



# Tiwi Islands Regional Council

**Title:** COVID-19 Pandemic Policy  
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## 1.0 Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the Tiwi Islands Regional Council (TIRC) maintains a safe working environment by reducing the risk of Coronavirus (COVID-19) exposure in the workplaces and communities.

## 2.0 Scope

The Policy applies to all Tiwi Islands Regional Council employees, councillors and all service users.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

The Tiwi Islands Regional Council acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency, that all COVID-19 related actions should be based on expert health advice, and that the following principles apply subject to the measures agreed and implemented by the NT Government and the Federal Government.

## **4.0 Procedure**

### **4.1 Request to Undertake a RAT**

The council does not provide free RAT kits to employees for returning to work from any personal visits (e.g. annual leave, personal leave) in any other non-work related events.

It is completely the employee's responsibility to go to the nearest clinic and get a COVID-19 test or buy the approved RAT kit and do the COVID-19 test at home on the above events.

However, the employee in the council may be required to complete a RAT outside of the regular testing schedule for matters relating to:

- a) any employee has/had Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms include-fever (a temperature of 37.5°C or higher), chills or night sweats, cough, sore throat, tiredness (fatigue), difficulty breathing, headache, muscle pain (myalgia), loss of sense of smell (anosmia), distortion of sense of taste (dysgeusia), nausea and vomiting joint pain, loss of appetite, runny nose, acute blocked nose (congestion);
- b) employee returning from personal (sick) leave without doctor certificate;
- c) employee returning from travel outside of TIRC;
- d) employee returning from isolation;
- e) employee live with a close contact;
- f) any other reason that includes if the employee has been away from the workplace for an extended period of time;
- g) employee who has been instructed to perform a RAT test must do so before performing any duties.

### **4.2 Safety Protocols**

The following will be the workplace testing safety protocols:

- a) Employees are encouraged to test at home whenever possible before coming to work.
- b) Masks must be worn on both occasions before and after testing until the results are negative.
- c) Employees should have access to hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and wipes in testing locations.
- d) The high number of employees taking the test at the same time should be stopped, and employees should be divided into intervals to ensure social distance is maintained.

### **4.3 Positive RAT Results**

- a) All procedures for positive RAT results may differ depending on the Northern Territory Government's advice at the time of the positive results.
- b) If an employee receives a positive rating, the processes outlined below must be followed:
  - i. the employee must depart the workplace immediately;
  - ii. inform the immediate manager and Human Resources;
  - iii. visit the Coronavirus website (<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/living-with-covid-19/covid-19-positive>) for more information;

- iv. isolate yourself until you hear from the COVID-19 response team (NTG);
  - v. inform any close contacts of your result.
- c) You must follow the Chief Health Officer (CHO), NTG and Federal Government directions given for the COVID-19 contracted person.

#### **4.4 COVID-19 vaccinations**

The NT Government CHO requires council employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and produce proof of this to their employer in order to continue working in the same job. Territory workers included in the mandatory vaccination policy, will be required to have their booster dose by Friday 22 April 2022.

#### **4.5 What to do if you have COVID-19**

Self-isolation entails staying at your house or place of residence and becoming isolated from people. You are not permitted to leave your home or accommodation unless for medical treatment, an emergency, or an authorised cause. This is normally for at least 7 days, however the timeframe varies by state and territory.

Inform anyone who you spent time within the (2) two days preceding your symptoms or testing positive, whichever occurred first that you have COVID-19. People in your employment, school, or social connections may fall into this category.

#### **4.6 When the council closed quickly due to a lockdown**

When a federal, state, or territory government or officer issues an enforceable government directive that precludes an employee from working, the TIRC is not required to pay the employee.

In these instances, the council does not have to pay the employee unless the employee takes paid leave.

TIRC will first discuss and convey a stand-down with the employee. They should also go through various workplace alternatives that are offered to employees.

While the border is closed, certain residents of impacted states or territories may be unable to go to work as normal.

If an employee is affected by a border closure as a result of an enforceable government directive, especially where this limits travel (or crossing state borders), the employee should contact the council immediately to discuss leave or flexible working arrangements.

#### **4.7 Alternative work arrangements**

The TIRC will assess whether an employee's residence is appropriate for the sort of work they will be performing. Workplace health and safety requirements continue to apply even when an individual work from home.

## **4.8 Transport and facilities**

All council transportation and facilities shall adhere to current Federal, NT Government, and biosecurity legislation. For example, when bio security acts are imposed on the council's service areas, all service users must present COVID-19 vaccination certificates, exemption forms, and RAT results.

## **4.9 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment**

To receive the Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment, you must fulfil the eligibility requirements. The TIRC will not make this payment; instead, the eligible employees must contact Services Australia directly.

## **5.0 Physical distancing and mask**

TIRC employees need to follow the guidance has set up by the Chief Health Officer in NT or another government regulator. Employees must wear a mask while inside any premises, vehicle or vessel where they cannot maintain a distance of 1.5 metres from other people. This includes pubs, clubs, restaurants, shopping centres, hairdressers, workplaces, public transport, taxi cabs, rideshare and indoor boat cruises.

Masks are not required to be worn in private residences or while exercising. Children under the age of 12 do not need to wear a mask. It is highly recommended that everyone wears a mask when outdoors, particularly at any large public outdoor events.

Face masks provide an extra layer of protection and are proven to be effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19, particularly when physical distancing cannot be applied.

Children under the age of two years should not wear a mask. It is up to individuals to decide if children over two years of age wear a face mask. Those people who have a relevant medical or health condition should not wear a mask if it is not safe or appropriate to do so.

Personal behaviour remains our best defence against COVID-19 which is why it is important for everyone to follow all health directions.

## **5.1 Biosecurity Act**

When biosecurity acts are imposed all employees need to follow the direction given by the Tiwi Land Council and NT Government for travelling in the islands.

## **5.2 Evaluation and Review**

Review as needed or at the end of this year whichever occurs first.

## **5.3 Relevant Legislations and links:**

*Workplace Health Safety Act 2011*

*Public and Environmental Health Act 2011*

*Fairwork Act 2011*

Chief Health Officer Directions, <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/chief-health-officer-directions>

Corona Virus (COVID-19), <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/symptoms-testing>