

## Work from home protocols

Queensland Law Society is committed to ensuring the safety of our members, colleagues and the community, and the information below is intended to assist you in achieving that goal during the COVID-19 outbreak.

### What measures should law firms take?

The primary strategy adopted by the Federal and State Governments is one of [good hygiene](#), [self-isolation](#), and [social distancing](#). QLS members and their places of work should endeavour to follow this advice to ensure that we play our part in the efforts to combat the current pandemic.

### Should I have a warning on my correspondence?

Yes. The current strategy involves limiting the opportunity for virus transmission, which means clients must be notified of the measures you are undertaking in light of the COVID-19 risks. Of necessity these notifications will need to be sufficiently plain to avoid miscommunication, and to effectively protect staff. QLS suggests wording along the following lines:

*[Firm name] is firmly committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its clients and staff. For that reason we have adopted measures developed by Queensland Law Society based on advice from the Federal and State Governments. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are experiencing [symptoms associated with the virus](#) or are otherwise feeling unwell, please DO NOT COME TO OUR OFFICE. In such circumstances you should follow [the advice of the Australian Government Department of Health](#).*

*We have the capacity to consult with you and provide advice via [insert communication options]. Unless specifically instructed by us to do otherwise, please telephone us on [contact details] to arrange the best way for us to continue to assist you with your legal service needs.*

### Should I have a warning at office entrances?

Yes. If you are maintaining a staff presence at your office during the course of the COVID-19 outbreak, you will need to take further steps to ensure the health and safety of staff and clients. QLS suggests a notice at the entrance to your office or offices along the following lines:

*[Firm name] is firmly committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its clients and staff. For that reason we have adopted measures developed by Queensland Law Society based on advice from the Federal and State Governments. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are experiencing symptoms associated with the virus or are otherwise feeling unwell, please DO NOT ENTER THESE PREMISES. Please contact us on [contact details] to arrange the best way for us to assist you with your legal service needs.*

## Should I transition to a work-from-home format?

If you are capable of transitioning to a work-from-format, QLS recommends that you do so. Maintaining strict social distancing is key in fighting this outbreak and you, your staff and your clients will be safer if contact is limited to digital methods.

QLS recommends the implementation of the following work-from-home protocols:

- Home work environment – firms should ensure that staff's home offices have an adjustable chair, adjustable computer screens, ergonomically safe set-up, and functional safety switches and smoke detectors; a basic first aid kit should also be on the premises.
- Firms should also ensure that safe, secure file storage options exist (if physical files are to be taken home) and that all staff working from home have complete contact lists.
- If staff are working on-line and from electronic files, cyber-security will be a priority. The widespread move to work from home, and the general disruption caused by COVID-19 will be seen as an opportunity by cyber-criminals; COVID-19 scams have already been circulated, and residential cyber-security is rarely as robust as that in the workplace. The following measures should be adopted in light of this:
  - Private devices and networks should be avoided (if possible) when accessing work data, and if home Wi-Fi networks are being utilised, steps should be taken to ensure robust password protection and other security.
  - Free networks, such as those in cafes and other public places, should be avoided; even those with passwords carry great risk, as any customer will be provided with the password.
  - Further information can be found on the [QLS Website](#).
- Staff should have a complete list of contact numbers for the firm, and a communication schedule should also be put in place to ensure staff remain supervised and are not isolated.
- Staff should complete and sign the checklist below to ensure that they are aware of these issues and have taken steps to address them.
- For more information on workstation ergonomics, see Office of Industrial Relations, *Ergonomic guide to computer based workstations* (2012).

**Name:**

**Position:**

**Is office equipment being relocated to home office? (If yes attach list of equipment)**

**Are physical files being taken home? (If yes attach file list)**

Item	Status/action required
Adjustable chair	
Smoke alarm	
Safety switch	
First aid kit	
Adjustable computer screen	
Screen height – top of screen set at or below eye level	
Screen one arm's length away	
Sufficient desktop space for keyboard	

Mouse same level as keyboard	
Workstation lighting – adequate for task	
Workstation lighting – adjustable	
Workstation temperature – controllable	
Workstation floor – free of tripping hazards	
File storage – secure	
File storage – not in shared area of house	
Staff communication – list of contacts	
Staff communication – schedule	

I understand safe manual handling practices and that I am responsible for ensuring a safe work place at my home or remote work space.

Name:

Signature:

Date: