

COVID-19 VET response: Infection control skills for Retail

Analysis of training recommendations

As a result of COVID-19, a large number of workers require skills to decrease transmission of infection while undertaking their daily duties. While the fundamental principles of infection control may be consistent, these skills will likely require some contextualisation in different industries.

Recommended pathway to swiftly upskill impacted roles: As a single unit skill set, *HLTSS00065 Infection Control (Retail) Skill Set* has a high level of flexibility to be incorporated into learning pathways. The single unit contained in the skill set is named in AQF level 2-5 qualifications in the HLT Health Training Package and AQF level 2-3 Qualifications in the CHC Community Services Training Package. This unit can be used as an “upskilling” product for those with existing qualifications. For those undertaking a qualification, a very large number of qualifications will allow this unit to be included as part of their packaging rules. This unit can also be used as stand alone training for those currently in the workforce without a qualification, however, it should be trained in the context of the learner’s job role.

Upskilling resources: A number of resources are available that provide important guidance and information about managing infection risks specific to COVID-19. These include resources published by the Department of Health, Safe Work Australia as well as state and territory governments (see RTO Factsheet for links).

The current Department of Health recommended [COVID-19 infection control training](#) provided by Aspen Medical and Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care [e-learning modules](#) are specifically targeted at those working in healthcare settings. A free 30-minute online module, the Aspen Medical training offers the most efficient, cost-effective and industry-relevant method through which workers can be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to address infection control demands created by COVID-19. Despite its current targeting, the training has applicability for workers who may benefit from this skill set in all sectors, and may contribute to the achievement of *HLTSS00065 Infection Control (Retail) Skill Set*.

Key training considerations: summary

What are the type and range of workplaces applicable?

- Large and small businesses
- Rural, regional and metropolitan areas
- Stand alone stores
- Strip shops
- Shops in shopping centres
- Cinemas and game arcades
- Convenience stores, including petrol stations
- Supermarkets
- Retail areas within beauty salons, hairdressing salons, barbers and sporting facilities including gyms
- Indoor/outdoor markets
- Museums and galleries
- Online retail – either having a relationship with a physical store or a warehouse

Where will workers use infection control in these workplaces?

- Inside and outside the store
- When merchandising or displaying store product
- Physical interactions with customers
- Touching hard and soft surfaces in the store such as counters, shelves, bakery cabinets, fitting/change rooms, display items, door handles, etc.
- Packing/bagging products including for online sales
- Shopping trolleys and baskets
- Vending machines
- Equipment such as coffee machines, microwaves
- Petrol pump nozzles, watering cans, squeegees, ice cabinets, air hose nozzles and buttons in petrol stations
- ATMs
- Lunch rooms and offices
- Bathrooms and toilets
- Baby change rooms, or children’s play areas if applicable
- Office equipment including computers, cash registers, EFTPOS terminals, pin pads, touch screens, telephones, etc.
- Recreation equipment
- Accepting deliveries of stock

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Analysis of training recommendations, cont.

Key training considerations: summary

What relevant interactions do workers have with clients?

Workers may have close physical interaction with other team members and customers.

Team members:

This would be constant and longer term in nature for the duration of the shift.

- Exchange of equipment or items when receiving, merchandising and selling items
- Working in close proximity on customer sales checkouts, etc.
- Shared facilities, such as lunch-room, bathroom or change rooms

Customers:

This would vary in duration dependent on the sale requirements.

- Providing information and assistance to customer with selection of items and during sale, etc. (medium term 5+ minutes)
- Cashiering - this may incorporate use of cash register where cash would be passed from customer to worker, or EFTPOS console, etc. which may be used by both worker and customer (short term under 5 minutes)
- Product delivery – this may be short term for delivery to customer door, or medium term for some delivery services where set up of item e.g. electricals, is included in the sale.

* Further details of these potential options are given later in this document

What existing measures are in place to mitigate infection risks?

Work Health and Safety provisions in place in states and territories. Induction training for staff would cover store cleaning and hygiene.

