

COVID response leave (Two additional days leave)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What is COVID response leave?

To acknowledge the efforts of health workers, and those supporting health workers, in response to COVID-19, the Queensland Government announced an additional two (2) days of leave, which is known as *COVID response leave*.

This leave is separate to an employee's existing leave entitlements and will need to be applied for separately to any other leave. A new leave balance will appear on an eligible employee's pay advice as 'COVID response leave'.

What does this mean for me?

To be eligible for COVID response leave, employees must:

- be a permanent (full-time or part-time) or temporary (full-time or part-time)
- if a temporary employee, must have at least three months continuous service at 10 September 2020 (this can be made up of any permanent or temporary service for the three months up to 10 September 2020)
- still be employed in an eligible role with Queensland Health at 1 November 2020.

Temporary employee example:

An employee is in a temporary position based in Brisbane as at 10 September 2020; however, they previously held a permanent position based in Cairns before resigning to take on the Brisbane role. Their service in Cairns would count towards the 'three months continuous service' requirement as long as there has been no break in their service between finishing the Cairns role and starting in the Brisbane role.

Am I eligible for COVID response leave and how much leave will I receive?

COVID response leave is determined based on your classifications and what is considered a 'standard day' under your award.

Full-time employees



Two standard days of leave, in hours, will be added to your new COVID response leave balance, which will appear on your pay advice.

Refer to your classification below for the number of leave hours you are entitled to:

- Queensland Public Service Officer employees – Administrative, Operational, Technical and Professional = 14.5 hours
- Hospital and Health Service employees – Administrative, Operational, Technical and Professional = 15.2 hours
- Building and Engineering employees = 15.2 hours
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers = 15.2 hours
- Nurses and Midwives = 15.2 hours
- Health Practitioners and Dental Officers = 15.2 hours
- Resident Medical Officers = 15.2 hours
- Senior Medical Officers = 16 hours
- Senior Officers = 14.5 hours
- District Senior Officers = 15.2 hours

Part-time employees

A pro rata of two standard days leave based on your standard fortnightly contracted hours will be added to your new COVID response leave balance, which will appear on your pay advice.

For example, a part-time Health Practitioner works four hours per day, every Monday and Tuesday (0.21 FTE). The employee will receive pro rata COVID response leave of 3.2 hours.

Casual employees

Casual employees are not eligible for COVID response leave. Casual employees are entitled to a higher rate of pay (23 per cent casual loading) which includes compensation for not receiving paid leave.

Senior and health service executives

Senior Executives and Health Service Executives who are not included in the classifications above (e.g. Health Service Chief Executives (S24/S70 contracts), Health Executive Service officers (HES) and Senior Executive Service officers (SES)), are not entitled to COVID response leave.

What is a pro rata leave balance?

A pro rata leave balance is a proportion of the two full days COVID response leave. Employees who are contracted less than full-time hours will receive a pro rata leave balance.

For example, a part-time registered nurse who is contracted for 38 hours a fortnight (0.5FTE) is entitled to 7.6 hours COVID response leave, which is half of the maximum 15.2 hours available.

When can I take the COVID response leave?

Eligible employees can access their COVID response leave balance, and be able to take the leave, from **1 November 2020**.

The leave can be taken on its own or in conjunction with other periods of paid leave (e.g. annual leave or long service leave).

The COVID response Leave balance will appear in *myHR* from 26 October 2020 and on your pay advice from Monday 9 November 2020. You cannot submit an application for COVID response leave prior to 26 October 2020.

How do I apply for COVID response leave?

Submit a leave application via *myHR*. When entering the leave details:

- choose the '**Other Leave**' option
- type '**COVID response leave**' in the 'Please Specify' text box.

There is no special delegation required to approve the leave application, it will go to your line manager or delegate for approval, in the same way an annual leave or sick leave application is processed.

What if I don't want to take the COVID response leave?

Employees are not obligated to take the COVID response leave. Any unused balance on 9 September 2022 will be reduced to zero.

Am I still entitled to the leave if I am already on another type of leave?

Employees are still eligible for the COVID response leave if they are on paid or unpaid leave on 10 September 2020, if they meet the employment eligibility criteria explained above.

What if I finish my employment with Queensland Health prior to 1 November 2020?

If you are employed on 10 September 2020 but finish your employment prior to 1 November 2020, you are not entitled to the COVID response leave, or any portion of it.

How long do I have to take/use the COVID response leave?

Eligible employees will have access to their COVID response leave balance from 1 November 2020 up until 9 September 2022. Any unused balance on this date will be reduced to zero.

Can the COVID response leave be cashed out?

No, the COVID response leave balance cannot be cashed out if it is not taken before 9 September 2022. When an employee resigns from Queensland Health or moves into a casual position there is no cash out of the leave.

I am a casual employee, am I entitled COVID response leave?

Casual (short or long-term) employees are not eligible for the COVID response leave.

