

COVID-19 – Standard for New Zealand Construction Operations

Version 1.0

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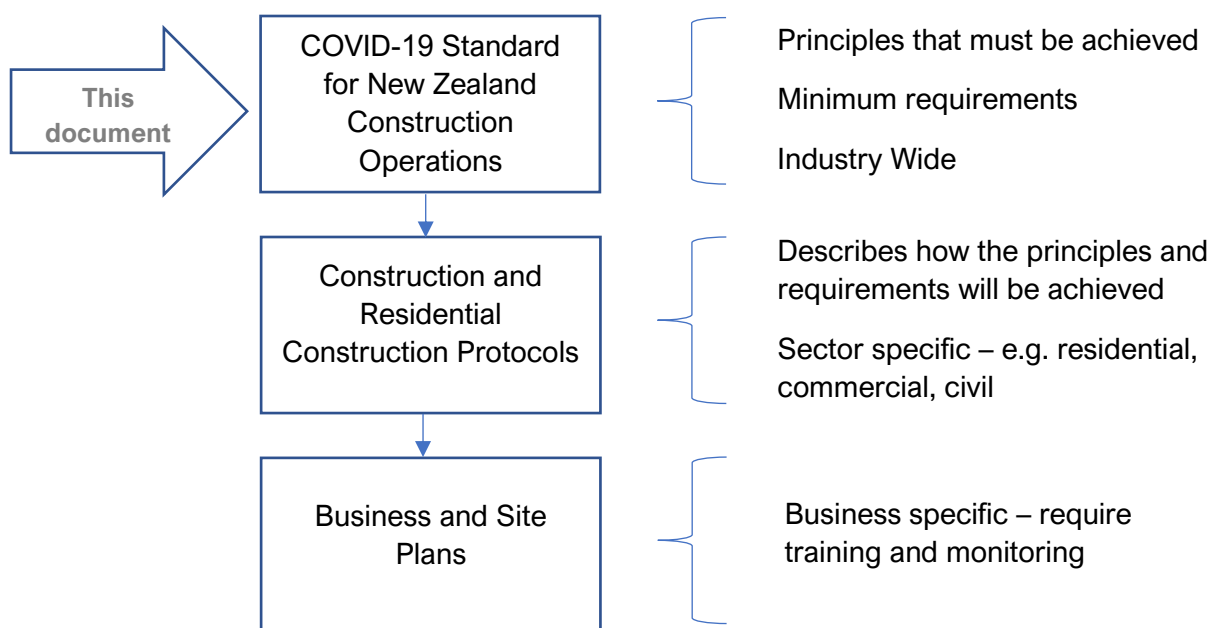
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Purpose of this document

This document sets out the key principles and minimum requirements that define responsible, healthy and safe operations for construction related operations working under COVID-19 Alert Levels 2 and above.

Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) and sub-sectors of the construction industry, including associated trades will provide further protocols and processes down to site level that show how the principles and minimum requirements set out in this standard are achieved. The means of achieving the standard will vary dependent upon the type of construction, size of the site, nature of activity or other conditions. Businesses should set their level of control higher than this standard where specific site or business conditions present higher levels of risk to individuals or operations.

This standard should be read in conjunction with the General Construction and Residential Construction protocols.



COVID-19 – Standard for New Zealand Construction Operations

The Standard for New Zealand Construction Operations governs the principles that construction operations (including civil, commercial and residential construction) must maintain in order to operate under New Zealand Government COVID-19 Alert levels 2 and above. COVID-19 Alert Level 4 is restricted to essential services only and while the principles in this document should be adopted, businesses permitted to operate under level 4 will have a higher task specific set of requirements depending on the nature of the business.

The core principle behind this standard is to protect the health and safety of all workers required to perform duties during the COVID-19 crisis, including related health and safety

impacts on operations related to operating under a COVID-19 environment, as well as protecting the wider New Zealand population from transmission and spread of the virus.

Another key principle is to maintain the WorkSafe three pillars of good work throughout all operations: leadership, risk management, and worker engagement.

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015), PCBUs in the construction industry should prepare and implement their site plans and processes with worker engagement and participation to ensure that these are embedded in practice.

Construction PCBUs and officers are expected to undertake and champion the principles of this standard by constantly focussing on eliminating or reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission to an acceptable level (as required by the Ministry of Health (MOH)), engaging meaningfully with their workforce, and making worker health a key priority.

The standard also includes prevention, detection, and rapid response measures designed to achieve the principles above whilst maintaining business continuity across the construction industry.

Achievement of this standard is expected for all PCBUs engaged in construction activity whilst working under COVID-19 Alert levels 2 and above and reflects what a responsible business and activity would undertake to ensure the health and safety of its workers and the New Zealand public. PCBUs are responsible for implementing controls to achieve this standard and maintaining records to provide evidence that the requirements have been met.