Other risk mitigation measures relating to infection control within retail sales areas include:

- Customer service areas – cleaning checklists and rosters to ensure regular maintenance of hygiene. This is important in high traffic, high touch areas such as counters, displays, doors, door handles/push plates, handrails, lift buttons, trolleys/baskets, tongs for self selection of food products in supermarkets.
- Signage in the workplace to alert and remind staff of requirements for hygiene, e.g. hand washing, cough etiquette, etc.
- Protocols to direct customers to self-service checkouts or protocols for customers to bag own products to reduce staff contact points.
- Food storage protocols for retailers of food items to ensure food is stored safely and not at risk of contamination, e.g. keeping fresh or non-pre-packaged foodstuffs behind a counter such as deli counter where only staff have access.
- Transport or delivery vehicles – must be designed to protect items from contamination and must be able to be easily and thoroughly cleaned and sanitised if necessary.

Specific measures relating to COVID-19 include:

- Measures to facilitate social distancing including: markers on the floor in areas where customers line up or staff perform tasks; controls on customer entry and egress; contactless pick up and delivery; spaced desks in offices and tearooms.
- Installation of Perspex barriers between cashier and customer in some stores.
- Monitoring staff for illness and directions to workers to stay at home if unwell.
- Sanitisers at store entrance and disinfectant wipes for trolleys.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes.

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Analysis of training recommendations, cont.

Key training considerations: summary	
What hand washing protocols are already in place in this industry?	<p>Hand washing facilities are available in-house in many larger retailers, however smaller shops may use communal bathrooms/toilets. Since COVID-19 hand sanitiser is commonly available at cashiers and for home delivery services, where hand washing facilities are not readily available.</p> <p>Since COVID-19 many larger supermarkets now provide access to wipes for customer use to clean trolley/basket handles before use.</p> <p>Single use hand towels or air dryers should be supplied for drying hands after washing to prevent potential transfer of infectious agents between workers.</p> <p>Replacement of soap, hand towels and hand sanitiser (as applicable) on a regular basis (at least daily, or when stocks run out).</p>
What reporting in this industry covers infection control?	<p>Reporting is initially verbally to supervisor at time of incident. Incidences of stock contamination or infection would be followed up by written incident reports as the incidents occur. Larger retailers would usually have daily reports on cleaning of retail spaces and bathrooms.</p> <p>Investigations may be carried out as required.</p> <p>Circumstances specific to COVID-19 (and other notifiable diseases):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business must work with local public health authorities to rapidly trace any close contacts/prevent further spread where a staff member tests positive.
What equipment and facilities could be included as part of this training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protective equipment such as gloves, vests or aprons, closed shoes, hat or hair net, eye protection, masks, etc. This may not be relevant or used in all forms of retail stores. • Retail sales area – this could vary depending on the type of retailer e.g. supermarket, fashion, whitegoods, sporting equipment, pharmacy, stationery or office supplies, hardware, automotive supplies, etc. • Stock or merchandise for sale to customers • Point of sale equipment such as cash registers, EFTPOS machines, etc. • Service areas including counters, doors (door handles and push plates), merchandise displays • Waste receptacles including those for recycling and contaminated waste and required equipment such as garbage bags • Hand hygiene facilities and equipment such as soap, hand sanitiser, hand towels. • Personal hygiene equipment such as tissues, etc. • Workplace cleaning products including spill kits • First aid kit • Sharps receptacle
What resources could be used as part of this training?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation policies and procedures • Incident forms • Waste disposal guidelines • Food safety guidelines for storage for food retailers • Signage relating to hygiene such as clean/contaminated zones, cleaning protocols, hand washing procedures, cough etiquette, etc. <p>Resources specific to COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance produced by Safe Work Australia; Health Department; and peak bodies, (e.g. Master Grocers Australia, Pharmacy Guild) regarding social distancing; risk assessment and reduction strategies; and frequency and type of cleaning.
Entry considerations	<p>Given the inclusion of the unit within this skill set across multiple AQF levels (2-5), if an individual has the capacity to undertake training at that level, they are likely suitable to undertake this unit.</p>

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Overview of approved contextualisation

