

COVIDSAFE Op Shop Operating Guidelines



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia
Work Health and Safety

Introduction

We understand the importance that our Op Shops bring to both the community and to those congregations who operate them. If you are currently planning to re-open your Op Shop at this time, the following guidelines are provided to assist church councils with planning and approving the current measures required to ensure the health and safety of your staff and volunteers and the community you serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A **UCA SA COVIDSAFE Op Shop Checklist** has also been provided as well as direct access to the most relevant **information and resources available to the general retail industry** from the [Safe Work Australia](#) website. We operate a significant number of very varied Op Shops across the Uniting Church in SA and therefore it is difficult to provide a single set of guidance appropriate to everyone. We encourage church councils to consider and assess your individual circumstances when developing your own COVIDSAFE plan.

Vulnerable Persons

The Synod Crisis Management Team has discussed and made recommendations to congregations regarding vulnerable persons at this time. The Uniting Church across the state is significantly over-represented in these vulnerable categories, particularly in the support and operation of our Op Shops. This represents a significantly greater customer facing risk to vulnerable persons than would be found in the majority of other retailers, therefore it is appropriate to consider the safety of our vulnerable members, staff and volunteers accordingly.

For this reason we are requesting that persons over the age of 80 (regardless of health) not be directly involved in Op Shop activities at this time. We understand this may cause some frustration and difficulties, however encourage you to support the wider church in this approach at this time.

We encourage church councils to carefully consider the use of all vulnerable persons in customer facing roles such as Op Shops during these early steps, particularly in terms of their legal duty of care under the WHS Act.

Who is a vulnerable person? The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) considers that, based on the limited current evidence, the following vulnerable people are at higher risk of serious illness if they are infected with the virus:

- People aged 70 years and over; and,
- People aged 65 years and over with chronic medical conditions; and,
- People with compromised immune systems; and,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 50.

In accordance with the recent Government of South Australia roadmap, we strongly encourage all vulnerable persons seeking to be involved in Op Shop activities, to talk to their doctor about what is appropriate for them. Church councils who approve the use of any vulnerable person must ensure an appropriate risk assessment is undertaken and apply effective controls to remove or reduce their potential exposure to COVID-19. This would include limiting customer facing activities.

COVIDSAFE Plan

If you are seeking to re-open your Op Shop at this time, we encourage you to develop a clear COVIDSAFE Plan specific to your own circumstances. This will help you comply with the legal WHS requirements to ensure the health and safety of staff, volunteers and customers, by either eliminating the risk of exposure to COVID-19, or if this is not possible, to minimise this risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

Your COVIDSAFE Plan should include, but is not limited to, the following control measures:

- Promoting and exercising a high standard of personal hygiene; and,
- Keeping surfaces and areas clean and effectively sanitised; and,

- Excluding ill workers, those with potential exposure to COVID-19 or other infectious disease; and critically,
- Ensuring maximum occupancy and safe social distancing requirements.

The following information is provided to assist you in the development of your COVIDSAFE Plan.

1. Maximum Number of Persons and Social Distancing

Op shops that operate at church sites, such as in halls and sheds, are currently required to limit the total number of persons on the site. This is currently set at a maximum of 10, however the directive provided by the SA Government potentially allows for those required to run an activity not to be counted in this number.

This number however is the maximum across the whole site (not per activity) so you will need to consider this when prioritising activities at the church.

Op shops that operate away from church sites (usually at specific retail premises), are not limited to the total maximum numbers, however:

All Op Shops must comply with the 1 person per 4 square metre density directive.

This is calculated by:

- length of room in metres x width of room in metres = area of room in square metres; and then
- dividing the area of the room by 4.

For example, a room that is 50 square metres in size, would only allow for a maximum density of 12 people at any given time (rounded down from 12.5), to allow each person to have 4 square metres of space.

To help you achieve 4 square metres of space per person (and maximum 10 person on church site restriction), limit the number of workers and customers in the shop, by implementing appropriate and safe measures to ensure these are not exceeded.

