



Brad Hazzard
Minister for Health and Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$5000 ON-THE-SPOT FINE TO PROTECT ALL WORKERS

Anyone coughing or spitting on any worker will face a \$5000 on-the-spot fine with tough measures introduced to protect health care staff and police now extended to all workers.

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said anyone at work or travelling to or from work would be protected, after several recent incidents involving retail and transport workers.

Mr Hazzard last week made a Ministerial Direction under the Public Health Act 2010 allowing NSW Police to issue \$5000 on-the-spot fines to anyone who coughs or spits on health workers, police, pharmacists, paramedics or other public officials.

“Unfortunately, there have now also been incidents in which retail staff and transport staff have also been subjected to this disgusting, dangerous behaviour, and it will not be tolerated,” Mr Hazzard said.

“Every worker in this COVID-19 crisis is now an essential worker and will have the added protection they deserve, including those in retail stores and those critical to our public transport system.

“This \$5,000 on-the-spot fine sends a clear message that our community will do whatever it takes to protect these essential workers.”

Bernie Smith, State Secretary of the SDA, the union for retail, fast food and warehouse workers, said there needs to be zero tolerance for this type of disgusting behavior.

“Unfortunately, we’ve seen vile attacks on our frontline workers during the COVID-19 crisis, with people purposefully spitting or coughing on people trying to do their job and we welcome and commend this move by the NSW Government.”

David Babineau, Secretary of the Tram and Bus Division of the Rail, Tram & Bus Union of NSW, said too frequently people who are trying to do their jobs are being spat on.

“Frankly, it’s disgusting in any circumstance but in the middle of the current health crisis it cannot be tolerated. Everyone has the right to go home safely from work and not wonder if they are bringing a potentially fatal disease home to their loved ones.”

The expanded direction commences on 20 April 2020.

Members of the public can report to Crime Stoppers if they have any concern that individuals are not complying with public health orders by calling 1800 333 000.

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