

Interim guidelines for healthcare workers deployed to Ebola virus disease affected countries

Aim

The aim of these guidelines is to ensure that any healthcare workers who become infected with Ebola virus disease (EVD) are quickly identified and treated and that there is limited opportunity for further transmission to any other person.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all returning healthcare workers who have worked in healthcare or community settings caring for patients with EVD in an area with intense and widespread transmission of EVD.

They do not refer to healthcare workers who manage an EVD case in a Queensland hospital. For these cases, healthcare workers should refer to the [Interim guidelines for healthcare workers caring for Ebola virus disease patients in Queensland](#) (available for Queensland Health staff via QHEPS).

These guidelines apply to all Queensland Health services providing services for returning healthcare workers who have been caring for patients with EVD.

In Queensland, all healthcare workers who return to Queensland after providing health care to a person with EVD are classified as having a low-risk exposure to EVD unless they have had an identified breach of their personal protective equipment or other identified exposure, in which case they will be classified as a high-risk exposure contact.

For the purpose of this guideline the term *healthcare worker* includes a community aid worker.

Voluntary home restriction requirements

All returning healthcare workers will be requested to go into supported and monitored voluntary home restriction in accommodation within a 2-hour drive of Brisbane to be close to the designated EVD treatment hospitals (Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital or the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital) for 21 days from their last potential exposure to the virus. Home restriction means that the healthcare worker will be asked to stay within the bounds of the property for 21 days from their last potential exposure to EVD.

Asymptomatic healthcare workers can be in voluntary home restriction in their own homes with usual household members. They are to be requested to maintain a distance of more than one metre from other household members and refrain from intimate contact such as hugging and kissing.

If alternative accommodation is required for the healthcare worker to be within a 2-hour drive from Brisbane, or the healthcare worker is concerned about being in voluntary home restriction with usual household members, alternative accommodation will be coordinated by the Department of Health's State Health Emergency Coordination Centre—Ebola Virus Disease Incident Management Team (SHECC EVD IMT).

Management of people in voluntary home restriction is to be in accordance with the [Interim guidelines for Ebola virus disease voluntary home restriction](#).

Identification of returning healthcare workers

Wherever possible, arrangements for voluntary home restriction should be in place prior to the healthcare worker's deployment.

Healthcare workers volunteering to support the EVD response overseas are requested to advise the Hospital and Health Service (HHS) via the local public health unit as soon as their deployment is approved. In addition, HHSs are requested to advise the SHECC EVD IMT of any healthcare workers that they have approved for deployment to support the EVD response.

The Australian Government Department of Health (DoH) has arrangements in place with aid organisations for them to advise the department of Australian healthcare workers being deployed to and returning from EVD affected areas.

The Australian Government DoH provides weekly advice to the SHECC EVD IMT on healthcare workers being deployed to and returning from EVD affected areas.

The SHECC EVD IMT will then advise the HHS of any healthcare workers being deployed to and returning from EVD affected area, so contact with the workers can be made as soon as possible.

HHSs are to advise the SHECC EVD IMT of arrangements made in advance for the return of deployed healthcare workers.

Monitoring returned workers

Healthcare workers going into voluntary home restriction will be provided with a thermometer and requested to take and record their temperature twice a day throughout the restriction period and to contact the HHS immediately through prearranged mechanisms if they become unwell or febrile.

Healthcare workers are to be contacted on a daily basis by the HHS or other agreed mechanism to monitor their health and wellbeing. 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) can assist with daily phone calls to healthcare workers on request by the HHS.

The HHSs are to provide a daily status report on the health and welfare of the healthcare workers in home restriction to the SHECC EVD IMT or (if stood down) the Communicable Diseases Unit, Chief Health Officer Branch.

Legislative or other authority

Healthcare workers will be requested to voluntarily go into home restriction.

There are provisions under the *Public Health Act 2005* to enforce home restriction under a magistrate's order, if warranted.

Supporting documents

These guidelines support the strategies for preventing local transmission of EVD as documented in the [Queensland Ebola virus disease management plan](#) and the [Interim guidelines for Ebola virus disease voluntary home restriction](#).

Review

These guidelines will be reviewed as new information and evidence relevant to the guideline emerges.

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Supersedes: N/A

Business area contact

Communicable Diseases Unit, Chief Health Officer Branch

Approval and implementation

Authorised custodian:

Communicable Diseases Unit, Chief Health Officer Branch

Responsible executive team member:

Dr Jeannette Young

Chief Health Officer

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Version control

Version	Date	Prepared by	Comments
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