

**Guidelines for NSW Fisheries Officers - COVID-19**  
**Original Release Date 20/03/2020 – Revised 16/07/2020.**

- Fisheries Officers should use this document as a guide. It is not definitive as to the measures that an officer can take to minimise the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19.
- For the latest information of COVID-19 restrictions and related information, officers should refer to NSW Health website - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx>
- Fisheries Officers are advised to keep up to date with the latest outbreaks and clusters, with a view to amending duties where required.
- Fisheries Officers should continue to undertake duties in a modified manner and be guided by the below instructions while carrying out those duties to minimise their exposure and potential spread of COVID-19.
- Fisheries Officers should use their discretion and judgement with their duties when it comes to operating safely and employ safe working practices to protect themselves from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as well as minimising any potential spread of the virus.
- Fisheries Officers should consider not to undertake a duty if they believe it is unsafe, providing it is reasonable and justified. An example could be a fishing location with a high number of fishers where adequate social distancing would be difficult to achieve.
- At this point in time there are no duties that a Fisheries Officer undertakes that are considered unsafe when it comes to COVID-19 providing they follow the necessary government advices and guiding documents such as these work instructions and Fisheries Officer Duties COVID19 Risk Assessment. However, certain situations may present themselves, where based on the officer's discretion and judgement, they would choose not to undertake that duty in that specific situation.
- Fisheries Officers should ensure they carry appropriate supplies of PPE for their rostered duties, including soap and water / hand sanitiser and face masks in all vehicles and vessels.
- Other 'like' agencies across Australia, and documents produced by the Department as well as NSW and Australian Departments of Health, have been consulted when creating this document to adopt current best-practice methods around COVID-19.
- All WHS incidents should be reported immediately to your supervisor and via the Department's [online CAMS Incident Form](#) within 24 hours.
- Stay at home if you are sick or leave work immediately if you begin to feel unwell and notify your supervisor immediately.
- If you are immune compromised, speak with your supervisor to arrange suitable risk minimisation strategies.
- Fisheries Officers are urged to download the COVIDSafe App onto their departmental phones.
- Fisheries Officers should raise any concerns relating to COVID-19 they have with their supervisor.

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Vessel Based Inspection	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid direct physical contact with fishers</li> <li>● Minimise direct contact with personal property of fishers</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● When in an enclosed area such as wheelhouse or fish hold, ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate clearly with the fisher during the initial contact on how the inspection will be undertaken</li> <li>● Apply PPE before inspection where practical</li> <li>● Ask fishers to hold up cards for inspection</li> <li>● Verbally ask for persons details and verify bonafides via the Government Licencing Service App/Officer Mobile App</li> <li>● Ask fishers to open and present fish/gear for inspection</li> <li>● If there is a need to board a boat and depending on the size of the vessel, communicate with the fisher/s and ask them to move to a location on the boat to allow social distancing, where safe to do so</li> <li>● Where boarding is not safe and the vessel is connected with an offence and a more thorough inspection is required, exercise the power under s.248 and direct the master of the vessel to take the boat to a certain place (in order to facilitate a safer inspection). Where an offence is not established this can always</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct a risk assessment generally and specifically in relation to COVID-19 for each inspection</li> <li>● Assess whether the boarding of a vessel is necessary and appropriate depending on how safely officers can conduct the inspection</li> <li>● Treat every inspection on a case by case basis, using a common-sense approach</li> <li>● Consider environmental conditions e.g. wind direction and your proximity to stakeholders.</li> <li>● Inform the skipper and crew that you will be exercising social distancing for your and their safety</li> <li>● Wherever possible, do not conduct ROIs in the wheelhouse or any other enclosed area of a vessel</li> <li>● Apply discretion in relation to whether they conduct the inspection vs the levels of risk</li> <li>● Note condition of person being inspected</li> <li>● If deemed necessary and lawful, record the person's details, to allow any follow up if required</li> </ul>

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		<p>be requested</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Where practical, wash hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any inspection as required</li><li>● Clean and sanitise all operational equipment after use</li><li>● Dispose of PPE appropriately</li></ul>	
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Land Based Inspections	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid direct physical contact with fishers</li> <li>● Minimise direct contact with personal property of fishers</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate clearly with the fisher during the initial contact on how the inspection will be undertaken</li> <li>● Apply PPE before inspection where practical</li> <li>● Direct fishers to a different location that is close by to allow social distancing if their current location doesn't facilitate this</li> <li>● Ask fisher/s to hold up cards and inspect from a distance</li> <li>● Verbally ask for persons details and verify bonafides via the Government Licencing Service App/Officer Mobile App</li> <li>● Ask fishers to move away from gear/fish before inspection if required</li> <li>● Where practical, wash hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any inspection as required</li> <li>● Clean and sanitise any operational equipment after use</li> <li>● Dispose of PPE appropriately</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct a risk assessment generally and specifically in relation to COVID-19 for each inspection</li> <li>● Assess whether the boarding of a vessel is necessary and appropriate depending on how safely officers can conduct the inspection</li> <li>● Treat every inspection on a case by case basis, using a common-sense approach</li> <li>● Consider environmental conditions e.g. wind direction and your proximity to stakeholders.</li> <li>● Inform the fisher that you will be exercising social distancing for your and their safety</li> <li>● Apply discretion in relation to whether an inspection is conducted vs the levels of risk</li> <li>● Note condition of person being inspected</li> <li>● If deemed necessary and lawful, record the person's details, to allow any follow up if required</li> </ul>