To ensure the applicability of *HLTSS00065 Infection Control (Retail) Skill Set* to the retail sector, contextualisation may be required in the delivery of the unit of competency contained in the skill set. The following tables break down the unit of competency and identify potential barriers that may arise due to the nature of the individual industry or measures taken in response to COVID-19. The contextualisation identified has been approved by the AISC and may be revoked at any time. The RTO may consider other contextualisation updates in line with the Standards for RTOs.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
Element 1: Follow standard and additional precautions for infection prevention and control	Yes		
1.1 Follow hand hygiene practices in accordance with organisations policies and procedures	No		
1.2 Implement hand care procedures and cover cuts and abrasions	No		
1.3 Follow organisation procedures for choice and use of personal protection equipment	Yes	Not all retail stores have a routine need for personal protective equipment.	This may require assessment via simulation or knowledge test.
1.4 Follow procedures for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette	No		
1.5 Follow procedures for environmental cleaning	No		Contextualisation for COVID-19 should reference Safe Work Australia and Health guidance re: risk-based approach to determine frequency and type of cleaning
1.6 Follow procedures for handling, transporting and processing of linen in a manner that controls the spread of infection	Yes		
1.7 Follow procedures for disposal of contaminated waste	Yes		
1.8 Follow procedures for handling and cleaning client equipment that prevents skin and mucous membrane exposures, contamination of clothing, and transfer of pathogens	No		



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Overview of approved contextualisation, cont.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
1.9 Identify and respond to situations where additional precautions may be required to prevent transmission of infection	No		Contextualisation for COVID-19: social distancing and managing customers with suspected illness. Address social distancing in delivery of groceries, etc.

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Overview of approved contextualisation, cont.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
Element 2: Identify infection hazards and assess risks	No		
2.1 Identify infection hazards associated with own role and work environment	No		Should be contextualised to reflect circumstances brought about by COVID-19.
2.2 Identify own areas of responsibility in relation to infection prevention and control	No		Contextualisation for COVID-19: Social distancing; practice frequent handwashing and good hygiene; not going to work if ill or if told to isolate.
2.3 Assess risk by determining the likelihood and severity of harm from identified hazards.	No		Should be contextualised to reflect circumstances brought about by COVID-19, including what is known about transmission.
2.4 Document and report activities and tasks that put self, clients, visitors and/or other workers at risk	No		
2.5 Identify appropriate control measures to minimise risk in accordance with organisations procedures	No		Contextualisation for COVID-19 should reference resources from Safe Work Australia; Department of Health and relevant peak bodies re: control measures.

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Overview of approved contextualisation, cont.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
Element 3: Follow procedures for managing risks associated with specific hazards	Yes		
3.1 Follow protocols for care after exposure to blood or other body fluids as required	No		Contextualisation for COVID-19: Exposure not just to blood or body fluids but to an infected (or suspected infected person). Definition of a close contact. Working with public health authorities.
3.2 Place appropriate signs when and where appropriate	No		Refer to resources available from Department of Health and other sites relating to COVID-19.
3.3 Remove spills in accordance with the policies and procedures of the organisation	No		
3.4 Minimise contamination of materials, equipment and instruments by aerosols and splatter	Yes	This may not occur routinely in all retail environments.	This may require assessment via simulation or knowledge test.
3.5 Identify, separate and maintain clean and contaminated zones	Yes	This may not occur routinely in all retail environments.	This may require assessment via simulation or knowledge test. Consider whether the concept expands to other areas – such as food delivery.
3.6 Confine records, materials and medicaments to a well-designated clean zone	Yes	Medicaments are not present in Retail environments other than pharmacies. First aid kits are required, however, these do not contain medication.	This may require assessment via simulation or knowledge test.
3.7 Confine contaminated instruments and equipment to a well-designated contaminated zone	Yes	This may not occur routinely in all retail environments.	This may require assessment via simulation or knowledge test.

