

COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols for New Zealand Residential Construction Sites

Purpose: The COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols for Residential Construction Sites outlines the minimum standards to be implemented at residential construction sites to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission on site. These Protocols apply at Alert Level 4. These Protocols supplement the *COVID-19 Standard for Operating New Zealand Construction Sites* developed by CHASNZ.

OUR COMMITMENT AS AN INDUSTRY:

- We are committed to working alongside Government to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- As an industry, we are united against COVID-19 and will do our utmost to protect our workers, the wider community, and New Zealand.
- We know that we're in this together – this means trusting that those we work with will keep us safe and that we'll do the same for them.
- We recognise that we must work together to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone in the supply chain.

DEVELOPED BY:



With support from:



1. WHO CAN WORK AT ALERT LEVEL 4?

There are only very rare circumstances where construction work is permitted to occur under the New Zealand Alert Level 4. These circumstances are:

For projects or work activities of national interest as decided by the New Zealand Government. These would include maintaining essential infrastructure such as public utilities and/or on behalf of the Ministry of Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic response. It is not envisaged that this would apply to residential construction.

To ensure the safety or security of the construction site. This means that regular checks and remediation of site security and safety structure and equipment such as scaffolding, plastic wrapping and fences is permitted. However, strict safety protocols will apply when undertaking this work or checks.

Because of an emergency where there is a high probability of significant risk to the health of members of the public. This is expected to impact residential builders and tradespeople called out to deal with household emergencies such as electrical issues, significant damage to a residence, water, and sewerage. Further guidance on essential construction work is available [here](#).

2. COVID-19 CONTROLS PLAN

Construction sites operating at Alert Level 4 need to have in place a COVID-19 Controls Plan. This plan will guide how the principal or main contractor and contractors will manage work on site and the controls they will use to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

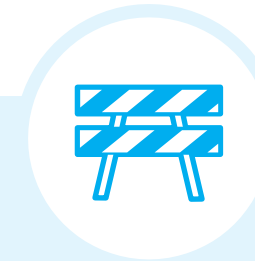
These protocols are separated into four sections:

- A) Before Arriving on Site
- B) Site Entry
- C) Site Operations (including deliveries & visitors)
- D) Leaving Site



A) BEFORE ARRIVING ON SITE

- » The business owner or manager is responsible for establishing that the situation does, in fact, constitute essential construction work under Alert Level 4.
- » All essential construction work should involve as few workers as possible, and only those that are absolutely necessary for the work.
- » The business owner is responsible for confirming the health status of any persons working and/or living at the site to ensure that they are not unwell, a known positive case, a close or casual contact of a positive case or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. If any of these circumstances are found, then advice should be sought from the Ministry of Health (0800 358 5453) before workers enter or go on to the site.
- » The business owner should encourage workers to become vaccinated at the earliest opportunity by communicating with them using material from the Government website [here](#). Business owners are encouraged to provide time off work for their workers to become vaccinated
- » Business owner to establish the potential situations where workers will be required to work closer than 2m, but always more than 1m, from another worker to complete tasks safely.
- » Resourcing plan is required to ensure those who do work within 2m of each other always work together and maintain a 'work bubble' that minimises exposure.
- » Planning around any other persons on site (e.g., residents) to ensure they are socially distanced and segregated from the workers.



A) BEFORE ARRIVING ON SITE continued

- Identify any vulnerable workers as per the COVID19.govt.nz guidelines <https://covid19.govt.nz/health-and-wellbeing/about-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness-from-covid-19/> and ensure that these workers are not operating under Alert Level 4.
- Establish communication channels for workers to raise any concerns about the effectiveness of COVID-19 controls or to identify improvement opportunities.
- All workers are to be provided with and follow the Personal Health Guidelines in Appendix 1 of these Protocols, to confirm they are safe to be on site.

B) SITE ENTRY

- Contact with any site residents should be made by phone to establish safe working distances and access before entering site.
- Location of all workers going onto an essential construction site should be kept in a register or log that details their whereabouts and times entering and leaving site. This log is to be kept by the business owner.
 - 1) Hand sanitiser should be used before entering the site.
 - 2) Where applicable and required workplaces must also register with the Government tracer app and the bar code clearly displayed <https://covid19.govt.nz/business-work-and-money/business/get-your-qr-code-poster/>
- All people working at Alert Level 4 must wear a face covering while on site. This could be a disposable mask, face shield, or other covering that prevents droplet transmission between the wearer and other persons. Using disposable gloves, where safe to do so, should also be considered although strict and regular hand sanitizing is sufficient in most cases.



