

# COVID-19: Development Industry Update

## Members Update - Construction Industry PEAKS

Wednesday August 11, 2021

The NSW Government, through Infrastructure NSW, has been co-ordinating feedback from industry representatives. See below the current status with links to relevant web sites. Further on – you will find a comprehensive set of Frequently asked Questions with Answers.

These have been developed by INSW and have been provided to Safe Work NSW staff as well as Service NSW staff.

### **General information – is available on the Infrastructure NSW website**

The response to COVID-19 is constantly evolving and we are committed to providing clear leadership and information to industry based on the current health advice and relevant Public Health Orders.

From 11 August 2021, construction is permitted in Greater Sydney, including the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour, with 50% of workers allowed on site. This includes in the local government areas (LGA) of concern:


- Blacktown
- Campbelltown
- Canterbury-Bankstown
- Cumberland, Fairfield
- Georges River
- Liverpool
- Parramatta
- Penrith for the following suburbs: Caddens, Claremont Meadows, Colyton, Erskine Park, Kemps Creek, Kingswood, Mount Vernon, North St Marys, Orchard Hills, Oxley Park, St Clair and St Marys.

Construction workers from these LGAs will be able to attend construction sites as authorised workers if they meet minimum vaccination conditions. They must provide evidence they have:

- had 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, or
- had 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least 21 days ago, or
- had 1 dose of a COVID-19 vaccine within the preceding 21 days and have been tested for COVID-19 within the preceding 72 hours, or
- a certified medical contraindication and has been tested for COVID-19 within the preceding 72 hours.

All construction sites in Greater Sydney must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. The plan was developed by the NSW Government in consultation with industry and the unions. It is also recommended for all construction sites in NSW.

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To mitigate delays incurred due to COVID-19, construction sites are now permitted to operate on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays, as per the relevant Planning Order. On extended days, noisy works are not permitted and all reasonable noise reduction measures must be applied.

NSW is currently trialing rapid antigen testing and when approved by NSW Health, that form of testing may be used as an alternative to a PCR test. Work in residential occupied dwellings in Greater Sydney is only permitted outside of the LGAs of concern, unless necessary, and is limited to two workers on site for indoor works and five workers for outside works. There must be no contact between workers and occupants. More information is available at [nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au).

Infrastructure NSW will continue to provide guidance to industry as further information becomes available.

[See on next page the FAQs.](#)

## FAQs on the COVID-19 restrictions on construction sites

(updated on 11/08/2021)

### Authorised workers

How are construction workers defined?	For the purposes of the authorised worker list, a construction worker is any person from an affected LGA who works on a construction site in Greater Sydney.
Does this include accredited or specialised workers who are attending a construction site for a short time.	Yes, the rules apply to any worker from an affected LGA who works on a construction site in Greater Sydney.

### Vaccinations and COVID-19 testing

Do the vaccination conditions only apply to workers from the eight LGAs and additional Penrith LGA suburbs? Why?	Yes, as these are the workers most of risk of being exposed to and transmitting the virus, but all workers are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible.
How are exemptions granted for individuals with medical or other conditions that make vaccinations unsuitable?	A person may provide a certificate from a medical practitioner that specifies a medical reason not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine because it may be harmful to them, and must continue to be tested for COVID-19 every 3 days.
What if workers haven't been able to get vaccination appointments until October or November?	AstraZeneca vaccinations are readily available at vaccination hubs and some GPs and pharmacies. A Super Sunday vaccination clinic will also be held at Sydney Olympic Park on 15 August.
What if a worker, including an apprentice, is under the age of 18?	We are currently working with NSW Health to ensure those under the age of 18 can access Pfizer vaccinations.
What evidence do I need to show I have had one or two doses of a vaccine?	You can view your vaccination status on the Australian Immunisation Register via Medicare. A booking with a doctor or other evidence is not enough.
Do I have to isolate after a surveillance test until a negative result is received?	No. But you will need to isolate if you are being tested if you are a close contact or have COVID-19 symptoms.
If I live in an affected LGA and wish to work only in that LGA, do I still need to meet the vaccination requirements?	Yes, any worker from an affected LGAs will need to meet the vaccination conditions to enter a construction site, including in their own LGA of residence.
Can workers return to full duties straight after receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, including operating heavy equipment, and heavy lifting?	Any person receiving a COVID-19 vaccination should follow the medical advice received at the time of the vaccination.
Should principal contractors store the health records of a worker, eg vaccination status?	Principal contractors are required to keep records (including vaccination status), as per the mandatory COVID-19 Safety Plan for Greater Sydney.
What if I have lost my proof of test or vaccination?	It is a requirement of attending a construction site that you have evidence of a vaccination and a test (if required).

