

COVID-19 SAFETY

Resilience NSW has been working with NSW Health to ensure councils and bushfire recovery services can continue to provide face-to-face support to fire impacted individuals and communities while staying COVID-safe.

Restrictions under the relevant [Public Health Order](#) DO NOT apply to bushfire recovery activities being managed and delivered by local councils, contracted Recovery Support Services and partnering non-government organisations (NGOs).

WHAT TO CONSIDER AND PLAN FOR



COVID-19 activity in your area

- Consider the current situation in your area. Bushfire recovery activity is exempted from public health restrictions, but you may decide to restrict face-to-face activity if there are active infections in your area.



Venues for recovery activities

- The options for recovery activity may be limited in areas impacted by bushfires. Venues must be places where clients feel safe and are comfortable to attend and these may be small local venues.



Preparing a venue and staff

- Plan how you will coordinate people's arrival, departure and interaction throughout the recovery activity and how you will prepare it to safely welcome and host participants.



Hosting recovery activities

- Know how you will communicate and facilitate social distancing and other COVID-safe practices to recovery activity participants.



Hygiene and cleaning

- Know how you will maintain hygiene at your venue, and how you will prepare your venue for recovery meetings or activity and clean it afterwards.

INFORMATION

COVID-19 SAFE RECOVERY OPERATIONS



Detailed Guides

- NSW Health has prepared detailed guides for COVID-19 safe operations including a [guide for community centres and halls](#).

More information

- Inquiries can be directed to your local Resilience NSW Recovery Manager, or
- Alison Morgan, Director, Resilience NSW on 0434 782 648

This guide will assist Councils and recovery service providers to design and deliver bushfire recovery activities in a COVID-19 safe way.

COVID-19 SAFE RECOVERY EVENTS

The following actions will assist in delivering bushfire recovery activities that protect organisers and participants.

VENUES FOR RECOVERY ACTIVITY

ACTIONS	GUIDELINES
COVID-19 ACTIVITY IN YOUR LOCAL AREA	Check the NSW Health website to identify active COVID-19 infections¹ in your local area. If there are active COVID-19 infections in your area consider restricting face-to-face activity and implement online options.
COVID-19 SAFE PLANS	Check with the venue owner or operator to determine whether there is an existing COVID-19 Safe Plan. This may include a cap on the number of people allowed to use the venue. The exemption for bushfire recovery activity, and this guide, can be used to negotiate with a venue to authorise a larger number of people to attend.
ESTIMATE NUMBERS	Estimate the numbers of people who may attend and, where possible, select a venue that will allow four square metres of space for each person (staff, volunteers, clients and contractors). Where four square metres per person cannot be accommodated use other strategies to support social distancing. For example, consider using both inside and outside space to enable people to remain apart.
PRE-REGISTER	Arrange for participants to pre-register. This will assist you to select an appropriate venue and manage numbers.
FIXED SEATING	Consider having fixed seating arrangements. It is easier to maintain social distancing when people are seated.

PREPARING A VENUE AND STAFF

ACTIONS	GUIDELINES
CLEAN BEFORE USE	Ensure the venue has been thoroughly cleaned by the owner/operator prior to use.
DISPLAY INFORMATION	Communicate clear COVID-19 safe practices within the venue.
MARK SPACES	Use floor markings to promote social distancing and use the placement of furniture to promote social distancing.
BRIEF PERSONNEL	Brief staff or volunteers on COVID-19 safe practices and how to demonstrate appropriate behaviours ahead of the session. Ensure they actively encourage and remind participants about the need for social distancing.
CREATE SAFE SPACES	Where the event has staff or volunteers talking one-on-one with bushfire-affected people, use a desk or table to create a COVID-19 safe space between them and, where appropriate, consider using clear plastic barriers.

HOSTING RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

ACTIONS	GUIDELINES
STAY AWAY IN UNWELL	Exclude any person who is unwell, including staff, volunteers, clients and contractors.
RECORD ATTENDANCE	Keep a record of everyone who attend the venue or activity. This includes name and a mobile number or email address. You must make every effort to ensure ALL attendees have provided contact details. Consider having multiple registration points to avoid people queuing in the one space.
PRIVACY	Ensure records are used only for the purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and are stored securely.
MANAGE CONGESTION	Manage queues outside the venue including in car parks, entrances and waiting areas to ensure people are socially distanced. Reduce crowding in specific areas and promote physical distancing with markers on the floor.

¹ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates#latest-covid-19-case-locations-in-nsw>

PROMOTE SAFETY Consider an announcement at the beginning of the event to remind people of important COVID-19 safe practices.

HYGIENE AND CLEANING

ACTIONS	GUIDELINES
HAND HYGIENE	Adopt good hand hygiene practices and ensure hand sanitiser is accessible at the venue entry and throughout.
FACE MASKS	NSW health advice recommends that face masks should be worn where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as small indoor venues. Have a supply of face masks for staff or attendees to wear if they choose.
MOVING EQUIPMENT	When cleaning or reorganising furniture or equipment wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly before and after.
STOCK BATHROOMS	Ensure bathrooms are stocked with hand soap and paper towels or hand dryers.
CLEAN FREQUENTLY	Clean frequently-touched areas and surfaces, including in communal facilities, several times through the event. Clean frequently-used indoor hard surface areas, including children's play areas, at least daily; first with detergent and water, and then disinfect.
LIMIT SHARED EQUIPMENT	Reduce sharing of equipment, where practical, and ensure shared equipment is disinfected between use.
SUPPLY GLOVES	Ensure there is detergent/disinfectant and gloves for visitors to use, should they wish. Disinfectant solutions need to be maintained at an appropriate strength and used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.
SINGLE-SERVE CATERING	If catering, use pre-packaged single serve options where possible. If food is to be shared, there is to be no self-service buffet. One person should be allocated to serve food and practise hand hygiene before and after service.
CLEAN TABLEWARE	Clean cutlery and tableware with detergent and hot water or with a commercial grade dishwasher, if available.

NOTES

To deal with the public health risk of COVID-19 and its possible consequences, the Minister for Health and Medical Research has made an Order under section 7 of the Public Health Act 2010: Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 4) 2020 [NSW].²

NSW Health and Resilience NSW have agreed that bushfire-impacted communities are deemed vulnerable and therefore gatherings are exempted under Schedule 2 (clause 14) of this Public Health Order.

This means restrictions included in the Public Health Order DO NOT apply to bushfire recovery activities being managed and delivered by local councils, contracted Recovery Support Services and partnering non-government organisations (NGOs).

This exempted activity includes, but is not limited to, community meetings, information sessions, outreach activity, and community networking activities.

The NSW Ministry of Health [provides information and support tools](#)³ to assist councils and community organisations manage the risks of COVID-19.

This guide is designed to assist councils and recovery service providers to design and deliver bushfire recovery activities in a COVID-19 safe way. At all times, please refer to updated advice of NSW Health in applying these guidelines.

² <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx>

³ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>