C) SITE OPERATIONS

How we work on site:

- Coordinate works to ensure, unless unavoidable, that only one trade is operating on a single house site at any given time.
- Eliminate where possible face-to-face meetings.
- Do not share tools.
- Consider opening windows for more ventilation.
- Workers to bring a drink bottle and lunch to work – no leaving site to pick up lunch during the day. All food / drink waste must be immediately disposed of in rubbish bins or taken away from site by the worker. Workers should wash their hands with soap before and after eating and remain 2m from other people.
- Smoking or vaping should only occur in designated areas or off site and smokers must dispose of butts responsibly. Hands must be washed with soap before and after smoking or vaping.

Continued over.



C) SITE OPERATIONS *continued*

Cleaning Regime (Responsibility of Site Manager)

- Remind all workers to regularly wash their hands with soap during the day or make hand sanitiser available throughout the site and show staff where they are located.
- For residential emergencies it is recommended that the resident is advised to clean the work area after the work is complete.
- It is not recommended that toilets are used in the case of residential emergencies.
 - » See this link on the Ministry of Health website for more information about cleaning: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice>

Site Visitors (including Council Inspectors)

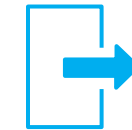
- All non-essential visitors to be denied entry to site.



C) SITE OPERATIONS *continued*

Deliveries

- Workers / site managers should attempt to arrange all deliveries / orders through phone / online systems rather than face to face visits to store.
- Site managers / contractors to ensure suppliers who will make deliveries to site have a COVID-19 plan and that delivery drivers will be trained in operation of the plan
- Delivery drivers to follow same sign in and sign out processes as any other worker / visitor when arriving and leaving site.
- Do not take physical documentation from delivery driver. Utilise photographic proof of delivery.
- Maintain minimum 2m physical distancing from delivery team.
- Any two-person lifts will require either a two-person delivery team, or two workers from a contractor bubble to complete the lift. This should not be completed in a way which breaches defined bubbles.



D) LEAVING THE SITE

Sign out process:

- All contractors, visitors and those making deliveries to utilise a log of their exit times.
- Sign out and wash hands with soap or use hand sanitiser.
- Dispose safely of any single-use face coverings and sanitise multi-use face coverings
- Ensure that all work shoes clothing and equipment is kept separately from other persons at the worker's residence and or sanitised separately.

3. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

Risk Identification

- Should any worker or site visitor become suspected of having contracted COVID-19, or become aware they have had contact with a suspected COVID-19 case this must immediately be reported to the Ministry of Health, their contracting company and to the Site Manager.
- Site Manager must immediately:
 - I. notify Ministry of Health (Healthline Advice & Information line: 0800 358 5453) and follow that advice.

Contact Tracing:

- Contact tracing will be completed by Ministry of Health
- To support Ministry of Health, the Site Manager should review records to identify all sites that the worker / visitor in question has accessed and compile a list of all people that may have been in the same home within a period of 4 weeks.
- Site Manager must inform all those workers and their contracting companies that there could have been an exposure, whilst protecting the privacy of the individual where practicable.
- Workers who may have had contact to stay at home until case and contacts are confirmed or not in conjunction with Ministry of Health.

