



Advice for Media during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Working in the Field

This internal guidance was produced by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to help ABC content makers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABC International Development is sharing this guidance in case it is useful for adaptation by other media organisations in our region.

Please remember that this guidance is not official medical or legal advice and should not be treated as such. Any advice must be adapted to local country contexts, taking account of your government's laws, rules and guidelines. In the event of a conflict between this guidance and local laws, the local laws will prevail. This guidance should not replace official advice from your usual sources of health or legal information.

What should I do if I am assigned to cover a COVID-19 story?

- You and your manager should conduct a Risk Assessment (example attached).
- Speak with your manager about the personal precautions listed below.
- If you have a pre-existing respiratory condition, or any other condition that may impact your immune system, you should seek medical advice before covering stories or visiting places that carry an elevated risk of contact with the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

What preventive measures should I be taking if I'm covering a COVID-19 story?

- Avoid contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 when that person is infectious.
- Keep 1.5 metres away from others wherever possible.
- Avoid physical contact, including handshakes.
- Do NOT enter the home of a person who may be infected.
- Do not touch objects that may have been in contact with a person who may be infected.
- If you are in an enclosed space, check that you have at least 4 square metres per person.
- Practice good hand hygiene: wash or sanitise hands after each story and before and after using a vehicle.
- Limit shared use of vehicles and avoid taxis if possible.
- Where possible limit to 2 people per vehicle. Passengers should sit in the rear seat if there is more than one person in a car. Windows should be down or air-conditioning on fresh intake mode (not recirculating).
- Limit contact with fuel pumps by using gloves or paper towel to hold the pump and wash/sanitise hands after refuelling.

- Regularly clean high-contact surfaces, e.g. in vehicle - door and drawer handles, steering wheels, gear sticks, indicators, mirrors, seat-belt clasps and sockets and dashboard controls; production equipment - cameras, all-weather camera covers, tripods, microphones, mic stands, boom poles, lights and lighting stands and carry bags etc.

Note: ABC has not recommended that its staff use masks or gloves when in the field. Social distancing, rigorous hand hygiene and cleaning high-contact surfaces are the recommended safety behaviours. (Masks have only been recommended to ABC staff as a preventative measure in make-up where staff have direct, close contact of more than 15 minutes with others.)

How should I set up for an interview?

- Talk to your manager about whether the interview can be conducted by phone/Skype.
- If not, before conducting an interview in-person, ask interviewees
 - Their recent travel history and if they complied with the government's requirements for post-travel isolation periods
 - if they have any reason to believe they have COVID-19
 - If they have any flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue or shortness of breath) or
 - If they have been exposed to the virus via close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and date of exposure
- No vox pops. Instead use a boom microphone or a microphone set-up on a stand to increase social distance.
- Film the interview at a distance (1.5 metres).
- Do not share microphones, ear-pieces, mobile or desk phones with others.
- Eliminate interviewees holding or contacting the microphone.
- Where a lapel microphone is required, verbally instruct the interviewee on how to correctly attach and position the lapel microphone themselves (i.e. to prevent close contact).
- Clean the microphone after each use: use a 60%+ alcohol or 0.1% bleach solution for hard surfaces and disinfectant spray with 60%+ alcohol for porous surfaces (e.g. microphone socks).
- Do not allow interviewees to touch any other production equipment.

How do I disinfect production equipment?

Clean all equipment (microphones, cameras, lighting and lighting stands, audio tape recorders) before and after use. You can disinfect it by wiping visible surfaces with disinfectant. Information about cleaning and disinfecting for COVID-19 is available here:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community>

What personal-protection precautions apply to media?

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Use hand sanitiser when hand-washing facilities are not available.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue that you can discard afterwards or with the inside of your elbow.

- Do not share objects such as drinking glasses, microphones, mobile phones or telephone handsets unless they have been cleaned.
- Disinfect workstation equipment including desk, keyboard and mouse at the beginning and end of your shift.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid contact with high-touch surfaces, e.g. handrails, doorknobs and lift buttons.
- If you are in contact with someone who is sick, stay 1.5 metres away or make sure this person wears a surgical mask.
- Maintain social distancing and avoid close contact with other people, e.g. hugs and handshakes.

What must I do if I (or a team member) have flu-like symptoms?

- Stay away from the workplace and seek medical attention. Call before going to a doctor or medical clinic.
- Alert your manager as soon as possible so they can take steps to reduce the risk to your colleagues and arrange for your workstation to be cleaned.

