

# COVID-19 and the legal consequences of failing to self-quarantine

## WHAT IS SELF-QUARANTINE?

You may have recently received a notice from a government health department to self-quarantine. Self-quarantine is for people who are well but at risk of having the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Self-quarantine means staying in your home, hotel room or provided accommodation, and not leaving for the period you are required to quarantine. Only people who usually live in the household should be in the home. Do not allow visitors into the home.

Other members of the household are not required to self-quarantine unless they meet one of the criteria for self-quarantine (see below). If you develop symptoms and are suspected to have the virus, members of the household will be classified as close contacts and will then need to be in self-quarantine.

If you have been overseas you need to self-quarantine for 14 days from the date you arrived in Australia. You can come out of self-quarantine after 14 days if you are feeling well. This reduces the chances of the infection spreading.

You must also self-quarantine if you have been in close contact with someone who already has the coronavirus.

While you are self-quarantining, if you start to feel unwell and develop any symptoms at all, but especially a fever or shortness of breath, a cough or a respiratory illness, you should seek immediate medical attention. Call ahead to your GP and tell them your travel history so they can prepare for your visit.

## WHAT IS CLOSE CONTACT?

Close contacts are those who have had face-to-face contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 for a period more than 15 minutes, or those who have

shared an enclosed space with a confirmed case of the virus for more than two hours.

If you have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus, you need to self-quarantine for 14 days from your last contact with them. If you become unwell during that period, see a doctor immediately.

## IS ISOLATION DIFFERENT FROM SELF-QUARANTINE?

A diagnosis of COVID-19 triggers isolation. Isolation is used to separate you when you are ill from healthy persons. You may be in isolation at a hospital or at home. The term 'self-isolation' has been used interchangeably at times with 'self-quarantine'. Social distancing means minimising social contact and may include self-quarantine measures.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT COMPLY WITH A SELF-QUARANTINE NOTICE?

If a person is suspected to have breached the notice they had voluntarily agreed to, [Queensland Health](#) will initially work closely with the person to ensure they not only understand their obligations, but also the importance and seriousness of self-quarantine under the current global circumstances.

There are additional compliance measures available to Queensland Health under the [Public Health Act 2005 \(Qld\)](#), and any further failure to comply may be subject to enforced quarantine and receiving fines of up to \$13 345 and other penalties.

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