



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

People in our Parishes

Frequently Asked Questions #1

5th August 2020

Who do these restrictions apply to?

Stage 4 restrictions apply to all Melbourne Metropolitan Parishes and will be enforced from 11:59pm tonight.

Stage 3 restrictions apply to all Victoria (including Mitchell Shire) Parishes.

Please refer to the latest communications from Annie Carrett Director of the Archbishops Office - [UPDATE: GENERAL GUIDELINES COVID-19](#) Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information

What is considered an essential service in a Parish?

In general, Churches are closed under Stage 4 however, the Victorian Government have outlined some exceptions. Please see table below for an overview.

Activity	Essential?	Notes
Livestreaming Mass	Yes	Maximum of 5 people – must have permits
Funerals	Yes	Will be limited to 10 mourners plus the minimum number required to conduct the funeral – must have permits
Visitation of the Sick	No	Home visitations are not permitted unless for grave reasons
Weddings	No	No weddings are permitted unless an application is made to the DHHS for an exemption on compassionate grounds
Baptisms	No	Are to be postponed, unless there is a grave pastoral need. (Can. 857; 860).

The table above also applies for Parishes under Stage 3 restrictions with the exemption of Weddings, which can be held with a limit of 5 people in total including the celebrant.

Also, in accordance with Government requirements, it is important that when you attend work for these reasons you abide by social distancing requirements and wear a face covering at all times.

For more details, please refer to the latest communications from Annie Carrett Director of the Archbishops Office - [UPDATE: GENERAL GUIDELINES COVID-19](#) Implications for the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne Information

Can a parishioner travel more than 5km to the Church to be involved in the broadcasting of Mass?

Where possible we recommend if at all possible, parishioners do not travel more than 5km to assist with broadcasting Mass. For some parishes located in outer regions of Melbourne this might be unavoidable. If provided with the required permit, then parishioners can travel more than 5km to the Church to be involved in the recorded Mass.

If a parishioner is travelling to the church (within 5km radius) to be involved in the recorded Mass, do they need to be issued a permit?

Yes, they require a permit to work.

Do volunteers need to have a permit?

Yes, the volunteer must obtain an approved work permit before attending the parish facility or relevant location.

They can only attend the Parish for the two permitted reasons, Livestreaming the Mass and Funerals.

Volunteers undertaking community services such as picking up food supplies from parishes for delivery to those in need, may do so ensuring it is done in a contactless manner and abiding by all government regulations and restrictions.

Where do I go for more information on the Permitted Workers Scheme?

Please access further information if required here - <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/permitted-worker-scheme> - this will continue to be the source of latest information on the requirements.

Or contact the CAM HR Team on hadmin@cam.org.au - Phone 03 9926 2424.

What is the sign off process for the Permitted Workers Scheme?

There are three separate areas on the form that need to be signed.

If you are a parish priest who is signing a work permit for an employee or volunteer the following process applies:

On Page 1, of the form, the Parish Priest signs as the Employer. The employee also signs and dates this page where it says Employee.

On Page 2, the Parish Priest signs the Statement from Employer. You will need to enter the permitted service and nominate the industry or nature of the work being undertaken.

Also on Page 2 in the section that is issued by nominated representative of the employer. In this scenario it is the Parish Priest who is the nominated representative. The secondary contact can be listed as Suzette Diaz – HR Partner. Phone number 03 9926 2424.

If you are a parish priest who requires a work permit for yourself, the following process applies:

You will need a worker permit in order to undertake necessary activities outside your home. As a priest is not an employee of the Archdiocese, we think the appropriate course is for you to regard yourself as a "sole trader" and complete the permitted worker permit as both employer and employee.

What are the consequences of not following the Government requirements?

From 11:59pm on Wednesday 5 August, employers that require their staff to attend a work site must issue a worker permit to their employees – this is the employer's responsibility. **The Parish is considered an employer.**

Penalties of up to \$19,826 (for individuals) and \$99,132 (for businesses) will apply to employers who issue worker permits to employees who do not meet the requirements of the worker permit scheme or who otherwise breach the scheme requirements.

There will also be on-the-spot fines of up to \$1,652 (for individuals) and up to \$9,913 (for businesses) for anyone who breaches the scheme requirements. This includes employers, and employees who do not carry their worker permit when travelling to and from work.

Can the Parish Secretary work from the Parish office?