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Overview of approved contextualisation, cont.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
Performance evidence	No		
Knowledge evidence	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No pre-surgical hand preparation in Retail 2. Clinical moments when hand hygiene should be performed with soap and water rather than alcohol-based rub 3. PPE – gowns 4. Sharps handling and disposal techniques 5. Reprocessing procedures for equipment 6. Factors that increase the susceptibility to infection – immune status, medications and comorbidities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This knowledge evidence would have to be assessed in simulation or via a knowledge test 2. Clinical moments would not occur in Retail except with the possibility of some pharmacies giving vaccinations, however, contextualisation could present the appropriate hand hygiene procedures and note that hand sanitiser may be used where soap and water facilities are unavailable. Understanding of which hand sanitisers can be used for COVID-19. 3. Gowns in Retail could be substituted for vests, apron or uniform as per organisational requirements. 4. Sharps handling in this context would be related back to sharps disposal bins for personal use e.g. insulin injectors, etc. 5. In this context reprocessing would be such things as cleaning items that are used by multiple customers, such as tong for self food service in a supermarket, or customer returns that are suitable for re-sale. 6. It is unlikely that in a Retail environment these factors would be known to other workers, so this knowledge evidence would need to be assessed in simulation or in relation to self or through knowledge test.



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Overview of approved contextualisation, cont.

	Contextualisation required?	Identified barrier or issue affecting delivery	Contextualisation required
Assessment conditions	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisational infection prevention and control guidelines 2. Medical or client care equipment relevant to the workplace 3. Clinical and other waste and waste disposal equipment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These guidelines could be simulated or template guidelines for the purpose of assessment. Consider also whether these could relate to organisational policies re: social distancing and cleaning of surfaces and equipment. 2. These items are not relevant to most Retail workplaces with the possible exception of some pharmacies that conduct medical procedures such as vaccinations. Consider whether these relate to equipment used by multiple customers such as trolleys and EFTPOS machines. 3. In Retail context this could relate to use of single use towels for drying hands, bins for disposal of contaminated waste e.g. blood from a cut finger, personal sharps disposal as outlined above.

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Assessment resources, potential scenarios and simulations

The following tables set out ways in which assessment strategies can be contextualised, including potential resources available and means of demonstrating competency in practical settings.

Equipment and facilities that may be available include but are not limited to:	Resources include but are not limited to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal protective equipment such as gloves, vest, apron, closed shoes, eye protection, masks, etc. • Retail sales area including merchandise areas, customer service areas, customer returns areas, including counters, doors (door handles and push plates), tables and chairs • Merchandise and related equipment such as coat hangers, baskets, trollies, bags, boxes • Point of sale equipment such as cash registers, EFTPOS machines, etc. • Waste receptacles including those for recycling and contaminated waste and required equipment such as garbage bags • Hand hygiene facilities and equipment such as soap, hand sanitiser, hand towels, etc. • Personal hygiene equipment such as tissues, etc. • Workplace cleaning products including spill kits • First aid kit • Sharps receptacle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation policies and procedures – templates contextualised to Retail business • Incident form templates • Model waste disposal guidelines • Signage relating to hygiene such as clean/contaminated zones, cleaning protocols, hand washing procedures, cough etiquette, etc. • Cleaning guidelines – Safe Work Australia

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Demonstrating competency in a practical setting

The tables below give examples of activities that could be used in the Retail sector to demonstrate competency.

