



Australian Government



VICTORIAN AGED CARE
RESPONSE CENTRE

Initial communications

The Australian Department of Health has produced [guidance for managing COVID-19 in a residential aged care facility in the first 24 hours](#).

1. Initial communication should occur with all residents. Residents should receive communications from a familiar, trustworthy person, who can discuss their diagnosis of a potentially fatal virus with sensitivity and compassion. Communication with nominated representatives is only commenced with the consent of the resident, unless they have lost capacity to manage their own medical affairs.
2. Phone the nominated person for a COVID-19 positive resident at the earliest possible opportunity. This call should be made by a member of the care staff. This is a sensitive call and will create anxiety and stress for the nominated person, and likely prompt questions. Ask them to share this information with other family members or friends. Explain when care staff will be in contact again.
3. Contact the Australian Government Department of Health by emailing agedcareCOVIDcases@health.gov.au
4. Contact the Victorian Public Health Unit by calling 1300 651 160
5. Contact all staff and inform them of the COVID-19 positive case. This is critical from a support and wellbeing perspective, to enable staff to test tracking (dates and results) and provide estimates for anticipated return to work, as well as maintaining trust and loyalty and allay fears to maintain the workforce. Staff communication should include information on education and support to enable safe use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and availability of hotel or onsite accommodation if staff are wanting to protect family members. State Government and the Public Health Unit will urgently undertake contact tracing and identify staff requiring self-isolation or quarantine.
6. Inform all residents' families (via the nominated representative) by phone of the fact there is a COVID-19 positive case. Dedicate sufficient staff to do this. Impress upon the nominated representative their responsibility to share this information with extended family. Let them know all that is being done to protect their loved one and contain the spread in the aged care facility.

BE COVIDSAFE

7. Advise all residents' families of how communications will proceed from here.
8. Distribute a message to your email distribution list providing information about the COVID-19 outbreak at the aged care facility and the activities of the Australian Department of Health and State health authorities to manage the situation.
9. Reinforce with families the care of their loved ones remains the utmost priority and explain what additional supports are being brought in to assist (e.g. surge workforce, rapid COVID-19 testing capabilities, rapid stocks of PPE). In this email, inform families of how communications will proceed and stress that phone communication will be made via the resident's nominated person.
10. Advise residents of access to the [Older Persons Advocacy Network \(OPAN\)](#), call 1800 700 600 for support.
11. Formal complaints and concerns can be directed to the Aged Care Safety and Quality Commission's free [Complaints Resolution Service](#) or by calling 1800 951 822.