Consider: Making adjustments to the layout of the Op Shop and your workflows to enable staff, volunteers and customers to keep at least 1.5 metres apart, including:

- Calculating and displaying maximum numbers as indicated above.
- Spreading out or removing some shelving/racking, to increase distancing capability.
- Allocating staff specifically to customer counting and occupancy/distancing control.
- Floor and/or wall markings and posters/signage to confirm 1.5m distancing requirements, particularly where customers queue internally such as at point of sale.
- Providing limited customer queuing outside the shop (if required) with floor markings to identify 1.5 metres distance - Churches should consider this carefully as church grounds are included in the maximum occupancy restrictions.
- Physical pedestrian controls such as belt type barriers, safety cones, bunting or tables.

It's not always easy to maintain social distancing and therefore we recommend that clear acrylic sneeze guard type screen(s) be installed (where appropriate) at point of sale, as an additional physical safeguard.

Whilst the use of PPE such as facemasks is not a general requirement, we encourage you to have a small supply available for emergency use and any occasions where this would be an appropriate control measure.

2. General Hygiene, Cleaning and Infection Control

Particular care should be taken with general hygiene, cleaning and infection control matters. This will likely increase the workload and associated hazardous substance risks and therefore you should consider these carefully. Further resources are available via Safework Australia and SA Health websites for this and we have download the most appropriate documents for ease of access. Please refer to these for specific instruction.

Minimal precautions should include:

- Frequent hand washing with good facilities (water, quality soap and disposable paper towels/hand dryers), is considered best practice and you should ensure clear instruction and reminder posters are placed accordingly. In addition and particularly where this is not possible,
- Hand sanitisers (minimum 70% alcohol content) are provided for staff, volunteers and customers in readily accessible places such as on entry/exit and near points of sale. Clear instruction and reminder posters should also be placed accordingly.
- Undertaking regular and appropriate cleaning and disinfection activities (see government guidance), particularly in higher risk areas and on commonly touched surfaces. Given the impracticalities of thoroughly cleaning changing room areas after each use, we strongly recommend these are closed.
- All donations should either be effectively sanitised (washing or cleaning) or remain quarantined (untouched) for a minimum period of 72 hours prior to sale. Consider additional restrictions on donated goods where necessary to keep this manageable. Gloves (preferred) and/or strict hand hygiene practices must be followed when receiving and handling all donations.
- We encourage the use of non-cash payments wherever possible, and ensuring clear procedures for safely handling and counting of cash. This may include the use of PPE such as gloves, reminders to not touch the face and cleaning/sanitising hands before and after.
- Maintain good respiratory (cough/sneeze) etiquette, i.e. cover the mouth/nose with a disposable tissue or the elbow and do not cough onto people, objects or into the open air. Hand wash or sanitise afterwards.
- Do not touch, kiss or hug others.
- Staff and volunteers who are showing any symptoms of COVID-19, influenza or other communicable illness, even mildly at this time, must not be allowed to work.

3. Important Additional Matters

We understand that there is a significant amount of confusing and often conflicting, government directives information, advice and guidance currently available as well as constant media coverage surrounding COVID-19 issues. The Synod Crisis Management Team is working hard to ensure we navigate this appropriately and can continue to encourage and advise Presbyteries and Congregations appropriately.

The following information is also provided to assist with the re-opening of your Op Shop:

Government Authority Notification

In the event that anyone connected to the Op Shop is diagnosed with COVID-19 and was likely present at the shop whilst infectious, this must be notified to SA Health if this has not already occurred. You must follow all government authority directions, including closing the shop, assisting with contact tracing and testing, quarantining and deep cleaning requirements as instructed. Please also notify the Synod as soon as possible.

It is also possible that where the COVID-19 can be reliably attributed to have been contracted during the course of work, under specific criteria, this also becomes notifiable to SafeWork SA. Please contact SafeWork SA directly or the WHS Coordinator at the Synod for further information should this occur.

Cafés & Food/Beverages

There are also current directions and restrictions on the provision of food and beverages at this time. Many of our Op Shops also run alongside or contain café type provisions, however no indoor sit down food and beverage services can currently be provided. Take away options may be considered.

Insurance

Whilst the Uniting Church has Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance policies that cover volunteers, the assumed level of protection they provide is often misunderstood and they do not provide for all eventualities. Our Volunteer Personal Accident cover is very limited by law, and there is no cover under this policy for illness, diseases and viruses such as COVID-19. We have factored this in to our decision making at this time and it is important that all volunteers are also made aware of this.