Earth Resources Regulation has put temporary measures in place to help mine operators who need to adjust their operations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The regulator will work with operators to prioritise and expedite approvals needed to enable operators to address impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19).

What’s new?

The efficient approval of changes to work plans will enable mine operators to maintain operations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Earth Resources Regulation will work with operators to expedite approvals where changes to work are necessary to help operators to maintain their operations or retain their staff.

Earth Resources Regulation will work with operators to process changes through the administrative update pathway on a case by case basis, where operators can demonstrate that the changes do not pose unacceptable risks to any member of the public, land, property, infrastructure or the environment. In some circumstances, high risks may be acceptable. Where changes to operations are required for longer than 6 months, a work plan variation may be required.

Alternatively, work plan variations will be expedited where changes are necessary to implement prevailing public health advice.

Who will be eligible for priority processing?

Earth Resources Regulation will prioritise and expedite approvals for operators with an existing work plan where a change in work is required to implement prevailing public health advice.

The following criteria need be met:

* The change must be necessary to enable operators to address coronavirus (COVID-19) impacts
* Any risks arising from the changes must be risks that the business is already managing effectively in current operations or manageable with additional controls and must be reduced as far as reasonably practicable.
* The change must not include expansion of extraction limits[[1]](#footnote-2), moving operations closer to sensitive receptors or cause major impacts on public health, nearby infrastructure or the environment.
* The change does not require changes to the planning permit for the operation.

How do I apply?

Operators should contact Earth Resources Regulation with the following information:

* A statement that sets out why the work site change is required
* A description of the proposed change and a risk assessment showing how the operator will manage risks
* Written evidence of advice from council that no further planning approval is required, or the change can be approved under secondary consent.
* Written evidence from relevant co-regulators that their requirements are met.
* Evidence that the local community has been consulted if changes would impact amenity for residents.

Proponents are encouraged to contact Earth Resources Regulation before submitting a request – we can help to identify relevant co-regulators.

Sites will be inspected to ensure the necessary mitigation and monitoring is in place, subject to any prevailing public health controls applicable to inspectors.

For further information

Please contact [Workplan.Approvals@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:Workplan.Approvals@ecodev.vic.gov.au).

You can also subscribe to Earth Resources Regulation’s email newsletter by visiting earthresources.vic.gov.au/about-us/newsletters.

This document is available in an accessible format at earthresources.vic.gov.au

1. Applications to expand a mine will continue to be assessed via the standard pathway as quickly as possible. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)