Cleaning

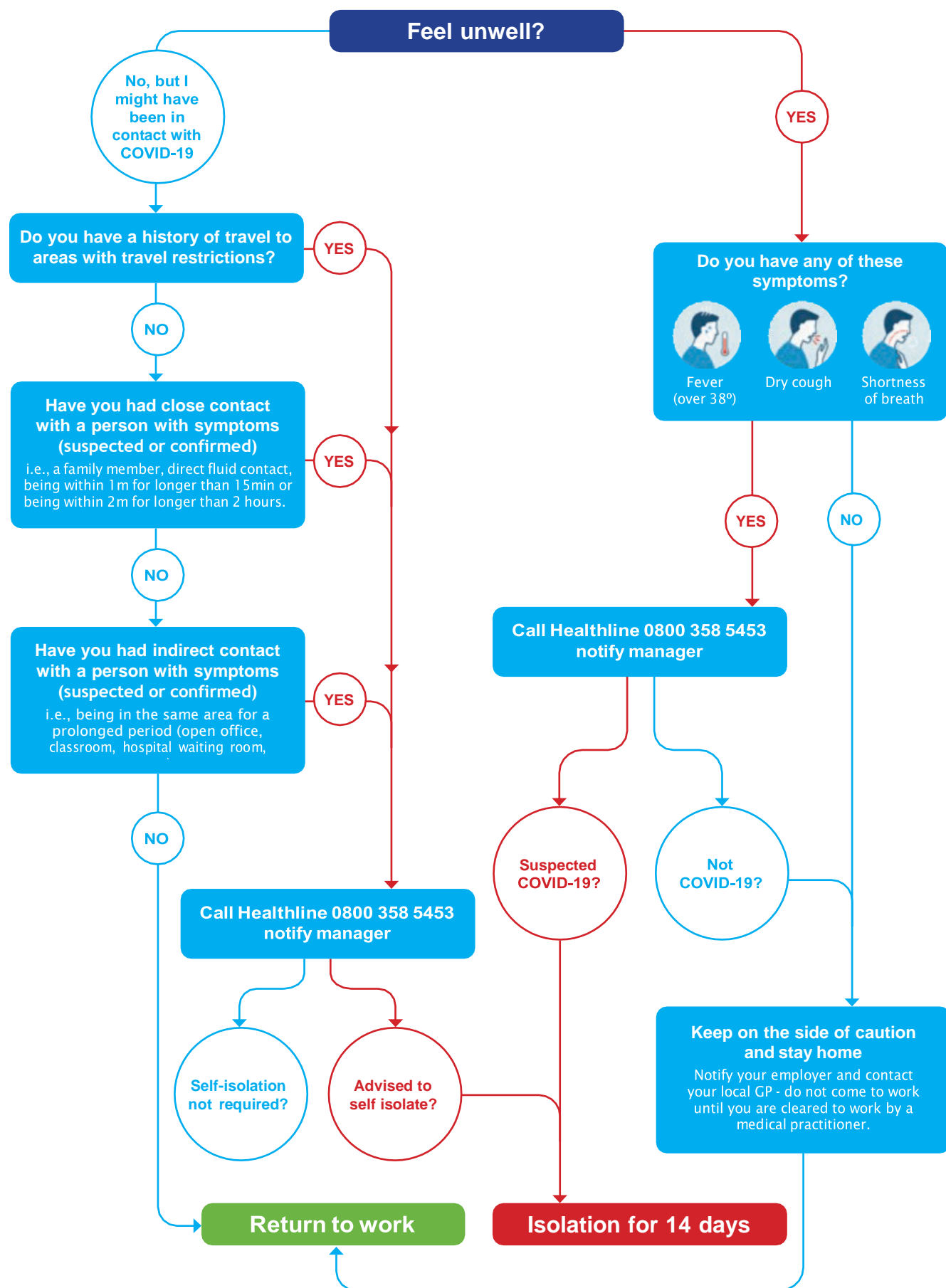
- Before the sites in question can be opened again a full sanitising clean should be completed
- Do not re-open site without specific approval from Ministry of Health.

4. MONITORING / ENFORCEMENT

We encourage all sector participants to take a **zero tolerance** approach to any serious breaches of this controls plan by either individual workers or companies.

These controls will be shared with WorkSafe, Local Councils and MBIE / MOH. We expect that some / all these entities will conduct audits against these controls.

APPENDIX 1:
PERSONAL HEALTH GUIDELINES:
 How to identify if you should be at work or stay at home.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Ministry of Health provides full information on the current state of CV19.

Ministry of Health: www.health.govt.nz

The COVID-19 website is a Government developed website with extensive tools and information on CV19. Official COVID-19 website: www.covid19.govt.nz

The CHASNZ website has tools and resources for the construction industry www.chasnz.org/covid19

The Site Safe website has tools specific for the construction industry. You can find toolboxes for all types of situations and general information on CV19. Site Safe: www.sitesafe.org.nz/news--events/covid-19/

Mates in Construction has a range of tools available relating to mental health and wellbeing: www.mates.net.nz