



Outdoor Power Equipment Association (AUST)
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Dear OPEA member,

Re: COVID-19 Stage 4 Restrictions Victoria-Urgent Advisory- to OPEA Members

By now, you will be aware of the important announcements made by our Victorian Premier (Hon) Dan Andrews; concerning curbing the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria and specifically that, the Melbourne Metropolitan area must now move to Stage 4 restrictions, enforceable from 6.00 pm Sunday August 2nd. Additionally, Premier Andrews announced that Victorian regional areas would also begin Stage 3 restrictions on Wednesday August 5, at 11.59 pm.

More Information concerning Stage 3 and the new Stage 4 restrictions, can be found here:
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/stage-4-restrictions-covid-19>

Unfortunately, for our industry members situated in metro Melbourne and regional Victoria, the Premier's subsequent announcements concerning effects to business operations made on Monday August 3, have far-reaching ramifications for our industry. Before going into the detail, I wish to state that the following information has been summarised under key areas, for the benefit of our OPEA members and originates from available published information from the Victorian state government and its departmental agencies. Whilst substantial care was taken to ensure that information contained herein was accurate at the time of publishing this advisory, please note that state government information may be subject to further changes. Details of available Federal and Victorian state government financial relief packages for employers and employees are not covered in the scope of this communication.

Supplier Members (Office Work, re Stage 4 Metro)

Over the next 6 weeks, up until September 13, suppliers cannot operate their businesses from their respective office complex/head office environments and where possible, should migrate all office-based staff to work from home. Alternately, re assign staff to other parts of the business permitted to operate, or investigate other remedies that may exist for employees and your business.

Supplier Members (Performing Manufacturing of OPE in Metro Victoria re Stage 4 Metro)

"Under Stage 4 'Stay at Home' Restrictions the default is that, workplaces in metropolitan Melbourne are **closed** unless the workplace is part of a permitted industry". Under the Stage 4 list of business restrictions and state government manufacturing sector guidance advisories, the only possible exceptions for our OPE industry concerning "Open (for onsite work) -COVID Safe Plan" in place; are those companies which are engaged in manufacturing goods to support the residential building industry or to support critical infrastructure public works. Additionally, the manufacturing

of “specialised machinery and equipment,” is a permitted industry. Official federal classifications of specialised machinery and equipment, can be found at, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/latestproducts/F1A50C679431092CCA257B9500133C45?opendocument> Additionally Please see, <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/manufacturing-stage-4-restrictions>, and government advice re, [Stage 4 Restrictions – Permitted Work Premises](#) drawing your attention to state government advice re “ancillary and support businesses”.

Companies will need to make their own assessments concerning whether their manufacturing activities fall within the government’s exception criteria. Additionally, make their own judgements regarding the ongoing viability re keeping your factory/manufacturing facility working, whilst ensuring that all other government mandated workplace directions are met. Please refer to the following links: <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/manufacturing-sector-guidance>

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-industry-stage-4-restrictions-covid-19>

Supplier Member (Warehousing/3PL Operations / Distribution Centres re stage 4)

OPE businesses with warehousing or distribution operations or using third party logistics companies for warehousing and distribution can stay open under the following conditions.,

1. Warehouse and Distribution Centres situated in Metro Melbourne areas, will be limited to no more than two-thirds the normal workforce.
2. Warehouses will also have additional requirements, including extra PPE, staggering shifts, staggering breaks, health declarations and more support for sick workers to ensure they stay home.
3. Must follow strict Stage 4 restrictions concerning “Additional Industry Obligation” i.e. these classes of businesses are required to have a “High Risk COVID Safe Plan” with enhanced obligations in place by Friday August 7.

A High Risk COVID Safe Plan with enhanced obligations must include the following activities:

- Your actions to help prevent the introduction of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace
- The level of face-covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) required for your workforce
- How you will prepare for, and respond to, a suspected or confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your workplace
- This plan must demonstrate how you will meet all of the requirements set out by the Victorian Government. Some higher-risk industries or workplaces have additional requirements of employers and employees.