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PHP (shop) Inspections and Regional Fisherman Co- Op Inspections	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid direct physical contact with fishers</li> <li>● Minimise direct contact with personal property of fishers</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● Ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate with employees during the initial contact on how the inspection will be undertaken</li> <li>● Apply PPE before inspection</li> <li>● Where practical, wash hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any inspection as required</li> <li>● Clean and sanitise any operational equipment after use</li> <li>● Dispose of PPE appropriately</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct a risk assessment generally and specifically in relation to COVID-19 for each inspection</li> <li>● Assess whether the inspection of a PHP premise is necessary and appropriate depending on how safely officers can conduct the inspection</li> <li>● Inform the manager/employees that you will be exercising social distancing for your and their safety</li> <li>● Treat every inspection on a case by case basis using a risk-based, common sense approach</li> <li>● Apply discretion in relation to whether an inspection is conducted vs the levels of risk</li> <li>● Note condition of manager and employees</li> <li>● If deemed necessary and lawful, record employee's details, to allow any follow up if required</li> </ul>

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Sydney Fish Market Inspections	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid direct physical contact with fishers</li> <li>● Minimise direct contact with personal property of fishers</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● Ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apply PPE before inspection</li> <li>● Where practical, wash hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any inspection as required</li> <li>● Clean and sanitise any operational equipment after use</li> <li>● Dispose of PPE appropriately</li> <li>● Adhere to Sydney Fish Market Protocols</li> <li>● Maximum of three staff per inspection</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fisheries Officers intending on conducting a Sydney Fish Market Inspection need to schedule the inspection into their roster. Once the roster is approved the SFO Metropolitan/Central Coast will inform Sydney Fish Market staff broadly that staff will be attending the premise.</li> <li>● Conduct a risk assessment generally and specifically in relation to COVID-19 for each inspection</li> <li>● Assess whether the inspection is necessary and appropriate depending on how safely officers can conduct the inspection</li> <li>● Inform any relevant person that you will be exercising social distancing for your and their safety</li> <li>● Treat every inspection on a case by case basis using a risk-based, common sense approach</li> <li>● Note condition of persons on the floor of the markets</li> </ul>

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Use of Patrol Vehicle	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimise personal contact with colleagues</li> <li>● Employ appropriate mitigation techniques when entering and exiting the vehicle</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Attempt to practice social distancing where practical</li> <li>● Use separate vehicles where available</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where possible maintain the same roles during patrol (e.g. Driver, passenger)</li> <li>● Regularly disinfect high touch surfaces before, during and after patrol</li> <li>● Wash hands with soap and water or sanitizer regularly and after contact with commonly used surfaces</li> <li>● Consider opening windows/vents to promote air circulation where practical</li> <li>● Switch air conditioner off recirculation</li> <li>● Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing</li> <li>● Passenger should sit in the rear seat (if available) diagonally opposite driver.</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officer should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be considerate and mindful of fellow officers and communicate what cleaning regime has been applied to the vehicle. A log or register is suggested to be created at a local level</li> <li>● Consider if the patrol requires two staff and can be undertaken as a single officer patrol if in line with policy</li> </ul>
Use of Patrol Vessel	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimise personal contact with colleagues</li> <li>● Employ appropriate mitigation techniques when entering and exiting the vessel</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Attempt to practice social distancing where practical</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where possible maintain the same roles during patrol (e.g. Driver, passenger)</li> <li>● Regularly disinfect high touch surfaces before, during and after patrol</li> <li>● Wash hands with soap and water or sanitizer regularly and after contact with commonly used surfaces</li> <li>● Consider opening windows/vents to promote air circulation where practical and applicable</li> <li>● Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officer should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be considerate and mindful of fellow officers and communicate what cleaning regime has been applied to the vessel. A log or register is suggested to be created at a local level</li> <li>● Consider if the patrol requires two staff and can be undertaken as a single officer patrol if in line with policy</li> </ul>

