



Queensland Chamber Guide

Assisting COVID-19
Identified Businesses

A Guide for Queensland Chambers of Commerce



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INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed from the learnings gained after recent cases in Gin Gin and Eumundi.

This is a first draft of the document and input is greatly appreciated, particularly as requirements change.

The Gin Gin business was notified by Queensland Health that they had a customer who had tested positive for COVID and had been in the store for 7 ½ minutes.

They were given 30 minutes before the information was made public.

The Eumundi business was notified through friends on their own social media page!

This document identifies the key learning to date.

First and foremost, in these situations communication is paramount.

As a chamber, it is important to:

- Contact the business early.
- Contact the business often.
- Contact your local health officials.
- Contact CCIQ.
- Contact the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

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FROM THE START!

When the Chamber hears, probably through media channels, a business has been identified in your area as having had a COVID case on the premises, the most important thing to do is to contact the business owner as soon as possible.

This is done by a designated representative from the Chamber, usually the president. Most important - it doesn't matter if they are a member of the Chamber or not.

Make contact with them!

For most businesses, this will be their first experience with Queensland Health and their first experience with a COVID case – tension will be high, nerves will be strained, and information will be missed.

1. Reassure the business owner.

The Chamber are here to help them through this.

2. Find out what information they need from the Chamber.

This maybe to help get the message out they are closed for cleaning, or they might need details from the Chamber on what to do next i.e. who to call at Qld Health, cleaning procedures etc.

3. Help them get back

Once all measures are taken, help them get back on their feet, by what ever means the Chamber is able to offer.

THE BUSINESS

Hopefully, the business will only be closed for a short period of time, and the impact will be minimal.

The business will be required to undertake a deep clean. The business will face a temporary closure and possible revenue downturn for during this time.

Unfortunately, they may face damage to their reputation and be the subject of rumors, gossip, and trolls (see Social Media section for more details).

Orders may be cancelled and people may stop coming to the business, even days after the deep clean has been completed.

For hospitality businesses this may mean the dumping of all prepared food and the loss of all bookings during that time.

Remind the business owner there are two things they must do quickly.

1. Organise COVID tests for their staff, particularly those who were in close contact with the COVID case.
2. Arrange for a deep clean (ref pg. 10). This can be done either by the business, following the guidelines developed, or by third party contracts that are available in most parts of Queensland.

THE STAFF

When a business has been identified as a Contact Site, Queensland Health will require staff to have a COVID test, and those who were in close proximity to the COVID case may be required to isolate for 14 days.

Depending on the type of business, this may be the entire front of shop staff, or the entire staff.

For many small businesses this has the potential to cause staffing issues, to the point where the business may not be able to operate at even part capacity, just simply because they don't have enough staff available.

All the information regarding testing can be found (currently) at:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/testing-and-fever-clinics#testing-centre-map>

The staff will be worried and upset by what is happening to them. Encourage the business owner to keep in touch with the staff as much as possible. 14 days in quarantine is long time without family, friends, and support, so a check in every couple of days becomes a lifeline of sorts.

Remember: neither the owner nor members of the Chamber should not visit these staff, unless they wish to spend 14 days in quarantine as well.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media will be a mix of support and outrage, support for the business, and outrage this has happened in their community.

Some of the comments will be understandable, given the fear people have, while others will be opportunistic, seeking to do maximum damage.

The business will be subjected to rumours, gossip and trolls and they may feel that their reputation and business is in ruins.

It's more important than ever to check it every hour during the day.

Remind the business they have control of their Facebook page, and any questions should be answered as soon as possible as that is proactive branding.

If necessary, suggest to the business they engage a PR person or firm to assist them.

If they must engage, the following script is a proven method to de-escalate the situation.

Hi <Persons Name>, thank you for comment and feedback. Please PM us directly so that we can better understand your feedback and work to resolve any issue you might have.

Rinse and repeat!

Offer the business further support by suggesting to assist the business with social media support regarding re-opening, fantastic products. The Chamber can encourage other chamber members to share these posts, keeping the wider community up to date.

THE MEDIA

Mainstream media, particularly local media, will be sympathetic to the plight of the business.

They are often looking to support local business and COVID is a great local story for them. It offers a great deal of scope and angle for their story, so much so that it is often a good idea to ask them what angle they are looking for.

They will ask questions such as:

- How has your business been impacted?
- What has been the cost to your business?
- How are they and the staff coping?

Local media are a great way to let people know when the business will reopen, if it already hasn't, and to thank locals for the support they have provided already (even if they haven't yet).

Chambers should look to provide updates to the media every few days or when circumstances change for the business. Even if they don't run a story, it keeps the business and their predicament front of mind.

If the business (or the Chamber) doesn't feel confident in the media space, let them know they can ask for assistance from the media department at CCIQ.

DEEP CLEANING

The following information is provided by Safe Work Australia(*). The document provides guidance on routine cleaning, as well as cleaning and disinfection following a case or suspected case of COVID-19 in a non-healthcare workplace

“For routine workplace cleaning in a non-healthcare workplace, physical cleaning with water and detergent is usually sufficient. Water and physical effort alone will not kill the COVID-19 virus.

A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus in workplaces when cleaning, and should be used where there is a high volume of workers, customers or visitors that are likely to touch surfaces.

Cleaning and disinfection should also be undertaken after a person with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 has recently been at the workplace. Those cleaning an area of suspected contamination need to be equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes disposable gloves and safety eyewear to protect against chemical splashes. If there is visible contamination with respiratory secretions or other body fluids in the area, the cleaning staff should also wear a disposable apron.

Once cleaning and disinfection is complete, place disposable cloths, PPE and covers in a plastic rubbish bag, place it inside another rubbish bag (double-bagging) and dispose of the bag in the general waste.”