The term PCBU is used throughout this document and corresponds with the definition laid out in section 17 of the Health and Safety at Work Act (2015):

Meaning of PCBU

*(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, a **person conducting a business or undertaking or PCBU**—*

(a) means a person conducting a business or undertaking—

(i) whether the person conducts a business or undertaking alone or with others; and

(ii) whether or not the business or undertaking is conducted for profit or gain; but

(b) does not include—

(i) a person to the extent that the person is employed or engaged solely as a worker in, or as an officer of, the business or undertaking:

(ii) a volunteer association:

(iii) an occupier of a home to the extent that the occupier employs or engages another person solely to do residential work:

(iv) a statutory officer to the extent that the officer is a worker in, or an officer of, the business or undertaking:

(v) a person, or class of persons, that is declared by regulations not to be a PCBU for the purposes of this Act or any provision of this Act.

New Zealand Government COVID-19 Response Levels

Level		Risk Assessment	Range of Measures
4 – Eliminate	Likely the disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained and intensive transmission • Widespread outbreaks 	<p>People instructed to stay at home; Educational facilities closed; Businesses closed except for essential services (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics) and lifeline utilities; Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities; Travel severely limited; Major reprioritisation of healthcare services.</p>
3 – Restrict	Heightened risk that disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community transmission occurring OR • Multiple clusters break out 	<p>Travel in areas with clusters or community transmission limited; Affected educational facilities closed; Mass gatherings cancelled; Public venues closed (e.g. libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, amusement parks); Alternative ways of working required and some non-essential businesses should close; Non face-to-face primary care consultations; Non-acute (elective) services and procedures in hospitals deferred and healthcare staff reprioritised.</p>
2 – Reduce	Disease is contained, but risks of community transmission growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk of importing COVID-19 OR • Uptick in imported cases OR • Uptick in household transmission OR • Single or isolated cluster outbreak 	<p>Entry border measures maximised; Further restrictions on mass gatherings; Physical distancing on public transport (e.g. leave the seat next to you empty if you can); Limit non-essential travel around New Zealand; Employers start alternative ways of working if possible (e.g. remote working, shift-based working, physical distancing within the workplace, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave arrangements); Business continuity plans activated; High-risk people advised to remain at home (e.g. those over 70 or those with other existing medical conditions).</p>
1 - Prepare	Disease is contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened risk of importing COVID-19 OR • Sporadic imported cases OR • Isolated household transmission associated with imported cases 	<p>Border entry measures to minimise risk of importing COVID-19 cases applied; Contact tracing; Stringent self-isolation and quarantine; Intensive testing for COVID-19; Physical distancing encouraged; Mass gatherings over 500 cancelled; Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms; Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face.</p>

Source: https://COVID19.govt.nz/assets/COVID_Alert-levels_v2.pdf

Construction Prevention Measures

1. Before workers come to a location where work is to be carried out.

- 1.1. Everyone who is involved in construction needs to play a part in minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19. All employers (PCBUs) need to create a plan to achieve the requirements of this standard focussing on managing work to maintain the health of persons engaging in construction activity.
- 1.2. Planning and implementing COVID-19 protocols must involve workplace Health and Safety representation from workers. PCBUs are required to communicate and engage with their workers regularly around how to safely carry out work in a COVID-19 environment.
- 1.3. The plan and work protocols must be communicated effectively to workers and persons before entering site or work starting by the person controlling the work. Language and culture requirements are to be taken into account to ensure information is understandable for all persons involved in the work
- 1.4. The plan and work protocols must take into account the possibility that the site or location where construction activity is to take place may have become unsafe while inactive during lockdown periods. Before any activity is recommenced the PCBU must ensure that all hazards have been reviewed and appropriately controlled before work activity is commenced after lockdown. This includes workers understanding of the operations and fit for purpose equipment, material and environmental condition checking.
- 1.5. In managing COVID-19 risk businesses the Health and Safety at Work (General Risk & Workplace Management) Regulations 2016 apply including adhering to the hierarchy of controls when making decisions on how best to protect persons from COVID-19 transmission.
- 1.6. Persons entering and exiting a workplace are to be registered to assist tracking of contact in case of COVID-19 infection.
- 1.7. Movement between and on sites is to be planned and managed to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
- 1.8. PCBUs will have a process to ensure employees are fit for duty by confirming their health status.
- 1.9. PCBUs must follow the guidelines set out by MOH in regard to vulnerable persons entering the workplace or engaging in any work activity.
- 1.10. PCBUs are required to have an understanding of and plan for how workers will travel to and from the workplace in order to minimise transmission of COVID-19.

