

Coronavirus Update – 21 January 2022

Essential Worker Isolation Exclusion

On 12 January 2022, the Federal Government made an announcement regarding reduced isolation periods for critical workers who had been identified as close contacts for Covid-19.

This announcement referred to several industries, including the health industry. Despite this announcement, isolation requirements are implemented individually by each state and as such the exemptions announced will not apply until introduced by each respective state or territory.

It is important to note that this exclusion does not apply to the dental profession in each state, and where it does specific rules apply.

The table below outlines the position in each respective state and territory.

State	Private Dental Practices Included in Critical Workers Exclusion?	Comments
NSW	No	While NSW has exemptions in place in the health industry, this does not currently extend to private dental practices.
VIC	Yes	Workers who have no symptoms may be exempt upon application. Workers are required to wear N95/P2 masks while working, at least a surgical mask during travel and cannot share facilities with other staff. If they are further exposed, they must alert their employer. If the worker has symptoms or returns a positive result, they are no longer exempt and must also inform their employer.
QLD	No	Although Queensland lists health as a critical industry, there is additional criteria that requires an excluded person to have particular skills, required to perform work in the workplace and performing health services which prevent immediate risk of death or serious injury, or prevent social harm in the community.
WA	No	No exemption currently exists. Practitioners should be alert for further announcements from the Western Australia Government.
SA	No	While exemptions exist, the industries specified do not include healthcare.
TAS	No	The exemption in Tasmania specifically applies to day procedure facilities, where a patient is admitted and discharged. Dentists in such centres may fit the exemption, but the definition would generally exclude private dental practices from the critical worker exclusion.
NT	No	No exemption currently exists. Practitioners should be alert for further announcements from the Northern Territory Government.
ACT	No	No exemption currently exists. Practitioners should be alert for further announcements from the Australian Capital Territory Government.

It is important to note that due to the rapidly evolving nature of the pandemic, individual state governments may change the exemption criteria. The information in this article is correct at the time of writing but is subject to change. Practitioners are strongly encouraged to contact the HR Advisory Service for specific advice against the legislative framework in place at that point in time.

If you have any questions about eligibility for reduced isolation periods or the content of this article, please contact the ADA HR Advisory Service on 1300 232 462.