The full document can be found at:

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/how-clean-and-disinfect-your-workplace-covid-19>

Full list of disinfectants approved for use against COVID-19:

<https://www.tga.gov.au/disinfectants-use-against-covid-19-artg-legal-supply-australia>

MENTAL HEALTH

During this process the mental health of the business owners, the staff and the members of the Chamber will be impacted.

This is often the first experience a business will have with a COVID situation, and uncertainty and stress will be high.

Often people will be reluctant to seek help, particularly in regional and remote communities. In these communities, people will have the opportunity to talk with friends and family. However during isolation, this may be significantly limited, exacerbating mental health issues.

It's important people feel connected and not alone, so communication, even something as simple as a check in, is so vital.

However as the days progress, professional help maybe required.

The following organisations have great resources for businesses to use as well as support numbers to call:

- <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/covid-normal.html>
- <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/covid-normal/small-business.html>
- <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/starting-business/advice-support/support/mental-health-resources>
- <https://www.cciq.com.au/coronavirus-information/free-resources/mental-health/>

KEY CONTACTS

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ)

Paul Garcia
(07) 3192 0138

Office of the Small Business Commissioner

13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Queensland Health

Non-urgent health advice: 13HEALTH (13 432 584)

Public Health Units (if after hours, PLEASE leave a message & someone will get back as soon as possible)

CONTACT THE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT CLOSEST TO YOU

Public health unit	Location	Telephone (general enquiries)	Fax (general enquiries)	Report notifiable conditions
Metro North (Brisbane North)	Bryden Street, Windsor Qld 4030 Locked Bag 2, Stafford DC Qld 4053	(07) 3624 1111	(07) 3624 1159	Fax: (07) 3624 1129 Phone: general enquiries number
Metro South (Brisbane South)	Level 1, 39 Kessels Road, Coopers Plains Qld 4108 PO Box 333, Archerfield Qld 4108	(07) 3156 4000	(07) 3156 4045	Phone: general enquiries number Fax: (07) 3156 4006 (Public Health Nurses)

Public health unit	Location	Telephone (general enquiries)	Fax (general enquiries)	Report notifiable conditions
Tropical Public Health Services (Cairns)	William McCormack Place II, Level 7, 5 Sheridan Street, Cairns Qld 4870 PO Box 1103, Cairns Qld 4870	(07) 4226 5555	(07) 4226 3095	Use general contact details
Central Queensland (Rockhampton)	82-86 Bolsover Street, Rockhampton Qld 4700 PO Box 946, Rockhampton Qld 4700	(07) 4920 6989	(07) 4920 6865 EH: (07) 4921 3230	Use general contact details
Darling Downs (Toowoomba)	Baillie Henderson Hospital, Browne House, Cnr Tor and Hogg Streets, Toowoomba Qld 4350 PO Box 405, Toowoomba Qld 4350	(07) 4699 8240	(07) 4699 8477	Fax: (07) 4699 8262 Phone: general enquiries number
Gold Coast	45 Chisholm Road, Carrara Qld 4121 PO Box 318, Nerang Qld 4211 Email: GCPHU@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 5667 3200	(07) 5667 3280	Fax: (07) 5667 3281
Mackay	Mackay Base Hospital, 475 Bridge Road, Mackay QLD 4740 PO Box 5580 Mackay MC QLD 4741	(07) 4885 5800	(07) 4885 5819	CDC Fax: (07) 4885 5818 Phone: use general enquiries number

Public health unit	Location	Telephone (general enquiries)	Fax (general enquiries)	Report notifiable conditions
North West (Mount Isa and Gulf)	26-28 Camooweal Street, Mount Isa Qld 4825 PO Box 1097, Mount Isa Qld 4825	EH Officer (07) 4744 7178 PH Nurse (07) 4744 7186	(07) 4744 7192	Use general contact details
Sunshine Coast	60 Dalton Drive, Maroochydore QLD 4558 PO Box 577, Maroochydore Qld 4558 Email: SCPHU@health.qld.gov.au	1300 017 190	(07) 5202 9596	Fax: (07) 5202 9889
Townsville	242 Walker Street, Townsville Qld 4810 Locked Bag No 4016, Townsville Qld 4810	(07) 4433 6900	(07) 4433 6901	Use general contact details
West Moreton (Ipswich)	81 Queen Street, Goodna, Ipswich Qld 4305 PO Box 188, Goodna Qld 4300	(07) 3818 4700	(07) 3818 4701	Use general contact details
Wide Bay (Bundaberg)	L1, 14 Branyan Street, Bundaberg Qld 4670 PO Box 185, Bundaberg Qld 4670	(07) 4303 7500	(07) 4303 7599	Use general contact details
Wide Bay (Hervey Bay)	Suite 11/17 Hershel Court, Urraween, Qld 4655 PO Box 724, Hervey Bay Qld 4655	(07) 4184 1800	(07) 4184 1809	Use general contact details

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OUT THE OTHER SIDE

There are still many unknowns in these types of situations.

Often Queensland Health is working with limited information or may be overwhelmed by the number of exposure sites, or possibly even both.

While they will sympathise with the situation, they have little time for discussion and even when proven wrong, little appetite for change.

Remind the business that they are dealing with the administrative side of a multi-faceted, multi-level bureaucracy who are doing the best they can. Their job is to protect the community, not help every business who might be exposed.

This is where organisations such as CCIQ and the Office of the Small Business Commissioner come in handy.

These organisations raise both the concerns of the business and the Chambers with the relevant government departments at a senior level.

As a Chamber you aren't alone - reach out to CCIQ and others for the support you and your committee may need.

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