

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



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STAY HOME: NEW CRACKDOWN ON ISOLATION BREACHES

More Victoria Police and Australian Defence Force personnel will be out in force ensuring Victorians are abiding by the directions of the Chief Health Officer (CHO), as the next stage of restrictions is supported by stronger enforcement and increased penalties for those who repeatedly breach the directions.

From today, a new infringement offence for a breach of the CHO directions will be introduced to target those people who are failing to self-isolate after testing positive to coronavirus or being identified as a close contact.

A fine of \$4,957 can be issued to a person who is found to breach the requirement to be self-isolating for a second or subsequent time – the highest on the spot infringement Victoria Police can issue to a person.

In line with the raft of changes we've made under Stage 4 restrictions this week, people who have tested positive or are close contacts will no longer be able to leave their homes for exercise. A limited number of reasons to leave the home will remain - including seeking medical care, in an emergency, or if required by law - but if your door is knocked and you're not able to prove you were out for the right reasons, you will face the consequences.

To ensure all Victorians are following the CHO directions, there will be an additional 250 sworn officers joining Operation Sentinel – bringing it to a team of 750 Victoria Police officers, as well as general duties officers.

They will be assisted by the expansion of Operation Vestige, which sees ADF personnel and DHHS authorised officers making in person visits to the homes of people who have tested positive or are close contacts to ensure they are self-isolating. The teams also ensure people understand the requirements for isolation and that they have what they need including connections to support services if required.

More than 500 ADF personnel and 300 authorised officers will join the teams already on the ground and see the operation scale up to 4,000 household visits every day from next week.

Any persons not at home or confirmed as non-compliant through door knocking are prioritised for compliance checks by Victoria Police as part of Operation Sentinel spot check activity. Where non-compliance is confirmed, infringements are issued.

With new restrictions on business and industry coming into force from Wednesday night, employees working in permitted industries who cannot work from home will be required to carry a new 'Worker Permit' when travelling to and from work. From 11:59pm Wednesday 5 August, employers will be required to issue signed permits to their employees to allow them to attend a workplace – to prevent people trying to get around the tough new restrictions.

Enforcement will also be bolstered by the addition of Protective Services Officers normally stationed on the Night Network supporting compliance efforts following the introduction of a curfew and the reduction in trains running at night.

In addition to the stronger enforcement capability, Victoria Police will continue to police the border of metropolitan Melbourne to ensure travel into regional Victoria only occurs for permitted reasons.

Booze buses have already been deployed to road stops and checkpoints to monitor traffic flow, and police will continue to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition to scan registration details and identify the residential addresses of license holders. Victoria Police are also conducting checks across the state, including the main arterials to regional Victoria.

Victoria Police has undertaken over 6000 spot checks in the past 24 hours at homes, businesses and non-essential services across the state and issued 161 fines as part of Operation Sentinel – including 60 for failing to wear a mask.

Police are conducting checks at businesses, homes, community locations and non-essential services across the state to ensure directions are being followed. Operation Ribbon and Operation Shielding remain in place.

The community can continue to report non-urgent crime and events, as well as breaches of the Chief Health Officer's directives, by calling the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 or submitting an online report at police.vic.gov.au/palolr.

Quotes Attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"If we all do the right thing, we will get through this. Those doing the wrong thing will cop a fine from Victoria Police, because the only way to beat this deadly virus is if we all follow the rules."

"We have a massive team going door to door to support all Victorians – including more powers and resources to Victoria Police to catch anyone who thinks they can get away with doing the wrong thing."

Quote attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

"Victoria Police don't want be issuing these fines but make no mistake – they will if they need to. It's more important than ever that Victorians do the right thing and follow the directives of the Chief Health Officer."