Further information and COVID Safe Plan templates; please refer to the following links:

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/creating-a-covid-safe-workplace>

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/covid-safe-plan#High%20Risk%20COVIDSafe%20Plan>

Note Re Worker Permits:

From 11:59pm Wednesday August 5, in Melbourne metro, employers requiring their staff to attend a permitted work site must issue a **'worker permit'** to their employees. Guidelines and the worker permit template are available at: <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/permitted-worker-scheme>

Victorian OPE Dealers Regional (Stage 3 Restrictions)

All Victorian regional dealerships will move to Stage 3 Restrictions. Therefore, Stage 3 restrictions apply from 11:59pm on Wednesday August 5. Under Stage 3 Restrictions, customers are allowed, "To shop for food and essential goods or services", therefore, hand hygiene measures, together with social distancing from the public and between your employees must be in place at all times. Please remember, it is now **mandatory that face masks also be worn** in the workplace and when outside your business (for any reason) during work hours. Note face masks must also be worn when venturing outside from your home. Additionally, if you have five or more employees working in your business, a formal COVID Safe Plan must be in place. Information concerning creating COVID safe plans can be found at, <https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/covid-safe-business/creating-a-covid-safe-workplace>

Note: If not already, please try to work super safely during these unusual and prescriptive times. E.g., as hard as it may be, please limit your contact and personal interactions with customers. Try where possible, to arrange electronic/click and collect payments and pick-up/drop service.

Victorian Dealers Metropolitan (Stage 4 Restrictions Melbourne Metro)

Regrettably, in terms of trading, Melbourne metro dealers are perhaps the most severely affected group concerning Stage 4 Restrictions. Under Stage 4 'Stay at Home' Restrictions, the default is that workplaces in metropolitan Melbourne are **closed** unless the workplace is part of a permitted industry. Allowable businesses "Open (for onsite work) -COVID Safe Plan" in place; are, automotive, machinery and equipment repair and maintenance are permitted to operate where providing support to a permitted services or industry i.e. into trades or permitted services supporting the residential building industry or supporting critical infrastructure/public works etc. Additionally, supporting those businesses required to maintain the health and safety of Victorians at home or at work. You will need to assess your own retail trading situation against the criteria concerning whether or not your business regularly supports other permitted businesses and if it is viable to pursue or continue onsite trading on the basis of the exceptions. Remembering, your decision also needs to consider all other additional requirements. I.e. You must use of contactless 'click and collect' pick-up/delivery services with strict safety protocols in place and not have your doors open to trade directly with the public and must issue worker permits to travelling employees etc, etc.

Note: You are permitted to work onsite, for the purpose of fulfilling on-line orders in a contactless manner.

RETAIL TRADE (GOODS)

CHANGES TO PERMITTED WORK PREMISES LIST

VERSION 1.0 EFFECTIVE 5 AUGUST 2020
FROM 11:59PM

VERSION 2.0 EFFECTIVE 8 AUGUST 2020
FROM 11:59PM

- Attendance on site at other retail outlets for the purposes of fulfilling online orders

I am certain that many of you may be feeling quite down and disenfranchised with much of this recent news, especially where difficult decisions concerning business preparedness, cash flow and your employee's futures are concerned. I would urge all dealer and other members struggling with recent events to reach out to friends, family and fellow members of the OPEA concerning these matters. Please remember that you are not alone, and this situation will surely pass. For those that are finding it hard going mentally, please consider some of the information and advice available from the health resources page at, <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19>

Alternatively, by calling beyond Blue on: 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day / 7 days a week).

In closing our approach and key recommendations during this Pandemic, is for our industry to always err on the side of caution and closely follow all state and federal government directions.

Please take care.

Sincerely

Milan Mejak



President, Outdoor Power Equipment Association (OPEA)