

COVID-19 PROCEDURE

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Operating a voting centre

NTEC staff

This document has been produced in consultation with the NT Department of Health (DOH) and is subject to change.

Purpose

This procedure document has been developed to decrease the risk of the spread of COVID-19 associated with operating early, mobile and election day voting centres.

The procedures will be followed by Northern Territory Electoral Commission (NTEC) staff operating voting centres. The voting centre manager (VCM) will be responsible for ensuring the procedure is followed.

Guiding Principles

These are general principles that apply to all Territorians. The NTEC will use the guiding principles to assist in the delivery of the 2020 Territory Election.

Physical distancing

- A minimum space of 1.5 metres between people who aren't from the same household.
- If there is a requirement to be facing another person less than 1.5 metres away, minimise contact to less than 15 minutes.

Hygiene

- Avoid touching your face and cough or sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before and after any contact with surfaces that are used by more than one person.
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched by more than one person – e.g. phones, door handles, benches, equipment.
- Avoid sharing implements e.g. cups or objects that you touch.

Set-up of a voting centre

- ✓ Place hand sanitiser dispensers on the tables of all voting staff and make available at entry and exit points.
- ✓ Place alcohol wipes where they are easily accessible for use by NTEC staff at any time.
- ✓ Place educational material about containing COVID-19, social distancing and instructing electors to go home if they feel unwell at the entrance and in each voting centre.
- ✓ Place issuing stations for NTEC staff at least 1.5 metres apart (tape measures will be provided).
- ✓ In instances where electors need assistance, have the chairs for the elector and the person assisting side-by-side with a gap.
- ✓ Place voting screens at least 1.5 metres apart.
- ✓ Place distancing guides on the floor 1.5 metres apart at the entrance to the voting centre where electors will queue.
- ✓ Place laminated surfaces over the top of voting screens for easy cleaning.

Daily operation of a voting centre

Hygiene officer and social distancing officer positions have been created to assist in reducing the spread of COVID-19 at voting centres.

In larger voting centres, these will be two separate roles performed by two different people. At smaller voting centres, one person may perform both roles at the same time.

The VCM will rotate voting staff throughout the day to perform these roles. The rotation will ensure one person is not performing the same role all day, each day.

Hygiene actions

- ✓ Hand out a single use pencil at the entrance point.
- ✓ Wipe down laminated surfaces of voting screens after use by each voter.
- ✓ Offer to dispense hand sanitiser to electors at the entrance point to the voting centre.
- ✓ Wipe down regularly touched surfaces including tablet screens, tables and door handles.
- ✓ Re-stock hand sanitiser dispensers and place on the tables of each issuer, and make available at entry and exit points.

Social distancing actions

- ✓ Ensure chairs and voting screens are 1.5 metres apart.
- ✓ Ensure only one voter enters a voting screen at a time.
- ✓ Ensure electors queuing to vote adhere to social distancing and are following the guides on the floor at the front of voting centres where electors queue (members of the same household may queue together).

- ✓ Regulate entry into the voting centre to ensure only one person is allowed into the voting centre at a time and only when an issuing station becomes available.
- ✓ Regulate entry into the voting centre to ensure the maximum capacity is not exceeded. The maximum capacity to adhere to social distancing guidelines for each voting centre is located on the voting centre layout document.

Voting centre manager - only

- ✓ Rotate voting staff throughout the day to take on these roles of hygiene officer and social distancing officer. Each team member should have an equal time performing each role. The VCM may at times assist with these roles, but will primarily need to be available to manage issues which arise and provide voters with assistance when requested.
- ✓ If any staff are unwell, refer to the *Suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19* document, send them home immediately and inform the NTEC staff contact by phone and via the eLAPPS central unit (CU) (refer to next section).
- ✓ Place the *Suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19* document at a location that is easily accessible for use by NTEC staff at any time.
- ✓ Notify the NTEC contact if additional hygiene supplies are required before they run out, including hand sanitiser, cleaning products and paper towels.
- ✓ Inform voting centre staff of the location of bathrooms and/or running water and soap.

Unwell NTEC staff

- A full procedure document titled *Suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19* has been provided to NTEC staff and must be followed in the event that an NTEC official is feeling or becomes unwell.
- NTEC staff will be required to self-monitor for symptoms and if symptoms develop they will not be allowed to attend a voting centre. NTEC staff will be required to contact their manager and the national COVID19 hotline (1800 020 080) or local health authorities and follow their advice.

Training and education

Online training is mandatory for all voting centre staff and face-to-face training will be conducted for senior positions. Information about the following COVID-19 measures will be included in the training packages:

- hygiene and social distancing measures
- cleaning protocols
- a strict direction and protocol for staff who are unwell.

Local assistants employed in remote communities will be briefed face-to-face about how they can assist in the above target areas and how to address COVID-19 related concerns from electors.