Examples of activities that may be useful in demonstrating competency against the performance and knowledge evidence	Practical setting	Scenarios and simulations for the specific industry context
Correct hand hygiene practices including washing hands with soap and water and drying, and cleaning hands with alcohol-based sanitiser	Practical demonstration of soap and water hand hygiene in the workplace Practical demonstration of the correct use of hand sanitiser at the appropriate times	Completing a simulation of practical hand hygiene practices including washing hands with soap and water and drying, cleaning hands with alcohol-based sanitiser. Provide two scenarios to demonstrate where and when each method of hand hygiene practice should be utilised in the workplace (soap and water and hand sanitiser) – verbal or written
Correct hand care procedures and covering cuts and abrasions	Practical demonstration in the workplace of method to treat and cover a cut.	Completing a simulation of practical hand care practices including nails and jewellery and treatment and appropriate cover for a cut or abrasion.
Correct personal protection equipment selected and used in appropriate manner	Practical demonstration of PPE selection and use in the workplace, e.g. using gloves for cleaning, or use of high visibility vest in high traffic areas.	Provide two scenarios to demonstrate where different PPE should be utilised in the workplace for different tasks – verbal or written
Knowledge of correct respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette		Completing a simulation of cough etiquette and scenario related to respiratory hygiene techniques – verbal or written
Environmental cleaning of both areas requiring frequent cleaning and infrequent cleaning – including preventing skin and mucous membrane exposures	Practical demonstration of surface cleaning and disinfecting procedures in the workplace, could be applied to merchandising, service or storage areas. Includes demonstrating use of correct PPE, cleaning equipment and products according to manufacturers guidelines and organisational policies and procedures. Reference Work Safe Australia cleaning guide.	Completing a simulation of surface cleaning and disinfecting procedures, including demonstrating use of correct cleaning equipment and products according to manufacturers guidelines and organisational policies and procedures and including limiting mucous membrane exposures such as rubbing noses or eyes, or coughing or sneezing without covering mouth or nose.
Handling and transporting linen		Verbal or written evidence of the learner having knowledge of correct handling of linen for different situations, e.g. change rooms or staff uniforms – verbal or written.
Disposal of contaminated waste		Provide two scenarios to demonstrate appropriate disposal of contaminated waste, e.g. blood or vomit and limitation of contamination – verbal or written.
Identify infection hazards and assess risks	Practical demonstration of identifying infection hazards in the workplace, analysing the risk to staff and customers, managing the risk and documenting and reporting the hazard.	Provide a scenario of an identified hazard in the workplace – response relating to identification of the hazard including assessment of risk to staff and customers, reporting and documentation of the hazard – verbal or written.

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Demonstrating competency in a practical setting, cont.

Examples of activities that may be useful in demonstrating competency against the performance and knowledge evidence	Practical setting	Scenarios and simulations for the specific industry context
Standard and additional precautions		Provide two scenarios where learner can demonstrate knowledge of 1. standard and 2. additional precautions to limit exposure to potential infection when interacting with staff or customers – verbal or written.
Sharps handling and disposal procedures		Scenario relating to disposal of used syringe for personal health care management e.g. diabetes using appropriate sharps disposal unit – verbal or written.
Chain of infection		Provide two scenarios where the learner can demonstrate knowledge of the chain of infection including source of infectious agent, mode of transmission and susceptible host and how the chain can be broken in a retail environment. Use COVID-19 as one example.
Basis of infection		Verbal or written evidence of the learner having knowledge of the basis of infection.
Key modes of disease transmission		Verbal or written evidence of the learner having knowledge of key modes of disease transmission as outlined in the unit of competency Knowledge Evidence and where these could occur in the workplace. Include COVID-19 transmission as an example.
Factors that increase susceptibility to infection		Verbal or written evidence of the learner having knowledge of factors that increase a person's susceptibility to infection as outlined in the unit of competency Knowledge Evidence. Include COVID-19 transmission as an example and address both susceptibility to infection and susceptibility to severe outcomes.
Reprocessing procedures	Practical demonstration in the workplace of reprocessing procedures, e.g. preparing returned goods for re-sale.	Scenario relating to reprocessing of equipment where learner can demonstrate knowledge of correct procedure – verbal or written.

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Demonstrating competency in a practical setting, cont.

Examples of activities that may be useful in demonstrating competency against the performance and knowledge evidence	Practical setting	Scenarios and simulations for the specific industry context
Managing risks associated with specific hazards	Practical demonstration in the workplace of maintaining clean and contaminated zones – including confining contaminated equipment to appropriate contaminated zones, minimisation of contamination of materials, identification and placement of appropriate signage.	Provide a scenario of an identified hazard, e.g a customer vomits in the store – response relating to management of hazard in line with workplace protocols and guidelines (template guidelines to be provided if no workplace). Provide a scenario of a spill in the workplace – response on appropriate management of spill in accordance with assessment of risk. Verbal or written.



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Approval and Version Control Table

Approval Body	Details	Date