All parish staff must work from home. Therefore, parish phone should be forwarded to the Parish Secretary's mobile phone (or alternative) and email out-of-office note to be set up for the query to be sent to a generic parish email address.

If this is not possible, and the Parish Secretary cannot work, the Parish Priest will need to answer the phone and email queries.

Can the cleaning staff continue to clean the Parish?

There may be some circumstances where it is reasonable for parishes to continue for staff attend and provide cleaning services at parishes. The Victorian Government has outlined that any ancillary business is permitted where it is necessary to provide a service on a permitted worksite, or ensure safety obligations on a closed worksite. As parishes may continue to host funeral services and conduct Mass for broadcasting purposes, it is reasonable that these areas will need to be cleaned to ensure health and safety obligations are met. This however, is only the case in parishes that are livestreaming Mass and funerals take place.

Can the gardener continue to work at the Parish?

There is less scope for parishes to carry out general grounds maintenance work under Stage 4 restrictions as it is unlikely this will go directly to ensuring health and safety obligations. Accordingly, gardening and grounds maintenance will only be permitted where it prevents or addresses some hazard (e.g. removing a fallen branch from a footpath).

Can my cleaner/domestic support/gardener work at the presbytery?

It may be reasonable to continue providing cleaning and shopping services at presbyteries where necessary for the care and support of vulnerable and ageing priests. The Victorian Government allows community based services which are required to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people.

This does not include ironing and gardening services (unless there is some hazard) to be permitted under Stage 4 restrictions.

It is also important to emphasize that work can continue to be performed at a parish employee's home – for example, an employee may cook and prepare food at their home and deliver it to the presbytery without person to person contact (effectively contactless delivery). For further support and assistance, priests can also contact the Ministry of Priests on 9412 8400.

If it is not possible for employees to work from home, which leave does their absence come out of?

They can take Annual or Long Service Leave if they have an entitlement.

If they have no Annual or Long Service Leave available, they will need to be stood down.

Individuals may be eligible for financial assistance from the Australian Government. Please feel free to provide them this link so they can discuss their personal circumstances and establish eligibility.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-and-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

What if my parish employees are currently on JobKeeper

There are currently no changes to the JobKeeper scheme. If the employee is already on JobKeeper then they do not need to do anything further at this time.

Please feel free to re-assure them to stay at home and they will continue to receive their payments. This is only for the next 6 weeks at this stage.

What if they are not on JobKeeper, what are their options?

They can take Annual or Long Service Leave if they are entitled to it.

If they have no Annual or Long Service Leave available, they will need to be stood down without pay.

They may be eligible for financial assistance from the Australian Government. Please feel free to provide them this link so they can discuss their personal circumstances and establish eligibility - <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-and-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Can they use their sick leave for this?

No – personal leave cannot be used in this instance.

What if my employee is casual?

If they are currently on JobKeeper they will continue to receive payments but casual employees do not accrue paid leave and therefore are not eligible take any leave.

I am a Parish Priest who lives between the Parish and my private residence, can I continue to do this?

No, you must have a single residence for the next 6 weeks under Stage 4 Stay at Home restrictions. You are not permitted to move between the two properties.

What do Parish Priests need to carry with them when leaving the Parish/presbytery?

You must carry an approved work permit, mask(s), sanitiser and bacterial wipes.

I am currently having renovations done at the Parish, do I have to now put them on hold?

No you don't. Contractors coming into the parish need to have their own permits – e.g. renovations and building works.

Can a contractor attend the parish to carry out maintenance gardening or repairs?

Worksites that are in the closed category (including parishes) can continue to provide access for the purposes of critical maintenance and safety works including meeting environmental obligations, subject to meeting minimum requirements.

If in the event that you consider the need for critical maintenance please contact Dao Tran on 0447 543 009 or Dermot Cannon on 0434 494 854.

I use a videographer to do our videotaping. Can they be issued a Permit to video the Mass?

If you are using an employee or volunteer to assist with videoing or livestreaming Mass, they are required to have a Permit. If you are using a paid contractor, they are responsible for arranging their own permit. Everyone in attendance is included in the overall limit of people numbers.

WHERE CAN I ACCESS MORE INFORMATION

Please read the DHHS updates for daily changes: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

If you need to make contact with the CAM HR Team, please email: hradmin@cam.org.au

Phone number 03 9926 2424