2. Workplace entry or commencement of activity

- 2.1. PCBUs are to provide a means of evaluating that workers are fit for duty as they enter site or start construction related activity – this should follow MOH guidelines for detection of COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors.
- 2.2. Workers must be able to sanitise their hands before starting work at their work location as per MOH guidelines

- 2.3. Arrangements are to be made by the PCBU for the safe use of PPE designed to minimise COVID-19 transmission including, cleaning, training in use, and disposal in line with MOH guidelines for Construction Related Activity.
- 2.4. Workers are to be given guidance by the person controlling the work location on how to decontaminate themselves and their clothing when returning to their home living arrangements and or accessing other services where they may be in contact with the public (including retailers and medical services).
- 2.5. All workers are to be registered as they enter a work area and records kept by the person controlling the work area. Work area registers are to be recorded, where it is practical to do so, at a work site level, part of a work site, or a place where construction related work is carried out.

3. Site Operations

- 3.1. Each place where work is carried out requires a person or persons nominated and agreed by the PCBUs to monitor and manage COVID-19 site protocols.
- 3.2. Only workers deemed necessary to carry out physical works, supervise work, or conduct work in order to meet regulatory requirements will physically attend the work location. All workers who can work from home, must work from home. Visitors to site will be restricted to the minimum necessary to deliver work.
- 3.3. All workers are to exercise the recommended personal health practices for reducing the risk of transmission as identified by the MOH. Education of these practices will be undertaken by the worker's employer or person controlling the work location; this will be based upon agreement between the employer and person controlling the work location.
- 3.4. All offices and jobsites are to implement additional cleaning measures of common areas as recommended by the MOH.
- 3.5. Additional sanitary measures are to be implemented at the work location, including but not limited to, hand washing protocols, hand sanitizer stations, and provision of disinfectant wiping products.
- 3.6. Bathrooms and portable/mobile toilet facilities will require a cleaning schedule that minimises the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- 3.7. Work areas, where there is the potential for close interaction with members of the public or other persons not involved in the work, should be segregated to achieve physical separation.
- 3.8. Where practicable, construction sites are to be separated into zones in order to keep different crews/trades physically separated at all times (some work locations may need to apply alternative methods to zoning to achieve work group separation).
- 3.9. Work that requires close personal proximity (as defined by MOH) between workers (e.g. scaffolding, carpentry, crane lifts) should be minimised. Work of this nature must be planned and managed to establish a safe system of work. Risk of COVID-19 transmission will be included in risk assessments and the highest level of control must be considered and properly implemented.
- 3.10. Work vehicles that are shared by multiple persons to be sanitised after each journey by different persons (travellers and/or driver) by thorough cleansing of all internal surfaces and external handles and touch points.

- 3.11. Deliveries to the work location must be closely managed and controls must be implemented to avoid transmission of COVID-19.
- 3.12. Equipment and material deliveries are to be planned and managed to avoid the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

4. Leaving Site or Place of Work

- 4.1. All persons must be checked out of site or the place of work as they leave and records kept by the site controller and employer.
- 4.2. For each site and work location commonly used areas and surfaces where workers may have come in contact with are to be cleaned and sanitised at the end of the working day or at the end of each shift.
- 4.3. All waste and disposable PPE must be securely and safely disposed of. Appropriate controls and consideration must be made to those handling contaminated (or potentially contaminated) waste products.

5. Emergency Management

- 5.1. PCBUs must ensure that workers understand that any individual exhibiting flu-like symptoms such as fever, coughing, or congestion must:
 - Not come to work;
 - Contact their supervisor and/or human resources department; and
 - Stay at home and self-isolate as directed by MOH.
- 5.2. Persons who have been identified as having potentially been exposed to the virus must follow MOH advice and must not enter or remain at a workplace.
- 5.3. Any business, workplace, or site that has had a worker with a positive COVID-19 diagnoses must prevent any person entering the workplace or conducting work activities and must complete the following:
 - Contact the MOH COVID-19 health line;
 - Gather records of all persons who have been on site or involved with the person who has tested positive within the past four weeks;
 - Gather information to identify those who have worked at the location or shared machinery, plant, materials or equipment with that person.
 - Be ready to present the information to the appropriate authorities;
 - Inform the wider workforce of the situation while protecting the privacy of the individual where practicable so that further health monitoring can take place of potential contacts with the person;
 - Clean and sanitise all site surfaces and equipment; and
 - Follow any other directions from MOH

Links

[Health and Safety at Work Act](#)

[Risk Management Regulations](#)

[COVID-19 Government Site](#)

[Ministry of Health](#)