

Pandemic (COVID-19) Leave Policy

Purpose

As a major Australian employer that plays a leading role in supporting and connecting our communities, Australia Post has prepared a Pandemic (COVID-19) Leave Policy to help our people manage the impacts that may be experienced due to COVID-19. Our first priority is the safety of our people, and Australia Post is committed to supporting employees who are unwell, required to self-isolate or care for members of their family or household.

Application

This policy applies to all employees of Australia Post and its wholly owned subsidiaries, including casual and fixed-term employees. It does not apply to our extended workforce including contractors, Licenced Post Offices and Labour-Hire personnel.

Scope

Australia Post's existing leave policies and industrial instruments provide for leave entitlements where an employee is unable to attend work due to personal illness or injury or due to carer's responsibilities. This policy provides additional leave arrangements for employees who are affected by COVID-19 and the employee in circumstances that include:

1. Is required to self-isolate in accordance with Federal or State/Territory health and quarantine requirements due to travel to a declared country or arriving in Australia from 16 March 2020, or close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, and the person is unable to work from home;
2. Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 (in which case the employee may be granted an additional week of Special Leave bringing the total period of leave up to a maximum of 3 weeks if required to comply with self-isolation requirements);
3. Is required to provide care or support to an immediate family member or member of the employee's household in circumstances where that member:
 - a. Is diagnosed with COVID-19; or
 - b. Is required to self-isolate in circumstances set out in (1) above;
4. Is unable to attend work due to the closure of the employee's workplace due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in that workplace, Australia Post is unable to provide duties at an alternate workplace and the employee is unable to work from home;
5. Is unable to attend work due to Department of Health recommendations for older and at-risk people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19, Australia Post is unable to provide duties at an alternate workplace and the employee is unable to work from home.

Unless otherwise stated, this policy does not apply:

- to instances of personal leave (sick or carer's) taken in accordance with existing entitlements under relevant industrial instruments and policies; or
- where a member of an employee's household is self-isolating in circumstances where they have **not** been diagnosed with COVID-19 (for example, they are self-isolating because they are feeling unwell, but have not been diagnosed with COVID-19).

Additional Leave Arrangements

In addition to existing leave entitlements, employees may be provided, at Australia Post's discretion on each occasion, with an additional leave arrangements. This may consist of 2 weeks' of paid Special Leave for certain types of absences, or allowing an employee to access different types of leave once their entitlement to personal leave expires. The additional arrangements are:

- assessed on an individual case by case basis; and
- where approved, is subject to a maximum cap of 2 weeks' per employee.

Additional Special Leave is limited to a maximum of 2 weeks' per employee in total, not 2 weeks' for each period of absence from work. Where an employee may require additional Special leave (for example, they are required to self-isolate on a subsequent occasion), further leave will be assessed on an individual basis and is subject to Australia Post's discretion.

Table 1 sets out additional leave benefits and evidence requirements that will apply to employees where they meet the relevant criteria.

Notification

Employees are required to notify their manager as soon as they are unable to attend work due to one of the circumstances set out in this policy.

Additionally, once an employee's circumstances change and the employee either meets a different criteria (e.g. a close contact leads to the employee being diagnosed with COVID-19) or no longer meets any criteria that entitles them to be absent from work, the employee must:

- immediately notify their manager;
- obtain any required evidence and provide this to their manager as soon as possible.

Employees who no longer meet any of the circumstances that justify a period of absence must obtain any required evidence as quickly (if applicable) as soon as possible and report for duty immediately.

Working from Home

Where an employee is unable to attend work due to self-isolation, is not sick and is not caring for an immediate family member or member of the employee's household, the employee should make arrangements to work from home where the duties of their position allow. Working from home arrangements are subject to manager approval.

Where an employee is undertaking caring responsibilities and seeks to work from home, such arrangements should only be permitted in limited circumstances where the employee's General Manager is satisfied that due to the nature of the caring arrangements and the employee's duties, there will be no impact on the performance of the employee's duties.

Travel to declared countries and locations

Australia Post recommends that employees follow the advice of the Australian Government and do not travel overseas. Employees will not be entitled to paid Special Leave if they have travelled to an area that was on the quarantine list before they entered the area, or they travelled to any overseas destination from 16 March 2020.

Manager Obligations

Managers are required to ensure compliance with this policy. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Ensuring that appropriate evidence is being provided for absences in line with the requirements of this policy;
- Exploring all possible alternatives where an employee's duties are impacted by COVID-19. This may include working from home, or if the employee is able to attend work - performing alternative duties, working on a different shift and/or working at a different location;

- Assessing the appropriateness of Working from Home arrangements and ensuring appropriate monitoring of those arrangements is in place;
- Recording absences in time and attendance systems and ensuring the correct leave codes are applied;
- Complying with the advice of health practitioners and Government Authorities;
- Ensuring that any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 are recorded on OneSafe and notified to MyHR on **1300 11 myHR (6947)**

Breaches

Breaches of this Policy may result in disciplinary action in accordance the policies of the relevant employing entity. Circumstances constituting a breach may include (but are not limited to):

- Attempts to claim leave benefits in non-genuine circumstances;
- Failing to notify Australia Post of any changes to the employee's circumstances in a timely manner;
- Failing to obtain medical evidence in a timely manner;
- Remaining on leave after an employee's circumstances have changed and they are no longer eligible to take that leave.

