

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 24 July 2020

SAME-DAY DOORKNOCK FOR CASES WHO DON'T ANSWER CALLS

The Victorian Government has sought assistance from the ADF of more than 1400 members to support our state-led operations in both enforcing the border around Melbourne and Mitchell Shire and other critical tasks in the response to the global pandemic.

As part of the ADF's support for the DHHS Case and Contact Management program, they will be supporting authorised officers (AOs) from the department to follow up positive cases who cannot be contacted by phone or who are refusing to cooperate.

Under new arrangements implemented this week, if a person cannot be contacted after two calls within a two hour window or if they refuse to participate in a contact tracing interview, ADF personnel accompanied by an authorised officer will visit the address on the same day.

If the person is not home when the ADF and the AO attend the property, an investigation is undertaken to determine the reason for absence and to ensure the home address is correct. If someone is found to be violating the Chief Health Officer direction to isolate, they will be issued with a fine by the AO.

Since Wednesday, 65 properties have already been visited as part of this program, and from today we will have 23 teams up and running and out on the ground.

Meanwhile, Victoria Police has undertaken 5,345 spot checks in the past 24 hours at homes, businesses and non-essential services across the state, and issued 101 fines as part of Operation Sentinel.

More than two million face masks will be distributable to vulnerable Victorians and frontline workers as the Government continues to ramp up enforcement efforts to slow the spread of coronavirus.

It is now mandatory for people living in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire to wear a face covering when leaving home for one of the four allowable reasons.

Victoria Police has begun enforcing the Chief Health Officer direction that requires people living in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire to wear a face covering when leaving home for one of the four approved reasons.

As part of daily patrols, police will issue on-the-spot fines of \$200 to those not wearing a face covering without a legitimate reason. Police will exercise discretion as always, but particularly over the first seven days, as Victorians make this adjustment.

The Victorian Government is working with local manufacturers and suppliers to ensure that Victoria has a strong ongoing supply of single-use and reusable face masks.

There will be 1.7 million free reusable face masks made available to vulnerable Victorians, including 1.1 million for people living with chronic conditions, including immunosuppression issues and heart and lung disease.

Other vulnerable Victorians who will be offered reusable masks include people living in public housing and crisis accommodation, people living with a disability, individuals using family violence services and indigenous Victorians.

The first lot of reusable masks will begin to be distributed within the next week. To help bridge any gaps, single-use masks will also be made available immediately. People receiving these disposable masks in the short term will still be eligible to receive reusable masks once they are available. Scarfs and bandanas are also acceptable, as some protection is better than none.

The Government is working with local councils, hospitals and community health services, community pharmacies, participating GPs, Aboriginal community groups and other service providers to distribute the free face masks.

Some 370,000 reusable masks will also be made available to human service support workers delivering face-to-face services to vulnerable Victorians.

For more information about coronavirus call 1800 675 398 or www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“We thank all Victorians who are following the rules – our hardworking healthcare workers, Police and Defence Force personnel are working around the clock to fight this virus and keep you and your family safe.”

“Not everyone will be able to access reusable masks – particularly the most vulnerable in our community. We’re making sure there is both a ready supply and means of distribution to get these masks where they are needed most.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

“The majority of Victorians are doing the right thing – but for those who continue to deliberately and blatantly disregard the Chief Health Officer directions – Victoria Police will catch you and you will be fined.”