Remember COVID-19 symptoms include:

- a fever
- dry cough
- sore throat
- tiredness

Risk Assessment

HAZARD	CONTROLS – HOW WILL YOU MANAGE THE RISK? Describe the controls you intend to use to minimise the risk to as low as possible.	RESIDUAL RISK RATING
<p>Infection, illness and disease (COVID-19)</p> <p>Updated 1/4/2020</p>	<p>AVOID DIRECT CONTACT WITH A PERSON WHO HAS TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 WHEN THAT PERSON IS INFECTIOUS. IF YOU (A STAFF MEMBER) ARE UNWELL WITH FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS DO NOT COME TO WORK AND SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE.</p> <p><u>ASK ANY POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their recent travel history and if they complied with the government’s requirements for post-travel isolation periods • Whether they have had close contact with any person(s) who has tested positive for COVID-19 and date of exposure (close contact is more than 15 mins face to face, or more than 2 hours in the same closed space) • Their current health status – do they have any flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath/respiratory distress? <p><u>General controls</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If staff have a pre-existing respiratory condition, or are over 60 years of age, or have another condition that may impact their immune system, re-consider whether they are assigned to a story/assignment where there is a known elevated risk of COVID-19 exposure (e.g. medical or care facilities or locations with known cases of COVID-19) • Maintain social distances – at least 1.5 metres (5 feet) between you and someone else and 1 person per 4 square metres • Maintain social distance of 2 metre radius in open plan office areas • Avoid physical contact with other people including handshakes, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact • Avoid small gatherings in enclosed spaces including edit suites – consider video conferencing or phone calls • Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (for 20 sec) with soap and water where there is ready access to these facilities (i.e. within offices) • Clean hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser when there is not ready access to soap and water (i.e. when in the field, travelling) • Wash or sanitise hands before and after eating and after going to the toilet • Practice cough and sneeze etiquette – cover nose and mouth with either a tissue that can be disposed of immediately or by using a bent elbow (avoid covering mouth/nose with your hand) • Avoid contact with high touch surfaces (e.g. handrails, doorknobs, lift buttons, tables etc) and wash/sanitise hands after contact • Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth – especially after contact with high touch surfaces or animals. Contaminated hands can transfer the virus to your nose, eyes or mouth. • No vox pops, instead set-up a microphone stand to obtain ‘grab’ or use a boom pole – clean equipment after use • Journalist/reporter to use their own IFB (ear-piece) and maintain cleanliness of these • Direct talent verbally to fit lapel microphones or IFB (ear-piece) themselves to avoid close contact • Avoid sharing of microphones, mobile phones and ear-pieces where possible • Clean audio equipment microphones (foam, fluffy or mesh-covered), mobile phones and ear-pieces etc before & after use with a suitable disinfectant (60%+ alcohol or weak bleach solution) 	<p>Medium-High</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and disinfect high touch and/or shared work surfaces and equipment (e.g. studio control rooms, radio studios, shared computer-workstations, shared telephone handsets/headsets, shared microphones or headphone) with a suitable disinfectant (60%+ alcohol or weak bleach solution) before and after use (aerosols can be used for soft surfaces such as microphone socks; fabric all-weather camera covers) • Consider providing individual radio presenters with their own pop filter for the microphone to use and they will apply and remove each time they do audio <p><u>Driving – social distancing and cleaning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where operationally possibly limit 1 staff member per vehicle to adhere to social distancing recommendations (1.5m apart, 1 person per 4 square metres) • Consider whether hire of additional vehicles is required to meet operational needs • Consider whether a staff member can use their own private vehicle for business purposes • All ‘touched’ surfaces in the vehicle must be frequently cleaned - preferably before after each person has completed their travel in the vehicle or the story is completed and returning to base. Cleaning should include key, steering wheel, gear stick, indicators, mirror adjusters/controls, internal & external door handles for boot, driver and passenger doors used, seat belt clasp and socket for seat belts used, any other dashboard controls used • Refuelling – try limit your contact with the pump by using paper towel from the service station to hold the pump or disposable gloves or wash/sanitise hands thoroughly after refuelling • If travel in a vehicle with 2 people is unavoidable due to operational constraints the passenger should sit in rear passenger side seat as this provides the greatest distance between the staff and should be limited to a cumulative total of 2 hours per day with that passenger. The vehicle should also be driven with windows down OR air conditioning on fresh intake mode (not recirculating) • Taxis can be used as a last resort to avoid more than two persons in a vehicle but this is the least preferred option due to risks of unknown exposure <p><u>For make-up and wardrobe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenters will need to complete some of their hair and make-up themselves (e.g. dry and generally style hair themselves, apply base/foundation for make-up) and make-up artists will get them up to broadcast ‘camera ready’ standard. The more a presenter can do at home, the less time the make-up artist needs to be in close contact to get them camera ready. • All presenters should have their own bag with relevant supplies to complete their own make-up (e.g. base/foundation) • All presenters to complete their own checks • Guest hair and make-up services are suspended. Advise all guests to arrive ‘camera ready’. • Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (for 20 sec) with soap and water and before and after each presenter being made up • <u>Wear disposable gloves when applying make-up</u> (not required when doing hair). Change gloves for each presenter. • <u>Wear mask when applying make-up.</u> Wash or sanitise hands each time you apply or remove your mask. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks can be sanitised by spraying with an alcohol solution, placing on a clean tissue and covering with a second clean tissue in between uses. Note that masks treated in this manner can be used 3-4 times and must then be disposed of. Tissues must be disposed of each time they are used underneath and covering the mask. • Practice cough and sneeze etiquette – cover nose and mouth with either a tissue that can be disposed of immediately or by using a bent elbow (avoid covering mouth/nose with your hand) • Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth – especially after contact with high touch surfaces or other people. Contaminated hands can transfer the virus to your nose, eyes or mouth • Do not double dip a brush into a lip colour pallet, pot of concealer or pot of eyeliner • Decant some lip colour /concealer or pot eyeliner onto a spatula and use presenter’s own brush or a single use, disposable brush to apply. Clean the spatula after use with alcohol. • Clean your brushes between every makeup, either with soap and water or brush steriliser • Sharpen lip and eye pencils before each use and clean sharpener with alcohol • Use disposable mascara brushes • Use loose powder for on set checks and label each powder puff you take into the studio • Dispose of used tissues, cotton pads and cotton buds immediately after use <p>• <u>For Interviewees/Guests/Subject Matter Experts (SME)/Panellists</u> Interviewee/guest/SME/panellist should appear via phone, skype wherever possible. An interviewee/guest/SME/panellist should not attend the studio if they have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tested positive to COVID-19 and are still within the isolation period or have ongoing symptoms ○ Returned from overseas in the last 14 days ○ Been in direct close contact with someone (i.e. for more than 15 mins face to face, or more than 2 hours in the same closed space) who has tested positive to COVID-19 when they were in the infectious period and have not completely served the isolation period ○ Flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath/respiratory distress) <p><u>For audiences/events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No live audiences for any broadcasts anywhere until further notice • Do not attend large gatherings/events – consider alternative means of obtaining footage <p><u>Remote Communities</u></p> <p>Remote and isolated communities are at increased risk of severe infection. To help to protect the health and wellbeing of people living in these communities, non-essential access is not advised.</p> <p>Before traveling, workers and managers should consider the risks and benefits of their trip (can the objective achieved via other means - tele/videoconference, online etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postpone all non-essential travel to remote communities • Seek information and adhere to local guidance on restrictions to access 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not travel to a remote community if you are not well • Do not travel to a remote community within 14 days of your last contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Isolate and self-monitor at home as recommended. • Do not travel to remote communities while waiting for your results • Ensure you are up-to-date with the Influenza vaccination and other health precautions <p><u>For Air Travel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All non-essential international and domestic travel is now suspended • Wash hands frequently with soap & water (for 20 sec) wherever possible or clean hands with hand sanitiser before and after being on the plane, after handling luggage at the carousel, after travelling in taxis, before and after eating, after using bathrooms. • Avoid physical contact with other people including handshakes, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact • Maintain social distances – at least 1.5 m (5 feet) between you and someone else wherever possible NB. Not possible when sitting on plane. • Avoid contact with high touch surfaces (e.g. handrails, lift buttons, doorknobs, car door handles, aircraft tray tables, aircraft arm rests, aircraft window shades, aircraft overhead storage locker handles). If using a boarding pass on a mobile phone, scan it yourself rather than handing to ground crew/customer service attendant. • Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes & mouth – especially after contact with high touch surfaces. Contaminated hands can transfer the virus to your nose, eyes or mouth. • Take cleaning wipes with you to wipe down aircraft tray table & knob, arm rests, window shades etc <p><u>International Locations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets, and areas where animals are slaughtered, including fish and seafood • Avoid contact with animals (alive or dead), including pigs, chickens, ducks and wild birds • Avoid surfaces with animal droppings or secretions on them • Ensure food, including eggs, is thoroughly cooked • Before travelling overseas review the Smartraveller website for latest advice level and subscribe for updates • If staff have a pre-existing respiratory condition or other condition that may impact their immune system, or are over 60 years of age, seek medical advice prior to travelling to a location where COVID-19 is present • Adhere to any mandatory periods of quarantine after returning that may be imposed by the government based on your travel <p><u>IF YOU DEVELOP FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS (fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath/respiratory distress)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DO NOT COME TO WORK and SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY. Call the medical facility in advance and provide all details of your recent travel. • Wear a surgical or P2 mask when attending a medical facility to prevent spread of illness to others (see instructions for how to put on and dispose of a mask correctly) https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks and avoid touching the mask when in use. Do not re-use (single use only) and dispose of correctly. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay away from others to prevent the spread of illness • Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (for 20 sec) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser • Practice cough and sneeze etiquette – cover nose and mouth with either a tissue that can be disposed of immediately or by using a bent elbow (avoid covering mouth/nose with your hand) <p><u>IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to any mandatory quarantine/self-isolation requirements recommended by medical practitioners • DO NOT ATTEND WORK. Inform your manager. • Stay away from others • Wear a surgical mask (if directed to do so) to prevent spread of illness • Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (for 20 sec) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser • Practice cough and sneeze etiquette – cover nose and mouth with either a tissue that can be disposed of immediately or by using a bent elbow (avoid covering mouth/nose with your hand) 	