Review

As the situation relating to COVID-19 is rapidly evolving, this Policy is subject to change at Australia Post's discretion at short notice.

Table 1: Additional Leave Arrangements due to COVID-19

No.	Criteria	Approach	Additional Leave Benefit	Evidence
1.	Self-isolation: employee required to self-isolate for 14 days in accordance with Government guidelines after returning from overseas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to work from home during isolation period, where duties of position allow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where employee unable to work from home, employee may be provided with Special Leave for duration of isolation period up to a maximum of 2 weeks. Paid Special leave will not apply where the employee a) entered a country or area that had been declared as "Higher Risk" (by the Commonwealth Department of Health) when the employee entered; or b) departed Australia on or after 16 March 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel documentation evidencing travel. Medical certificate showing fitness to return to work at end of isolation period.
2.	<p>Self-isolation: <u>Close contact</u> with a confirmed case of COVID-19</p> <p><i>Close contact as defined by the Commonwealth Department of Health</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to work from home during isolation period, where duties of position allow. Employee must undertake testing for COVID-19 at earliest possible opportunity in accordance with current Government testing requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where employee unable to work from home, employee may be provided with Special Leave for duration of isolation period up to a maximum of 2 weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical Certificate or statutory declaration setting out supporting evidence of close contact and requirement to self-isolate. Medical certificate showing fitness to return at end of isolation period. If testing is delayed, evidence of employee's attempts to obtain immediate testing.
3.	Absent due to illness: Employee diagnosed with COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to access personal (sick) leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If employee has exhausted paid personal leave entitlements, employee may be provided with additional Special Leave up to a maximum of 3 weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical certificate confirming diagnosis. Medical certificate showing fitness to return at end of isolation period.
4.	Carer's responsibilities: employee required to provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediate family or household who is diagnosed with COVID-19 or required to self-isolate in accordance with Items 1 or 2 above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to access personal (carer's) leave. If member is diagnosed with COVID-19, refer to Item 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If employee has exhausted paid personal/carers' leave entitlements, employee may apply to access annual leave and/or long service leave. Otherwise, unpaid leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical certificate confirming diagnosis or requirement to self-isolate, and confirming the need to provide care. Medical certificate showing fitness to return at end of isolation period.
5.	<p>Carer's responsibilities: employee required to care for a child due to school, kindergarten or child-care centre closure due to COVID-19.*</p> <p><i>*Does not include existing school holidays or public holidays</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to access personal (carer's) leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If employee has exhausted paid personal leave entitlements, employee may apply to access annual leave and/or long service leave. Otherwise, unpaid leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official advice from school, kindergarten or child-care centre of closure due to COVID-19. In addition, statutory declaration may be requested to establish relationship between the employee and the child.

No.	Criteria	Approach	Additional Leave Benefit	Evidence
6.	Closure of APG facility: employee unable to attend normal work location due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the work location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee may be directed to work from other location and perform other duties. If unable to work from another location, employee to work from home where duties allow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no alternative work duties or location can be found for the employee and the employee cannot work from home due to the nature of their duties, employee to remain at home and will be paid Special Leave up to a maximum of 2 weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
7.	Casual employees: unable to attend work due to satisfying criteria 1, 2, 3 or 6 above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per relevant criteria above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special leave may be provided (up to a maximum of 2 weeks) where employee is unable to attend work due to meeting criteria 1, 2, 3 or 6 above. Paid according to the hours they would have been rostered during absence (up to full-time equivalent hours). If roster not known, employee's pay for previous 6 weeks to be averaged (up to full-time equivalent hours). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence to be provided in accordance with the relevant circumstance set out in this table.
8.	Self-isolation on medical advice: employee unable to attend work after being advised to self-isolate by a medical practitioner due to an existing medical condition (other than COVID-19).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to work from home during isolation period, where duties of position allow. If unable to work from home, employee can access personal (sick) leave while they are unable to attend work due to illness or injury. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If employee has exhausted paid personal (sick) leave entitlements, employee may apply to access annual leave and/or long service leave. Otherwise, unpaid leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical certificate confirming requirement to self-isolate, the nature of the condition and why the condition requires them to self-isolate (due to condition other than COVID-19). Medical certificate showing fitness to return to work at end of isolation period.
9.	Self-isolation of older employees: Department of Health advise that employee self-isolates, managers should take active steps to engage with these workers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) if the employee is over the age of 70; (b) If the employee is over 60 with an existing medical condition that places them at risk (other than COVID-19) (medical certificate required); or (c) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the age of 50 with existing medical condition that places them at risk (other than COVID-19) (medical certificate required). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee to work from home during isolation period, where duties of position allow. If unable to work from home and the employee wants to continue working at their usual place of work, they will be required to provide a medical certificate confirming that it is safe to work at the employee's usual place of work. If the employee is unable to work at all, employee can access personal (sick) leave while they are unable to attend work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If employee has exhausted paid personal (sick) leave entitlements, employee may apply to access up to 2 weeks of paid Special Leave, and then annual leave and/or long service leave. Otherwise, unpaid leave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical certificate confirming requirement to self-isolate, the nature of the condition and why the condition requires them to self-isolate (due to condition other than COVID-19). Medical certificate showing fitness to return to work at end of isolation period.