

COVID-19 Relief

Relief to support the need to isolate at home

COVID-19 relief

This factsheet provides information on the types of relief available to people in Victoria who need to isolate due to COVID-19, who need food or material aid and are unable to get help from family or friends.

People are encouraged to use their own resources and networks to source food and aid. This includes:

- Online shopping and delivery
- Support through friends, family and community.

People's personal circumstances such as illness, timeliness, social isolation and limited financial capacity, may impact on vulnerability during isolation.

COVID-19 relief will help to ensure that people have food and essential items while they stay at home.

Pathways and process for relief support

People seeking COVID relief and support should contact the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398.

Coronavirus Hotline

When a person contacts the Coronavirus Hotline (the Hotline) seeking relief support (Option 4), they will be provided with options. To access relief services, they need to choose option 4. Callers that need interpreter services need to first choose option 0.

The call centre will ask a series of questions to determine the relief needs of the caller and refer them accordingly. The call centre will refer to the following relief pathways:

- Australian Red Cross (ARC)** – if the need is not urgent (can wait 24 – 48 hours) and can be met by the standard emergency relief pack (see next page)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's (DFFH's) COVID Relief Coordination** – if the need is urgent food relief, personal care

items and/or practical support (rapid – needed within 3 hours / urgent – needed same day)

- Integrated Intake Assessment and Triage Service** – if there is a need for emergency accommodation or welfare supports.

Internal departmental units

The need for relief coordination may also be identified by the Department of Health (DH), such as Case Contact and Outbreak Management (CCOM), or other DH and DFFH divisional program areas.

These units or program areas may refer to the following relief pathways:

- DFFH's COVID Relief Coordination** – if the need is rapid relief or urgent food relief, personal care items and/or practical support (rapid – needed within 3 hours / urgent – needed same day)
- Integrated Intake Assessment and Triage Service** – if there is a need for emergency accommodation or welfare supports.

DFFH COVID Relief Coordination

When COVID Relief Coordination receives a referral, it will prioritise the referral based on:

- immediacy of individual need (with a focus on risk to health and/or of cumulative harm to individual/others)
- public health risk (including effectively supporting outbreak responses).

COVID Relief Coordination will:

- review the individual's immediate relief needs
- support the individual with the provision of rapid response relief required
- facilitate and fast track a referral for additional relief needs required within the first 24 hours-48 hours, to:
 - relevant local council

- Australian Red Cross (if further assessment identifies that needs can be met through standard emergency relief packages)
- Integrated Intake Assessment and Triage Service (IIATS).

Referrals to Relief Coordination can be made by emailing rcs@dffh.vic.gov.au.

Integrated Intake Assessment and Triage Service

If the Hotline in the first instance, or COVID Relief Coordination, following a referral for a rapid relief response, identifies a complex welfare support need, they will refer the individual to the Integrated Intake Assessment and Triage Service (IIATS), which will then conduct assessment to determine the level of supports required.

Following assessment, IIATS may then refer the individual to emergency accommodation or to Integrated Support Services (ISS) for coordinated welfare support while self-isolating at home.

Referrals to IIATS can be made by any staff member or member of the public by calling **1800 365 100** or completing the [online referral form](#).

All referrals are managed urgently.

Types of COVID-19 relief

There are several options available through COVID relief. These options are outlined below:

Emergency relief packages

Emergency relief packages, delivered by the Australian Red Cross (Red Cross), contain food staples like cereal, long-life milk, sugar, pasta and canned vegetables. Personal care items such as soap, toilet rolls, deodorant and toothpaste are also provided as part of the packages.

*Packages may include additional items like nappies, baby formula, personal hygiene products (sanitary pads, hand sanitisers, gloves) and pet food. ***These items must be requested if required.**

Each emergency relief package is designed to provide enough basic food and personal care items for two weeks for a household of four.

Emergency relief packages are normally delivered within 24 hours in metropolitan Melbourne and 48 hours in regional Victoria.

The Red Cross can mobilise emergency food support within a 24-hour period in priority situations, such as where there is an infant in the household. The Coronavirus Hotline will escalate these cases to the Red Cross directly.

Emergency relief packages are suitable for people who:

- Can wait 24 – 48 hours for their pack
- Do not require fresh food, culturally appropriate food, or have special dietary requirements
- Do not require medicine or specific material aid beyond the standard pack

Local government

DFFH COVID Relief Coordination may refer to councils to coordinate where a person requires relief beyond the standard emergency relief pack, or if relief is required urgently.

Examples include:

- Fresh food / culturally specific foods / food to support dietary needs / food relief through charitable organisations
- Personal care items and/or practical support
- Provisions and materials required to support an infant

The following items **cannot** be purchased:

- Tobacco and alcohol
- Non-essential items such as cosmetics.

Councils operate on an as-needed basis from:

- Metro and large regional towns – 8am to 9pm
- Rural – 9am to 6pm

Councils may also receive direct referrals from people in their local area who require relief.

Access to COVID-19 relief

COVID-19 relief can be accessed via the following pathways:

- Calling the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 and selecting Option 4
- Direct referral through the Case, Contact and Outbreak Management (CCOM) team
- Via DFFH COVID Relief Coordination
- Direct access via the [council website](#)

Publication date: 16 September 2021

For updates or corrections contact rcs@dffh.vic.gov.au