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This guidance information is provided by the Office of Local Government (OLG) in response to amendments relating to the Public Health (COVID-19 Temporary Movement and Gathering Restrictions) Order 2021, commencing 19 July 2021.

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

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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 The Order will be in place until the beginning of 31 July, unless extended or repealed earlier.

Stay at home restrictions have also been imposed on people who live (or have been there on or after Saturday 17 July) in the Blayney, Cabonne and Orange Local Government Areas from 21 July until 28 July 2021.

OLG 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](#).

OLG also held a webinar for councils on 15 July 2021 about QR Code requirements. When available, the recording will be placed on the OLG website.

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.

1. Council administration buildings, depots and offices

The requirements relating to [working from home](#) have been strengthened. **An employer in Greater Sydney must require a worker to work from home** unless it is not reasonably practicable. In regional NSW, other than any LGAs affected by a temporary local down, an employer must **allow** and employee to work from home unless it is not reasonably practical. The NSW Government strongly urges all councils to minimise staff that are not working from home to the maximum extent possible. Failure to do so can result in a fine of up to \$10,000.

In Greater Sydney, and those outside of Greater Sydney who are subject to the stay at home rules (i.e. anyone who has been in Greater Sydney in the previous 14 days and those in any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown including the Blayney, Orange and Cabonne LGA's and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown), it is a [reasonable excuse](#) to leave your residence for work but only if it is not practicable for the employee to work from home.

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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.

Councils are reminded under the Amendment Order that a person leaving Greater Sydney, Blayney, Cabonne or Orange or any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown (who is at least 18 years of age) is required to carry a face mask and evidence showing their address and produce that evidence if required to do so by a police officer. This includes workers travelling from Greater Sydney to perform work in regional NSW.

If councils decide that work cannot be delayed and their contractors are travelling from Greater Sydney, Blayney, Cabonne or Orange or any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown, 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 or affected area. If a staff member or contractor is required to enter Greater Sydney or affected area 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.

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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 for councils 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](#).

1.3 Authorised workers – residents of Fairfield, Liverpool or Canterbury-Bankstown LGAs

Workers who live in the Fairfield, Liverpool or Canterbury-Bankstown LGA, you can only leave the LGA you live in to go to work if:

- the business is allowed to be open.
- you are an authorised worker.

For more information, please refer to this list of authorised workers.

Of particular note to councils are the following categories who are defined to be authorised workers:

- A person employed or engaged to provide services to persons with disability or vulnerable persons.
- Early childhood education and care.
- Biosecurity and food safety personnel undertaking critical duties.
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services described as electricity services, operation of energy systems, gas services, liquid fuels, water supply, sewerage, sanitation and drainage services and waste resource recovery services (including collection, treatment and disposal services).
- Essential services for the maintenance, safety and upkeep of public and recreational spaces.
- Click and collect services
- A person employed or engaged at a residential aged care facility
- Animal welfare, care and accommodation services

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Workers from Greater Sydney should be reminded of their [testing requirements](#), which may apply depending on their work and place of residence.

1.4 Carpooling in Greater Sydney

In Greater Sydney, you cannot [travel in a vehicle](#) with persons other than members of your own household, and persons over 18 must carry documentation evidence of their address when in a vehicle with another person and provide it to police on request.

This does not apply to vehicles being used:

- to provide public transport.
- for work (eg police, ambulance).
- to provide care and assistance to a vulnerable person.
- for an emergency or for compassionate reasons.

1.5 Extended face mask rules

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:

- When carpooling which includes in council vehicles in which more than one employee is traveling
- In non-residential indoor areas
- 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
- For some situations in [outdoor areas](#)
- In airports and on commercial domestic flights
- If you are working in a hospitality venue

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NSW Health also advises that, to help stop the spread of COVID-19, masks should be worn at any time that you cannot stay 1.5 metres away from other people. 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](#).

In Greater Sydney, Cabonne, Orange and Blayney and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown, masks are required in indoor common property areas of residence premises (e.g. lifts and lobbies of apartment blocks).