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Surveillance	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Employ relevant mitigation techniques depending on surveillance platform (vehicle, vessel, land based)</li> <li>● Where possible and safe to do so, undertake surveillance duties one-up</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Not share surveillance tools, such as radios, binoculars, cameras etc. unless sanitised</li> <li>● Separate and use different surveillance locations</li> <li>● If an apprehension is required, follow the specific instructions for that type of inspection e.g. land based</li> <li>● Where practical, clean hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any patrol as required</li> <li>● Clean and sanitise all operational equipment after use</li> <li>● Dispose of PPE approximately</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be particularly mindful to sanitise any shared surveillance equipment at the end of any patrol</li> <li>● Note condition of person being apprehended</li> <li>● If deemed necessary and lawful, record the person's details, to allow any follow up if required</li> </ul>
Maintenance	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimise personal contact with colleagues.</li> <li>● Use and have supplies of appropriate PPE (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● When in an enclosed area ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash hands (and any other body part) with soap and water or hand sanitiser before, during and after any maintenance is conducted as required</li> <li>● Regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Officers should be rostered to do maintenance alone where possible</li> </ul>



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Administration/ Office	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimise direct physical contact with colleagues and stakeholders</li> <li>● Use appropriate PPE when required (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, face mask, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● When in an enclosed area ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.</li> <li>● Regularly wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser</li> <li>● Have lunch at your desk or outside rather than in the lunchroom</li> <li>● Regularly clean and disinfect high touch surfaces</li> <li>● Consider opening windows and adjusting air conditioning for more ventilation</li> <li>● Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace</li> <li>● Refrain from sharing equipment and devices</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With any front desk enquiries, communicate clearly with the stakeholder that you are practising social distancing techniques</li> <li>● Note condition of stakeholder</li> <li>● Ensure office has appropriate signage in place. Resources can be found on the Department’s intranet here <a href="https://intranet.dpie.nsw.gov.au/working-at-dpie/projects-and-programs/road-to-recovery/resources">https://intranet.dpie.nsw.gov.au/working-at-dpie/projects-and-programs/road-to-recovery/resources</a></li> <li>● For further information refer to the Department’s intranet here <a href="https://intranet.dpie.nsw.gov.au/working-at-dpie/projects-and-programs/road-to-recovery/working-from-an-office">https://intranet.dpie.nsw.gov.au/working-at-dpie/projects-and-programs/road-to-recovery/working-from-an-office</a></li> </ul>
Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fisheries Officers are being instructed not to attend Mention matters until further notice</li> <li>● The NSW Chief Magistrate has determined that all defended hearings that do not involve a defendant in custody which are scheduled to take place between 23 March and 1 May 2020 will be deferred.</li> </ul>	Not applicable at this point in time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fisheries Officers will be notified via email as to the status of their respective matters or any matter they are witnesses for</li> <li>● For further information see the NSW Justice website - <a href="http://www.localcourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/coronavirus.aspx">http://www.localcourt.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/coronavirus.aspx</a></li> </ul>

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Office Based Record Of Interviews	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider whether the interview can be postponed to a later date</li> <li>● Avoid direct physical contact with the interviewee</li> <li>● Use appropriate PPE when required (latex gloves, hand wash, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, paper towel)</li> <li>● Practice social distancing, currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m</li> <li>● When in an enclosed area ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate clearly with interviewee during the initial contact on how the Interview will be undertaken, explaining the measures being employed</li> <li>● Sanitize all areas in the interview room using disinfectant and wipes</li> <li>● Refrain from offering refreshments and ask them to bring their own</li> <li>● Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing</li> <li>● Section 256(2A) of the FMA has been amended to allow Fisheries Officers to require persons to undertake audio link and audio-visual link questioning. This method of interview is also available for any questioning relating to offences, however the person is not required to answer questions unless it is in relation to s256, so they will be undertaking the interview voluntarily. Note that if you intend on recording the questioning in any form (regardless of the requirement under s256), you will still require consent from the person.</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inform the interviewee that you will be exercising social distancing for your and their safety</li> <li>● Conduct a risk assessment specifically in relation to COVID-19 asking the interviewee if they are at risk of the virus prior to them attending the interview. If they do present a risk, postpone the interview to a later date.</li> <li>● Note condition of persons present</li> </ul>

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Meetings/ Training/ Advisory Events/ Conferences/ Travel	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Defer where possible non-essential travel</li> <li>● Defer where possible face to face meetings</li> <li>● Defer where possible advisory events</li> <li>● Defer where possible conferences</li> <li>● Defer where possible any scheduled training</li> <li>● When meetings do occur, practice social distancing currently recommended as a minimum of 1.5m.</li> <li>● When in an enclosed area ensure only 1 person every 4m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>● No more than 20 people are allowed to gather outside in a public place.</li> </ul>	Fisheries Officers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hold meetings via video conferencing or phone call</li> <li>● Hold essential meetings outside in the open air if possible</li> <li>● Stop handshaking as a greeting</li> <li>● Cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing</li> <li>● Ensure any event that you attend has a COVID-19 Safety Plan in line with NSW Government requirements.</li> </ul>	Fisheries officers should; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore alternatives to face to face meetings, in discussion with their supervisor</li> </ul> <p>Note: Non-essential travel is not considered travelling to work, patrol work or between districts and zones in vehicles.</p>