA; and provide evidence of their most recent test if requested by the police or their employer. For the rest of Greater Sydney, from 19 July an essential worker must be tested every 7 days to continue working more than 50 kilometres outside of Greater Sydney and provide evidence of their most recent test if requested by the police or their employer.

If councils decide that work cannot be delayed and their contractors are travelling from Greater Sydney, councils should implement strategies to minimise risk. This could include consideration of whether those contractors can complete the work without coming into close contact with local staff and generally limiting the interaction and mixing of employees. There is an expectation that such contractors will carry out their work before immediately returning home without mingling with locals.

Where practical, council decisions relating to contractors should be made with a view to minimising the requirement for travel across, from and through Greater Sydney. If a staff member or contractor is required to enter Greater Sydney for work that cannot be carried out from home, that person will be subject to the stay at home order upon their return.

Infrastructure NSW has developed [seven principles](#) for dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on community infrastructure projects.

## 1.2 QR codes

To facilitate contact tracing, the Order requires persons entering specified types of premises to register their contact details electronically as well as providing alternative means for persons who cannot register electronically due to age, disability or language issues, or due to internet outages.

Effective from 12 July 2021, the Order has been amended to extend these requirements to additional types of premises including retail, office, industrial, accommodation, residential care, education, child-care premises and construction sites, and for the Service NSW QR code to be used at all specified premises.

Councils are required to take reasonable steps to ensure people entering their premises (such as workplaces and depots) check-in using the Service NSW QR codes or digital sign-up sheet. This includes staff and visitors such as maintenance workers and delivery drivers. While many council premises across NSW have adopted and implemented COVID safe plans, including check-in processes, it is a timely reminder councils

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check their compliance in light of this new mandate. To register to access your COVID Safe resources please visit [here](#) or to find about the changes to the QR code rules please visit [here](#).

## 2. Council meetings and public forums

The NSW Government is ensuring local councils can continue to function during COVID-19 restrictions with existing laws enabling them to hold meetings electronically instead of physically. Virtual meetings will help councils continue to make important decisions on behalf of the community while complying with Public Health Orders and minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

For **councils in areas subject to the stay at home order**, all councillors and staff may attend and participate in meetings by audio-visual link.

For **councils in other parts of NSW**, council meetings can be conducted in person. **However**, the restrictions under the Public Health Order will affect how meetings are conducted. Councils should continue to ensure appropriate social distancing is practiced at meetings.

The Office of Local Government issued a circular on 28 June 2021 to provide technical advice on the conduct of council meetings in compliance with the Public Health Order. The circular can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

## 3. Libraries and community centres

### Libraries

For councils in the Greater Sydney area, libraries must remain closed, unless the Order is extended or repealed earlier.

For the rest of NSW, libraries can remain open, provided the 4 square metre rule and mask requirements are observed.

Please see the State Library's Public Library Services website for further information.

### Community centres

The Public Health Order does not mandate the closure of community centres and halls. As councils usually control these places, it may exercise a discretion to close the space, but that is a matter for councils. If councils decide to keep them open it is important a COVID Safe plan is put in place. This includes making sure the COVID-19 Safety Plan in place is relevant to the building's use. For example, you may need a community hall Safety Plan, as well as a places of worship Safety Plan to cover the different buildings on the site. Furthermore, multiple

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buildings on the same site can all have unique QR codes. To get different QR codes for each building, you need to register each building as COVID Safe.

## 4. Community sport

The Order states no community sport (whether training or a match) should proceed in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour.

However, undertaking exercise and outdoor recreation activities is a reasonable excuse to leave your home. You can take part in exercising or outdoor recreational activities that comply with the gathering rules (no more than 2 people outdoors, excluding members of the same household) and must stay in their Local Government Area or within 10 kilometres of their home. However, people should limit their movement in Greater Sydney and try and undertake exercise and outdoor recreation in their local neighbourhood.

Exemptions from the 2 person outdoor gathering limit is available on the NSW Government [website](#).

