

STAND-UP TALK



Let's Talk About the COVID-19 Tracing App

Let's talk about some issues associated with staff using the COVID-19 Tracing App.

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WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING?

People who come into contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19 are at a higher risk of becoming infected themselves, and of further infecting others.

Closely watching these contacts after exposure to an infected person will help the contacts to get care and treatment and will prevent further transmission of the virus. This monitoring process is called contact tracing.

Contact tracing is a little like detective work. Trained health professionals interview people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 to figure out who they may have recently been in contact with. Then, they can contact those people that they may have been exposed, sometimes encouraging them to quarantine themselves to prevent spreading the disease any further.

WHY IS CONTACT TRACING IMPORTANT?

Contact tracing is a "cornerstone" of preventative medicine because of the crucial importance of identifying those individuals who have been exposed quickly and isolating or quarantining them.

It's important that this backward tracing is undertaken so that authorities can understand how the virus is spreading in the community.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE LIMITATIONS OF CONTACT TRACING?

For one, contact tracing is a labour-intensive process. Interviewing infectious patients and reaching out to dozens of contacts takes time. When you get to a point where there is a lot of people who are sick with COVID-19, it quickly overwhelms the health departments' response to be able to contact trace all those individuals.

Health care workers may also have trouble getting in touch with contacts if phone records aren't up to date, or

if an infected patient is already too sick to help identify their recent contacts.

COVID-19 TRACING TECHNOLOGY

Governments around the world are introducing digital tracing technologies. However, not all governments are adopting tracing apps for a wide range of reasons. Belgium for example, has highlighted that investment in people and expertise is key. New Zealand has suggested that people should keep a diary of their contact with others, which will assist even if they do adopt a technological solution to track movement further down the track.

In South Korea, contact tracers are combining patient interviews with cell phone GPS data, credit card transaction records and surveillance camera footage. Singapore has also introduced a mobile app that uses Bluetooth to log when people are close together and then uses the data to identify contacts after new cases are confirmed.

In China, around 9,000 contact tracers were employed in Wuhan. And in Canada they launched a nationwide contact tracing program, which has brought on 27,000 volunteers. In Australia, the COVIDSafe app was released Sunday 26 April 2020. As of 6am today (27 April 2020), more than 1.13 million Australians had downloaded the app.

HOW DOES THE COVIDSafe APP WORK?

The app is based on the app introduced in Singapore. It uses a Bluetooth wireless signal to exchange a "digital handshake" with another user when they come within 1.5m (4.9ft). Each user is assigned a unique identifier that will only reside on their phone. No one can access the encrypted list of contacts on your smartphone. It can only be accessed, with your consent, by health officials in your state if you test positive to coronavirus.

The app scans once every minute and exchanges unique identifiers within that 1.5m range. If that same unique identifier is detected within range 15 consecutive times (that's 15 minutes) it will be stored in your database. The app notes the date and time, distance and duration of the contact and then logs this contact and encrypts it. Users will be notified if they have had more than 15 minutes of close contact with another user who tests positive to COVID-19.

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Stand Up Talk Meeting Outline

1	FOLLOW UP	Follow-up on any outstanding issues from the previous meeting.
2	INTRODUCTION	Briefly introduce the topic (in 1-2 minutes) for employees. Let staff know that the government has introduced an app that is designed to reduce disease spread in the community.
3	ADVISE	To work, the app needs to be left open with Bluetooth and push notifications turned on. COVIDSafe does not need to be connected to the internet continuously but will need to occasionally download temporary IDs and will use less than 1MB of data each day doing so.
4	ASK	Does everyone have a Smartphone?
5	ADVISE	<p>TechGuide has reported that the COVID Safe app meets all 19 privacy recommendations which were compiled by an independent law firm after it wrote a 100-page assessment ahead of the app's completion.</p> <p>When you register with the app, it will collect your name, your mobile phone number, age range and postcode. It will also generate an encrypted code unique to you. When you're close to someone else with the app, their app will record your encrypted reference code, as well as the date and time, your proximity and the duration of contact.</p> <p>The information shared by the app will be stored on phones for 21 days and deleted after 22 days. That's long enough to allow for a 14-day incubation period and the time it takes to confirm a positive coronavirus diagnosis.</p> <p>The data has to be kept on an Australian server. It cannot leave the country. It cannot be accessed by anybody other than a state public health official.</p> <p>It cannot be used for any purpose other than the provision of the data for the purposes of finding people with whom you have been in close contact and it is punishable by jail if there is a breach of that.</p> <p>There is no GPS or location data.</p> <p>There is no Commonwealth access.</p> <p>All information collected by the app is securely encrypted and stored in the app on the user's phone. No one, not even the user, can access it. The data will be stored in Australia, and the Australian Health Minister said "not even a court order" would allow other authorities such as the police to access it.</p> <p>Our workplace recommendation is (choose one below to recommend to your team for discussion at point 6):</p> <p>ALL STAFF DOWNLOAD THE APP</p> <p>STAFF CAN DECIDE TO DOWNLOAD THE APP</p>
6	ASK	Does anyone have any issues to discuss about our workforce using or not using the app?
7	ADVISE	Our position in respect to the app is (insert your position resulting from the team discussion): We...
8	THANKS	Thank everyone for their time and attention.