

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 5 August 2020

CHILDCARE AND KINDER ACCESS FOR PERMITTED WORKERS

People working in permitted industries will maintain access to kinder and childcare for their kids under Stage 4 restrictions beginning at 11:59pm tonight, regardless of whether they are working onsite or from home.

If you or someone else in your household can look after your kids at home, you must continue to do that, but we recognise that for many frontline workers and others playing important roles in our pandemic response, it's just not possible. And while keeping movement down across our community is vital to slowing the spread of coronavirus, we also need permitted workers to be able to keep doing these vital roles.

From tomorrow, only the children of permitted workers and vulnerable kids will be able to access childcare and kinder. But in recognition of the realities of trying to undertake critical work functions while supervising small children, for the purposes of accessing childcare or kinder, a permitted worker will also include someone working from home.

The new Access to Childcare Permit will sit alongside the Permitted Worker Scheme announced yesterday.

For people working from home in permitted industries who aren't able to supervise their kids in the course of their duties, and who don't have anyone else in the household who can supervise them either, there will be a separate form to complete.

This will require the employer to attest that the worker is employed in a permitted category and the employee will need to attest that there is no one in their household who can supervise their child. Reasons might include because the other parent is also a permitted worker or because they are a single parent.

For permitted workers who are still required to attend work onsite and need access to childcare or kinder, there will just be a component of the existing permit where they will need to confirm there is no one else in their household able to supervise their child.

The Permitted Worker Scheme and Access to Childcare Permit will assist childcare centres and kinders to verify that a permitted worker is eligible to access childcare, whether they are working onsite or from home.

Under the Permitted Worker Scheme, from 11:59pm tonight employers that are permitted to have their staff onsite will be required to issue a worker permit to their employees – attesting that the worker cannot work from home and outlining what tasks they will perform at work. The new permits will help Victoria Police enforce the Chief Health Officer's directions and ensure only people who genuinely need to be out are on the roads or moving around.

Hefty penalties of up to \$19,826 for individuals and \$99,132 for businesses will apply to employers who issue worker permits to employees who do not meet the requirements of the worker permit scheme or who otherwise break the rules. There will also be on-the-spot fines of up to \$1,652 for individuals and up to \$9,913 for businesses for anyone who breaches the scheme requirements. This includes employers, and employees who do not carry their worker permit when travelling to and from work.

Information on the Permitted Worker Scheme can be found at www.vic.gov.au/worker-permit-scheme. Access to Childcare Permits will be available at the same place later today.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews