

NECA MEMBER COVID-19 UPDATE

LATEST FEDERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. JOBKEEPER PAYMENT – EXTENSION OF TIME TO ENROL UNTIL 31 MAY

Enrolments are open from now until the end of May for the JobKeeper Payment through Australian Taxation Office (ATO) online services, the ATO's Business Portal using myGov ID or through your registered tax professional.

You can enrol once you have confirmed you and your employees meet the eligibility criteria for the JobKeeper Payment.

If you have employees you will need to ask them to complete a JobKeeper employee nomination notice and return it to you by the end of April if you plan to claim JobKeeper payment for April.

If you enrol by 31 May you will still be able to claim for the fortnights in April and May, provided you meet all the eligibility requirements for each of those fortnights. This includes having paid your employees by the appropriate date for each fortnight.

For more information:

<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/JobKeeper-Payment/>

2. NATIONAL SAFE WORKPLACE PRINCIPLES

The Federal Government has agreed to develop nationally-consistent, industry-specific work health and safety guidance on COVID-19, accessible via a central hub provided by Safe Work Australia.

The guidance will be developed and endorsed through Safe Work Australia, working with its members (the Commonwealth, states and territories, employer groups, and unions).

To support the development of nationally-consistent guidance, National Cabinet agreed the 'National COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles':

1. All workers, regardless of their occupation or how they are engaged, have the right to a healthy and safe working environment.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic requires a uniquely focused approach to work health and safety (WHS) as it applies to businesses, workers and others in the workplace.
3. To keep our workplaces healthy and safe, businesses must, in consultation with workers, and their representatives, assess the way they work to identify, understand and quantify risks and to implement and review control measures to address those risks.
4. As COVID-19 restrictions are gradually relaxed, businesses, workers and other duty holders must work together to adapt and promote safe work practices, consistent with advice from health authorities, to ensure their workplaces are ready for the social distancing and exemplary hygiene measures that will be an important part of the transition.

5. Businesses and workers must actively control against the transmission of COVID-19 while at work, consistent with the latest advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, including considering the application of a hierarchy of appropriate controls where relevant.
6. Businesses and workers must prepare for the possibility that there will be cases of COVID-19 in the workplace and be ready to respond immediately, appropriately, effectively and efficiently, and consistent with advice from health authorities.
7. Existing state and territory jurisdiction of WHS compliance and enforcement remains critical. While acknowledging individual variations across WHS laws mean approaches in different parts of the country may vary, to ensure business and worker confidence, a commitment to a consistent national approach is key, including a commitment to communicating what constitutes best practice in prevention, mitigation and response to the risks presented by COVID-19.
8. Safe Work Australia (SWA), through its tripartite membership, will provide a central hub of WHS guidance and tools that Australian workplaces can use to successfully form the basis of their management of health and safety risks posed by COVID-19.
9. States and territories ultimately have the role of providing advice, education, compliance and enforcement of WHS and will leverage the use of the SWA central hub in fulfilling their statutory functions.
10. The work of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission will complement the work of SWA, jurisdictions and health authorities to support industries more broadly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic appropriately, effectively and safely.

For more information and resources:

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/other-resources/national-covid-19-safe-workplace-principles>

LATEST STATE AND TERRITORY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Contact your local NECA Chapter website for regular updates.