

We have free information and advice to help employers understand their rights and responsibilities during the coronavirus outbreak



You can:

- Visit www.coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au
- Call the Coronavirus hotline on **13 13 94**, or
- Submit an enquiry online through **My account**.

Some employers might also be able to access free legal advice through our Workplace Legal Advice Program.

What is the Workplace Legal Advice Program?

The Workplace Legal Advice Program provides eligible employers with free independent legal help to deal with workplace issues arising from the coronavirus outbreak. Advice is available on issues like:

- stand downs from work
- flexible work arrangements
- pay and entitlements
- JobKeeper changes to the Fair Work Act.

Law firms with specialist workplace experience provide the advice. It is free and confidential.

Who can access the Workplace Legal Advice Program?

Employers who contact our Coronavirus hotline or make an online enquiry through My account may be referred to the Workplace Legal Advice Program if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- the employer is an 'eligible employer'
- the employer's enquiry relates to workplace impacts of COVID-19, and
- the employer is willing to participate in the Program.

Simple enquiries that can be resolved by the advisers on our Coronavirus hotline or website are not suitable for referral.

Am I an eligible employer?

To be eligible for the Workplace Legal Advice Program you must meet all of the following criteria:

- not be represented by a lawyer or paid agent
- not be a paid member of a professional employer body or industry association that provides member advice services as part of your membership
- be covered by the Fair Work system
- agree to the Terms and Conditions, available at www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-legal-advice-program.

I've been referred to the Workplace Legal Advice Program, what happens now?

Your enquiry reference will be your reference number.

We will allocate your enquiry to one of our partner law firms and provide them with your contact details. You cannot choose your own law firm for the Workplace Legal Advice Program.

The law firm will contact you within 2 business days. To meet professional legal requirements, the law firm will provide you with a letter outlining how legal services work and information on how they can help you.

If you do not hear from the law firm please contact us through My account.

We ask that you respond to the law firm within 3 business days to tell the law firm if you agree to go ahead. If you do not respond to the law firm in that time, your appointment may be allocated to another employer.

The law firm will arrange a meeting with you by phone or video conferencing technology to discuss your enquiry. Meetings will not be held in person during coronavirus restrictions.



Is there a limit on the advice I can get?

Yes. We will pay for a fixed amount of advice. In most cases, this will be 4 hours of free advice to help you deal with the immediate needs of your business. The law firm will let you know what your free service limit is when they contact you. This time can be used flexibly, for instance over multiple appointments.

The Workplace Legal Advice Program provides advice related to Commonwealth workplace laws only, to address workplace issues arising from the coronavirus outbreak. Advice on other topics (like tax or insolvency) are not covered.

The Workplace Legal Advice Program does not provide ongoing legal assistance. You are not obliged to use the law firm's services once you reach your free service limit. If you choose to access further or additional services from the firm, you will be responsible for the costs and the law firm will provide you with new information about any further work and costs.

What do I need to prepare for my appointment?

It is important to prepare for your appointment so that you can get the most out of your free advice. Before your meeting with a lawyer, you should:

- read the letter you receive from the law firm so you understand how they will help you
- answer the pre-appointment questionnaire and return it to the law firm before the appointment
- think about and briefly write down the questions you want answered
- consider solutions that may support your business and employees now and after the coronavirus outbreak
- gather any relevant paperwork or information so you have it handy
- tell us if you need an interpreter for your appointment.

Is the advice I get confidential?

Yes. Any legal advice you receive from a lawyer is confidential and covered by legal professional privilege. We will not get a copy, or summary, of the advice provided to you. Sharing the advice may waive your legal professional privilege and the confidentiality of the legal advice.

We will collect information from participating law firms to:

- confirm that services were provided for the purpose of payment
- improve the referral process and service offering
- identify common themes and frequently asked questions – this de-identified data will be used to understand and address gaps in our information and resources.

Can I access the Workplace Legal Advice Program more than once?

Employers can usually only access the Workplace Legal Advice Program once. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible for an employer to access the Program a second time. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as whether there is a new issue that the business was not known at the initial appointment.

I need more help, what do I do?

Visit www.business.gov.au/coronavirus to find free information about financial assistance and other government support for Australian businesses. For further assistance, you may wish to separately engage a law firm or business advisor of your choice, or join an employer organisation.

How will the FWO handle my information?

The FWO is committed to protecting your privacy, and will handle your information as set out in the 'Terms and Conditions of Workplace Legal Advice Program referral' and 'Privacy Statement - Referral to external law firm'. These documents are available at www.fairwork.gov.au/workplace-legal-advice-program.

For more information on how the FWO protects your privacy, please visit www.fairwork.gov.au/privacy.

How do I provide feedback on the Workplace Legal Advice Program?

We will routinely survey users of the Workplace Legal Advice Program to seek feedback on their experience. If you wish to provide additional feedback, please visit www.fairwork.gov.au/feedback.