I was eligible on 10 September 2020, but I have since changed to casual employment. Am I still eligible for the leave?

If you are a casual employee on 1 November 2020, you are no longer eligible for the COVID response leave.

What if I take COVID response leave on a shift that is longer than a standard day?

COVID response leave will be paid for the hours based on the rostered shift being applied for. As employees will be provided with a balance of hours, you can use this for any shift length. It can also be taken for part of a shift.

For example:

An employee (a nurse) is rostered for an eight-hour shift from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. They use COVID response leave for the whole shift, which debits eight hours leave from their balance of 15.2 hours. Their remaining leave balance is 7.2 hours. The employee wishes to take leave for a second eight-hour shift. They can use their remaining COVID response leave and cover their remaining time with another leave type (e.g. annual leave or TOIL).

Can I take COVID response leave for part of my shift?

Employees can apply for COVID response leave for part of a shift. A leave application is to be submitted via myHR with the number of hours of COVID response leave taken. The start and finish times of the leave is to be recorded in the comments section of the leave

application and the 'part day leave' box must be ticked. The hours taken will be deducted from your COVID response leave balance.

For example:

An employee may wish to finish one hour early for their 7:00 to 15:30 shift on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. A leave application is required for each day. The 'part day leave' box must be ticked and the start and finish times of the leave (14:30 to 15:30) is to be recorded in the comments box on the leave application.

What if I don't have enough COVID response leave hours to take a full shift?

If the employee does not have enough COVID response leave hours to take the full shift, another leave type (e.g. annual or long service leave) will need to be applied for if you intend to take leave for the full shift.

What rate will I be paid when I take COVID response leave?

The classification level base rate you are being paid when you take the leave is the rate the leave will be paid on. If you are on higher duties in an eligible classification, the leave will be paid at the higher duties base rate.

Examples:

- You are an Operational Officer Level 3 (OO3) and are on higher duties as a Level 4 (OO4) when you take the leave. You will be paid the OO4 rate of pay.
- You are an eligible employee who then temporarily undertakes a role as a Senior Executive or Health Service Executive. During this relieving period, you should not be accessing COVID response leave; however, you can access this leave when you return to your substantive position provided it is prior to the expiration date of 9 September 2022.

Will I be paid for my shift penalties when I take COVID response leave?

Projected shift penalties and shift allowances are not paid when COVID response leave is taken.

If I am a concurrent employee, am I entitled to the COVID response leave for all my positions?

Concurrent employees employed on 10 September 2020 will be entitled to COVID response leave on a pro rata basis for all eligible assignments. The leave balance across eligible

assignments will be capped at the maximum of two days and proportioned across eligible assignments.

For example, an employee has one 0.6 FTE (22.8hrs/week) part-time role as an enrolled nurse, and a second 0.4 FTE (15.2hrs/week) part-time role as an administration officer with a Hospital and Health Service. The employee meets the employment criteria to be eligible for COVID response leave in both roles. The employee will receive 9.12 hours COVID response leave against their nursing role and 6.08 hours against their administration role.

If I am a concurrent employee, can I take all my COVID response leave on one of my positions?

Concurrent employees can choose to transfer their COVID response leave hours to another eligible assignment. The leave will be paid at the rate associated to the assignment where the leave is taken.

If I am a concurrent employee, what happens to my COVID response leave when I finish a position on one of my assignments?

Any remaining COVID response leave on an assignment that is finishing or moving to casual can be transferred to another eligible assignment.

Are employees who are seconded from other Queensland Government agencies into Queensland Health eligible for the COVID response leave?

If an employee from another government agency is seconded into Queensland Health as at 10 September 2020 and being paid via the Queensland Health payroll, the employee is entitled to COVID response leave. The leave needs to be taken after 1 November 2020 and prior to finishing their secondment, where possible.

Any remaining leave hours at the completion of the secondment period are not to be paid out. Where the employee's secondment ceases before 1 November 2020, there is no entitlement to the leave.

Are employees who are seconded from Queensland Health into another Queensland Government agency eligible for the COVID response leave?

If an employee is seconded into another government agency from Queensland Health as at 10 September 2020, the employee is not entitled to the COVID response leave from Queensland Health. However, the employee may be entitled to additional leave depending on the seconding agency's entitlements (e.g. Education Queensland pandemic leave). Such

leave would need to be accessed prior to the end of the employee's secondment with the other agency.

Will the COVID response leave be taxed and included in my superannuation contribution?

Yes, this leave is subject to the same taxation and superannuation rules as other standard leave types (e.g. annual, sick and long service leave).

Where can I go for more information on the COVID response leave?

Employees can contact their [local Human Resources team](#) for further assistance.

Who do I contact if I have an enquiry regarding my COVID response leave balance?

Employees can contact their local payroll service centre (1800 239 074, 8am–5pm Monday–Friday) to obtain details on their eligibility for the COVID response leave and how the balance was calculated (for part-time employees).