

Coronavirus (COVID-19) requirements update three - VEU program



Information for program participants

26 August 2020



The Victorian Government has released updated guidance for the [construction sector](#) and [electricity, gas, water and waste services](#) permitted work sectors under stage 4 restrictions for metropolitan Melbourne.

We **do not recommend** accredited persons discuss their upgrades with us prior to undertaking an upgrade.

Accredited persons are responsible for reviewing the government's 'permitted work' requirements themselves and to only undertake upgrades that comply with requirements.

For activities undertaken during the stage 4 restriction period, accredited persons may be required to provide:

- an assessment of how the upgrade complied with the government's 'permitted work' requirements
- proof of work permits for the installers
- a COVIDSafe¹ Plan for the upgrade site.

Working under stage 4 restrictions in metropolitan Melbourne

Stage 4 restrictions remain in place for metropolitan Melbourne to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

As per our [program update](#) of 12 August 2020, these restrictions mean:

¹ A High Risk COVIDSafe Plan is required for permitted work premises under high risk industries, including the construction sector





- Businesses in Melbourne can only conduct on-site operations if they are a permitted work premises and have implemented an appropriate COVIDSafe Plan².
- If you are a permitted industry, it is the responsibility of employers – accredited providers and their sub-contractors – to follow workplace obligations available from the [Business Victoria website](#). These obligations include:
 - having an up to date COVIDSafe Plan¹
 - issuing a worker permit to their employees.
- Employees must carry the worker permit and photo identification when travelling to and from the workplace. For information on the permitted worker scheme, visit: www.justice.vic.gov.au/permitted-worker-scheme.

Updated permitted work sector guidance pages

The following sector guidance pages have been updated with the following answers which is particularly relevant to the work involving upgrades of electricity and gas consuming equipment.³

Sector	Question	Answer
Construction sector	Can Melbourne-based construction workers work in regional Victoria and vice versa?	<p>Only if the worker was already employed on that project before 11:59pm, Wednesday 5 August. No new employment arrangements can be entered into that require workers crossing in and out of restricted areas.</p> <p>Workers in permitted industries can travel to and from regional Victoria for work, subject to meeting any relevant workplace requirements and having in their possession a worker permit (for workers who reside in a Melbourne). Stage 4 restrictions apply to workers who enter a stage 3 area.</p> <p>When travelling between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, workers should only travel alone or with members of their household.</p>

² High risk industries, including the construction sector, must have a High Risk COVIDSafe Plan

³ Guidance accurate as at 26 August 2020.





Sector	Question	Answer
Construction sector Electricity, gas, water and waste services sector	Under stage 4 restrictions, can the replacement or upgrade of energy consuming appliances and equipment continue?	<p>Upgrades and replacement of electricity or gas consuming equipment cannot be undertaken in residential properties under stage 4 restrictions unless it is required in an emergency or for safety reasons.</p> <p>Upgrades and replacements can be undertaken at construction sites, including a residential renovation where the home is fully vacated, provided specialist contractors follow the worksite's COVIDSafe Plan. Workers are included in the daily workforce caps.</p>
Construction sector	Are repairs and maintenance allowed at permitted workplaces?	Repairs and maintenance can occur at a permitted work premises if they are required for the operations of that premises. It is up to the operator of the workplace to determine whether repairs and maintenance are required for this purpose.
Electricity, gas, water and waste services sector	What 'electrical services' or 'gas services' are permitted?	<p>The generation, distribution, transmission and/or sale of electricity and gas is permitted.</p> <p>The replacement or upgrades of electricity or gas consuming equipment, including lighting, unless it is work involving critical repairs for an emergency or for safety reasons, is not permitted.</p>

The guidance above should be used by businesses to determine what constitutes a permitted workplace and to understand the specific requirements that will apply to restricted activities occurring at permitted workplaces.

Eligibility of VEU upgrades under current restrictions

Our position on the eligibility of VEU upgrades under current restrictions are based on sector guidance updates.

We **no longer recommend** that accredited persons discuss the nature of your upgrade with us before carrying out the upgrade (as requested in our [program update](#) of 12 August). Businesses





are responsible for reviewing the government's guidance for each industry sector and making their own business decision on whether a proposed upgrade is permitted under the current restrictions.

We are not able to provide advice on whether a proposed upgrade activity meets the requirements of permitted work as this is the responsibility of other Victorian departments. Businesses can contact Business Victoria on 13 22 15 to seek clarification on their interpretation of the permitted work restrictions.

It is your responsibility to monitor the latest updates from the government. However we will endeavour to communicate relevant updates to you.

We recommend program participants do not start an upgrade if there is uncertainty around the eligibility of the upgrade.

Requirements to be completed under the program

As advised in our [program update](#) of 12 August, all accredited persons undertaking or planning to undertake VEU program activities from 3 August to 13 September 2020 were to have submitted their tailored COVIDSafe Plan to us by 14 August 2020. This is still required.

Please be aware that if you have not submitted a COVIDSafe Plan, there may be a delay to the assessment of your certificates.

As we have advised, accredited persons may need to submit evidence that upgrades undertaken in metropolitan Melbourne during stage 4 comply with these restrictions as part of the validation process. The type of evidence you may need to submit are:

- an assessment of how the upgrade complies with the government's 'permitted work' requirements (including any steps you took in making that assessment)
- proof of work permits for the installers
- a COVIDSafe Plan⁴ for the upgrade site.

⁴ A High Risk COVIDSafe Plan is required for permitted work premises under high risk industries, including the construction sector





For upgrades of **water heating and space heating equipment** undertaken from 27 August 2020 (particularly in residential premises), installers will need to document that the existing equipment was faulty or had broken down on the certificate of electrical safety issued in respect of the upgrade.

All accredited persons (and their sub-contractors) are responsible for familiarising themselves with all current legal obligations and complying with those obligations.

Where to get help

If you have any questions or feedback on the program update, please contact VEU Support on (03) 9032 1310 or veu@esc.vic.gov.au.

Contact Business Victoria on 13 22 15 to clarify any questions around stage 4 permitted work restrictions.

For assistance on developing a COVIDSafe Plan, go to the [Business Victoria website](#) or contact Worksafe: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/contact