There are [additional areas where masks are required](#):

- In indoor and outdoor areas of food markets in Greater Sydney.
- In outdoor areas near food, drink or retail premises in Greater Sydney.
- In outdoor areas while working in Greater Sydney.
- By persons in a school, other than a student.

In addition, in Greater Sydney, Blayney, Cabonne and Orange and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown, persons [must carry a mask with them at all times](#) when away from their residence.

For persons who cannot wear a face mask because of a disability, physical or mental health illness or condition, they must carry either:

- a medical certificate or letter signed by a registered health practitioner (such as a doctor) or a registered NDIS provider or
- a statutory declaration.

1.6 Pause on construction

From **12:01 am on Monday 19 July**, in Greater Sydney, [work cannot be carried out on a construction site](#)* unless:

- it is necessary to deal with environmental risks, secure the site or maintain critical equipment.
- it is to maintain public utilities.
- it is necessary to maintain the safe operation of transport infrastructure.
- it is a construction site necessary for NSW Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- it is an emergency.

(*) **construction site** means a place at which work, including related excavation, is being carried out to erect, demolish, extend or alter a building or structure, or at which civil works are being carried out but not work carried out in relation to a dwelling in which a person is residing.

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 but there is nothing to prevent councils meeting by audio-visual link if they choose to do so. **However**, if councils meet in person, 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.

The State Library has advised that contactless click and collect delivery can be provided, however councils will need to establish whether the need for these services outweighs the risk, especially considering the restrictions in the Greater Sydney area, Orange, Cabonne and Blayney and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown.

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In making these decisions, councils need to consider that click and collect (pick up from a library site) will attract people to that location, and also necessitates staff travelling to the library to provide the service, in line with restrictions in the Public Health Order.

The State Library has also advised that isolated residents may benefit from home library services or home delivery and that these services could prove to pose less risky, provided the service is contactless.

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 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 and other areas affected by a temporary lockdown.

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

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- See below for information about gyms and indoor recreation facilities.

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.

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](#).

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5. Gyms and indoor recreation facilities

For Greater Sydney, Caboonie, Orange and Blayney and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown, 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. Dance classes, or any other classes such as yoga also have a limit of 20 people. All gyms and indoor recreation facilities need to comply with the 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, Orange, Blayney and Caboonie and any other areas affected by a temporary lockdown a reasonable excuse for a person to be away from their residential premises or temporary accommodation, is for outdoor recreation and exercise. 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.

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 4m² 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](#).

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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.

9. Waste

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) has advised that workers in the waste industry have now been declared exempt as authorised workers, under the latest Public Health Order.

- Workers in the waste industry are now authorised to travel outside an affected local government area if required for work purposes, but only for the provision of critical waste work
- The exemption covers waste resource recovery services, including collection, treatment and disposal services
- Details can be found about [authorised workers](#) on the Service NSW website
- You can leave home to go to work if you are an authorised worker living in the Fairfield, Liverpool or Canterbury-Bankstown local government areas ie; working in resource recovery including collection, treatment and disposal services

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- This exemption allows waste workers to enter common property on a residence under the direction of ensuring the health, safety or security of residents, ie; waste disposal work can be carried out on common property of residential premises.
- This exemption also allows authorised workers to undertake critical sanitation works, such as the cleaning of parks, amenity blocks and streets.
- People living in or staying in an affected local government area (such as Fairfield) but working outside this area, must have a COVID-19 test once every 72 hours (3 days) in order to be allowed to go to work as an authorised worker.
- NSW EPA has advised that all licensees and operators need to carefully assess which activities and services are critical and should continue, and which should pause during this lockdown period.
- It is important that the waste and recycling industry and councils continue to provide critical waste services to the public. This includes keeping waste and recycling centres open so that people can easily dispose of their waste.

Further information, including FAQ's are available on the EPA's website [here](#).

Concerns about operations can be raised by contacting the Environment Line on 131 555 or info@epa.nsw.gov.au.