

Coronavirus (COVID-19) safe practices under the VEU program



24 June 2020



The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has released guidance on coronavirus safe practices for participants of the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) program.



Accredited persons need to review and ensure they are taking the appropriate measures to manage coronavirus risks in accordance with guidance provided, including development of your own COVIDSafe plan.



Accredited persons are required to provide the commission written confirmation they have developed a COVIDSafe plan and have provided appropriate training to installers **prior** to resuming installations or by 30 June 2020 (which ever is the earlier date)

Lifting of suspension for activities 15, 17, 21 and 30 under the program

The Victorian Government has announced the lifting of the temporary suspension of the following activities under the VEU program from **24 June 2020**:

- weather sealing (activity 15)
- low-flow shower roses (activity 17)
- incandescent lighting upgrades (activity 21)
- in-home display units (activity 30).

The suspension was put in place on 1 April 2020 to protect public health and to slow the spread of coronavirus transmissions in the Victorian community.





Coronavirus (COVID-19) requirements for all accredited persons

It is critical that accredited persons take appropriate measures in managing coronavirus transmission risks when undertaking activities in the VEU program. In the current situation, the health of Victoria's community and the government and community's ongoing confidence in the program requires accredited persons (and third party contractors and agents, including lead generators) to implement appropriate risk-management measures to control transmission risks.

The Government has said that doorknocking as a form of lead generation is not encouraged until restrictions are fully lifted. As regulator of the VEU program, we encourage participants to follow this advice and stop doorknocking until restrictions are lifted.

For accredited persons seeking to resume installations under activities 15, 17, 21 and 30

Prior to resuming installations under activities 15, 17, 21 and 30, the commission requires accredited persons to provide us with a written confirmation that:

- your organisation has undertaken a risk assessment and developed a tailored COVIDSafe plan to manage the risks associated with exposure to the virus to your employees, installers, customers and others in or near your work environments
- your organisation has provided its employees (including third party contractors and agents) with appropriate training to manage these risks.

The written confirmation should be provided to us:

- by a person authorised to act on behalf of the organisation
- via email: veu@esc.vic.gov.au and be titled as follows: [Organisation name: COVIDSafe plan confirmation]
- prior to resuming installations under activities 15, 17, 21 and 30 of the VEU program or by 30 June 2020 (which ever is the earlier date).

For accredited persons completing installations of other activities under the VEU program (including water heating, space heating and commercial lighting activities), you must provide us written confirmation of the above by 30 June 2020.





Accredited persons will be required to provide us with a copy of your COVIDSafe plan and/or training plan if requested to do so as part of our validation or audit of created certificates.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning guidance document for accredited persons

In undertaking your risk assessment and developing your COVIDSafe plan, you must review the COVIDSafe plan guidance document released by the department. This document aims to assist accredited persons under the VEU program to manage potential coronavirus exposure risks to their employees, installers, customers and others in or near their work environments.

The guidance document is available at: <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/energy-efficiency/victorian-energy-upgrades>

Other useful references

We encourage accredited persons to review the following documents which provides additional detailed guidance for managing exposure to coronavirus (particularly for installers under the VEU program) when undertaking your risk assessment and developing your COVIDSafe plan:

- Master Electricians – ‘Code of practice for the electrical industry COVID-19’, available at <https://www.masterelectricians.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-Practice-for-Electrical-Industry-COVID-19.pdf>
- Masters of Plumbers ‘COVID-19 safe work method statement’ template available at <https://plumber.com.au/covid19/>

Training requirements for your employees (and third party contractors and agents)

Training provided to your employees (and third party contractors) must include:

- good hygiene and cleaning practices, including when collecting signatures from the consumer on the Victorian energy efficiency certificate assignment form
- physical distancing practices to minimise contact between people
- training on use and management of personal protective equipment provided





- employee's obligations to follow company policies and procedures and to isolate if unwell or suspect they have been infected
- consumer screening/coronavirus site risk assessment
- provision of customer advice on your organisation's coronavirus work procedures.

Audits under the VEU program

With the lifting of suspension of activities under the VEU program, accredited persons should resume undertaking their internal audits to ensure that certificates are created in compliance with the program's requirements. This includes undertaking both phone and field audits as part of your internal audits for activities created under the VEU program.

Field audits must be completed in accordance with your COVIDSafe plan practices.

Creation of certificates must be created in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act

The department's guidance document details:

- the duties employers have under the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- the duties employees have under the Act.

Section 15 of the Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Regulations 2018 provides that a certificate cannot be created if an activity is not undertaken in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act or the regulations under the Act.

Where to get help

If you have any questions or feedback with respect to matters set out in this program update, please contact VEU Support on (03) 9032 1310 or veu@esc.vic.gov.au.

If you require assistance in developing your COVIDSafe plan, you can contact Worksafe: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/contact>

