



2.3 Infection Prevention Control Committee

Effective IPC in quarantine and isolation requires the support and participation of facility health staff.

The IPC committee consists of people who work together to promote a shared culture of safety and high quality care across the site. The committee should have representatives from both the medical and non-medical staff and be prepared to coordinate the site's IPC actions.

The key purpose of the committee is described as aiming to:

Support all areas to fulfil their IPC responsibilities for ensuring the provision of high quality and safe resident care by oversight and responsibility of key objectives relating to the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare as they pertain to the quarantine facility, the Centre Disease Network Australian National Guidelines for Public Health Units and COVID-19 specific directions and guidelines.^{1,2}

To be responsible for oversight of educational strategies to actively promote principles of infection prevention and control and to ensure that effective work practices are maintained to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

The IPC committee should be one of the first committees established to support the quarantine facility in the achievement of identified roles and function specific to IPC.

The committee reports primarily to the Executive Director of the facility and the site Quality and Safety Committee.

2.3.1 Role of the IPC Committee

The role of the committee includes but should not be limited to:

- Develop, implement and embed a culture of continuous capability in the provision of preventing and controlling infections.
- Based on the quarantine service and relevant data the committee should develop, ratify and monitor the implementation of a quality improvement plan aligned to the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Infection in Healthcare and existing quarantine systems.⁷
- Develop and monitor a program of scheduled audits directly related to IPC.
- Analyse data, evaluate current trends and incidence of infections and undertake control measures as indicated.
- Coordinate relevant follow-up of infection prevention and control issues identified.
- Review IPC-related incident reports and adverse events, and plan to address causative system vulnerabilities.
- Review and develop standard operating procedures for the quarantine facility.
- Monitor the potential spread of infectious disease in the facility, as well as develop plans for local outbreaks.

The core responsibilities of the committee are recognised as:

- Identifying training requirements for preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infections,
- Monitoring the performance of systems for the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections.
- Reporting on the outcomes or prevention and control of healthcare-associated infection and monitoring available data on healthcare-associated infections.

It is anticipated that members of an IPC committee possess a comprehensive understanding of the quarantine facility operations, particularly with its obligations and practices for IPC. Members are expected to drive the implementation of all priority projects and initiatives and act as champions (role models) proving assistance with IPC matters where necessary.

The committee will need to be prepared to manage urgent IPC matters and disseminate actions and plans as required. As with any committee expectations, there is the expectation that committee members will be responsible in dealing with confidential matters and information and to keep this confidential. Any conflicts of interest need to be declared.

Membership

The Chair of the committee is recommended to be the site's Director of Nursing with the responsibility to:

- Set meeting agendas and preside at meetings.
- Obtain secretariat support.
- Ensure compliance with record management processes, including monitoring members' attendance.
- Ensure compliance with governance reporting processes to the government body, including minutes reports, action plans, workplans.

Other committee members are recommended to represent the following areas: clinical services, IPC professionals, medical services, education and training, quality and assurance and other members as aligned with the facility staff structure.

2.3.2 Examples of IPC Committee agenda items

The IPC committee is focused on IPC matters and this involves a number of agenda items that would be considered mandatory to address.

Items for ICP Committee Agenda

- Personal protective equipment- effectiveness of equipment, alignment with national recommendations, PPE auditing outcomes and education and training of staff.
- Reports of PPE/IPC breaches in practice.
- Resident management- PPE compliance.
- Infectious disease (in addition to COVID-19 for example) which may be present on site such as skin infections or gastroenteritis.
- Viral screening processes and reports.
- Vaccination outcomes
- Hand hygiene practices.
- Clinical and other waste.
- Site cleaning practices.