Can Rapid Antigen Testing be used instead of PCR testing as part of the surveillance testing requirements of the Public Health Order?	Rapid antigen testing is currently being trialled at a number of construction sites but is not yet approved for mandatory surveillance testing by NSW Health. Self-administered rapid antigen testing cannot be used.
What happens if my test results take more than 3 days to arrive?	You only require evidence of a test to attend a construction site. You do not need to have received the result. It must be no older than 72 hours.
Could the vaccination conditions apply to other LGAs in the future?	As case numbers change, areas may be added or removed from the Greater Sydney LGAs of concern, as decided by the NSW Government
Do workers who have been vaccinated need to undergo surveillance testing	The Public Health Order requires a worker from an affected LGA who has had 1 vaccination less than 21 days ago to undergo surveillance testing. Those who are fully vaccinated or had their first vaccination more than 21 days ago do not need surveillance testing.

### Construction sites

How does the 50% allocation or 4sqm work on construction sites?	You must use the lesser of 1 person per 4 square metres <b>or</b> 50% of the maximum daily workforce. That can be calculated on any day over the project life cycle on the basis of the resourcing plan). Workforce allocations are to be determined by the site owner or principal contractor.
Will the new conditions apply to renovations in occupied homes	There are no changes to the current rules dealing with visitors to the home, including visitors who are workers undertaking maintenance, repairs, cleaning, alternations and additions.
Do the requirements apply to emergency works or works that are otherwise urgently required?	A person from an affected LGA must meet the vaccination conditions to work on a construction site, even if the works are urgently required. If it is an emergency, the vaccination conditions do not apply.
What about construction sites in an occupied residential building, eg an unoccupied apartment in a strata block?	Workers attending an otherwise occupied residential building must adhere to the limits of two workers for indoor services and five for outdoor services, always wear a mask and minimise time spent in any indoor common area. Workers from affected LGAs should not attend these sites. Residents and workers in residential apartment buildings are strongly encouraged to contact their Owners Corporation or Strata Manager to check any additional rules which may apply to a particular residential apartment building for access.
Is Newcastle and the Hunter included in the definition of Greater Sydney?	No, these rules only apply to Greater Sydney, including the Central Coast, Blue Mountains, Wollongong and Shellharbour.
Who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the 50% allocation and vaccination conditions?	In addition to penalties for individuals who don't comply with the rules, the occupier of a construction site will be required to ensure that all persons who enter the site comply with the new vaccination requirements for workers who live in the affected LGAs. There will be tough penalties for non-compliance. As a condition of the COVID-19 Safety Plan, the principal contractor is required to keep records to demonstrate compliance with

	the COVID-19 requirements. Records may be inspected by police or Safe Work NSW.
What are the penalties for non-compliance?	It is an offence not to comply with a public health order. The maximum penalty for non-compliance is 6 months imprisonment and/or \$11,000. On the spot fines of \$2,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for a corporation can be issued.
Where can I find more information on COVID-19 case locations?	Visit <a href="http://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19">www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19</a>
Do the rules apply to small construction sites, eg less than 10 people?	The rules apply to all unoccupied construction sites in Greater Sydney, irrespective of their size.
What happens if I am an unvaccinated worker at a site which is determined to be an affected LGA or suburb that day.	In line with the Public Health Order, you would be required to leave the site and go home. You would be unable to return to work until you meet the vaccination conditions, or your place of residence is no longer an area of concern.

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**For more information go to**

<https://www.urbantaskforce.com.au/covid-19-information-for-the-development-industry/>

or

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/rules/greater-sydney#construction-activity>

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