

Legal Aid Queensland

COVIDsafe recommended processes for lawyers and other practitioners in court houses.

The Queensland Government has a Roadmap for COVID-safe Recovery. DJAG has issued COVIDsafe workplace principles. All workers have the right to a healthy and safe working environment. The health and wellbeing of all involved in the justice system and the broader community is a priority. LAQ has engaged with DJAG to consider how lawyers and other practitioners can safely work in the context of Queensland court houses. LAQ will be guided by the following principles in developing necessary safety controls with judicial officers and registry staff.

- Social distancing measures to support a safe workplace for lawyers in all areas of court houses that the public can access. This will include Work, Health and Safety laws, and advice from health authorities such as people should maintain a 1.5 metre distance from all other persons and all public areas make available at least 4 square metres for every person.
 - Areas that lawyers access include security points, waiting areas, interview rooms, safe rooms, cells, court rooms, registry counters and lifts.
- Responsibility of lawyers and other practitioners to control against the transmission of COVID-19 while at work. For example, lawyers with potential symptoms or who have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19 must not attend at court houses and should notify LAQ so that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Confidential and private facilities for lawyers to interview and engage with clients or other parties.
- Availability of anti-bacterial gel and wipes to the public, lawyers and other services attending court houses.
- Thorough daily cleaning of areas of court houses that the public can access.
- Use of remote and electronic means of service delivery where feasible.
- Use of electronic filing, service and provision of material where feasible.
- Clients to be asked screening questions about travel, symptoms and exposure to known cases of COVID-19 prior to the delivery of services.
- Lawyers and clients may choose to utilise personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves whilst in court houses subject to any directions of a presiding judicial officer if a person is giving evidence as a witness.
- Ongoing review with DJAG of arrangements to adapt and promote safe work practices, consistent with Work, Health and Safety laws and advice from health authorities, to ensure court houses and work practices meet social distancing and exemplary hygiene measures.
- Where necessary to achieve a COVIDsafe workplace duty lawyer services may be a mix of both court-based and remote services.
- In the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in a particular geographic area duty lawyer services will revert to remote service delivery.
- Regular users of court houses to be encouraged to download the Australian Government COVID-19 tracing app.