For the rest of NSW, the following restrictions relating to sport and active recreation now apply:

### Indoors

- Indoor recreation facilities and gyms are required to adhere to 1 person per 4 square metres in all areas.
- Gym and Dance classes are capped at a maximum of 20 people. Masks must be worn.

### Outdoors

Outdoor gatherings are capped at the lesser of:

- 1 person per four square metres; or
- 5,000 persons

For non-controlled outdoor public gatherings (up to 200) these events are restricted to 200 people (unless the gathering is a COVID-19 safe outdoor gathering with a COVID-19 Safety Plan).

COVID-19 safe outdoor gathering (up to 5,000) events can have the lesser of 1 person per 2 Square metres of space or 5,000 persons and do not need to be seated or enclosed by fencing and do not have a time limit. The organiser must have and comply with the relevant COVID-19 Safety Plan.

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Controlled outdoor public gatherings (up to 10,000). A ticketed and seated COVID-19 safe outdoor gathering can have the maximum of the lesser 1 person per 2 square metres of space or 10,000 persons. The event must be enclosed by fencing or another barrier. The organiser must have and comply with the relevant COVID-19 Safety Plan.

For all activities taking place at indoor recreation facilities, gyms and COVID-safe outdoor community sport activities a face mask must be worn. Please note some exemptions do apply relating to mandatory face coverings and can be located [here](#). All indoor facilities such as change rooms, canteens, clubhouses are to adhere to the 1 person per 4 square metre rule. Club BBQs and canteens can still take place in line with COVID Safety Plan requirements. As the BBQ/canteen is taking place at community sport, face masks must be worn at all times by staff and volunteers.

Organisations must continue to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Outdoor seated events will be limited to 50% seated capacity.

For further information, visit the Office of Sport's [COVID19 information page](#).

## 5. Gyms

For Greater Sydney, indoor recreation facilities such as gyms are to remain closed.

For the rest of NSW, a 20-person limit applies to classes or activities at a gym, requirement to adhere to 1 person per 4 square metres in all areas and requirement to wear face masks (unless an exemption applies) in all indoor areas of non-residential premises.

Councils are reminded of the Service NSW QR code mandate from Monday 12 July. To register to access your COVID Safe resources please visit [here](#) or to find about the changes to the QR code rules please visit [here](#).

## 6. Parks, reserves and beaches

The current Public Health Order states that in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, a reasonable excuse for a person to be away from their residential premises or temporary accommodation, is for outdoor recreation and exercise. Given the advent of the school holidays and other stay at home requirements councils are urged to keep playgrounds and parks, reserves and beaches open and accessible where possible. Ultimately, however, this is a matter for councils to decide.

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Furthermore, the Order states if you are in the Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, you must not participate in any outdoor public gathering of more than 2 people (excluding members of the same household) and must stay in their Local Government Area or within 10 kilometres of their home. Councils should consider how they can support good social distancing and health and hygiene practices by users, such as by installing signage and notices to communicate the rules that apply.

For all areas of public space, it is a matter for each individual council to decide whether it should be open, any conditions that should be applied and how best to communicate with users. In making this decision, councils should consider how large the area is and how many users are able to use the space at once to allow each person 4m<sup>2</sup> of space. In situations where this is not possible or there is overcrowding councils-should work with their NSW Police Local Area Command to implement any restrictions.

Councils are also reminded the resources from the COVID Safe Summer are still available which has useful tools and guidance. To access these resources please visit [here](#).

## 7. Swimming Pools

The Order states the following places in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour, are directed to be closed to the public.

- Indoor recreation facilities such as squash courts, indoor swimming pools, gyms, table tennis centres, health studios, bowling alleys and ice rinks.
- Public swimming pools (except natural swimming pools, which may open)

## 8. Caravan parks and camping grounds

The Public Health Order allows caravan parks and camping grounds in Greater Sydney including the Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Wollongong and Shellharbour to be open to local workers and overnight travellers as well as residents of the caravan park or camping ground. The Order allows visitors to visit permanent residents of the caravan park or camping ground.