



PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGING
COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 2 IN THE WORKPLACE

PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGING COVID-19 LEVEL 2 RESTRICTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

“If a business determines it cannot operate safely, or make the necessary changes to do so, it should not open.”

This is the key message from the government and government agencies such as the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and WorkSafe NZ.

Make sure you have read and understood the guidelines provided by the government on the relevant government websites. Financial Advice New Zealand has provided this resource to all member organisations conducting business under Alert Level 2 to help you with your preparations for moving to Alert Level 2. This document provides a summary of what the government recommends as essential and/or desirable at COVID Alert Level 2, and is our interpretation of those recommendations and guidelines for your financial advice business to consider.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THE COVID ALERTS MOVEMENT FROM LEVEL 3 TO LEVEL 2

All businesses, including financial advisers, must make sure they can operate safely under Alert Level 2, otherwise they are not permitted to open.

WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO MOVE FROM ALERT LEVEL 3 TO ALERT LEVEL 2?

At Alert Level 3 financial advisers have not been permitted to conduct face to face or on-site appointments with clients, and offices have been closed for the duration of COVID Alert Level 4 and Level 3.

Alert Level 2 is a “safe” normal. This means that as long as you can keep yourself safe and your business safe for your employees and clients, then you can resume business activities and occupy business premises to do so.

Although there may be circumstances where some employees, a consultant, or a financial adviser remains working from the home-base, there is no longer a requirement to do so.

ALERT LEVEL 2 – RECOMMENCING BUSINESS

At Level 2 the pandemic is deemed to be contained but there is still the risk of community transmission. The aim at Alert Level 2 is to reduce levels of movement and interaction between places and people. Therefore, measures are still required in order to operate safely.

Under Alert Level 2 financial advisers can recommence business activities at the office, or business premises, for employees, consultants, clients, and visitors.

PREPARING YOUR OFFICE FOR RE-ENTRY

During Alert Levels 4 and 3, your business premises will have been closed for 6 or more weeks. Make sure the office is prepared in advance for the return to work of your employees. Here are some suggestions, although this will not be an exhaustive list. Make sure you have checked your usual building maintenance procedures to ensure the business premises are safe before your employees and customers return.

- ◆ Make sure the offices have been thoroughly cleaned with all surfaces disinfected (include office chairs and desks)
- ◆ Check any air conditioners are working correctly and clean any filters to ensure clean air throughout the building
- ◆ Clean any water machines which may have become stagnant and replace the water bottles to ensure clean water is available
- ◆ Clean any communal appliances such as fridges, dishwashers, microwaves, etc.
- ◆ If you share a building with other businesses, discuss with the landlord and the other businesses how any shared facilities, such as toilets, kitchens, lifts, staircases, air conditioning will be kept clean and sanitised.
- ◆ Flush out the water in the kitchen taps and anywhere else where water has been stored. e.g water fountains and water fountain filters

CORE REQUIREMENTS AT ALERT LEVEL 2

You and your business must ensure the requirements are met regarding public health and workplace standards relating to PHYSICAL DISTANCING, HYGIENE, and CONTACT TRACING.

This section is set out under the following headings:

- ◆ Flexible Working Arrangements
- ◆ Travel
- ◆ Health and Safety
- ◆ Personal Protection Equipment
- ◆ Reducing the Spread
- ◆ Physical Distancing
- ◆ Contact Tracing
- ◆ Out of Office Contact with Clients
- ◆ Managing Personal Risk
- ◆ Safety Planning

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

In all cases, if it is not possible to maintain physical distancing requirements between people in the workplace, then you will need to look at alternative options for all employees. These options could include staggered shifts, or day on day off shifts for employees.

High risk personnel

Although Level 2 is a return to a “safe normal”, there may be some employees for which a return to the workplace is not advisable.

Employees, consultants and financial advisers who meet the criteria for high risk are advised to stay at home. This means that in some circumstances an employee should remain working from home at Level 2. These circumstances could be:

- ◆ If the employee is at a higher risk if they were to contract COVID-19. This could be because:
 - they have pre-existing medical condition. For more in-depth description of pre-existing medical conditions see <https://postivepeople.co.nz/covid19-guidance-for-employers/employment-practicalities-of-return-to-work-2/>
 - they are over the age of seventy years
 - they are pregnant, or may be pregnant
- ◆ If the employee is sick
- ◆ If the employee has recently returned from overseas
- ◆ If they live with someone who is a high risk person

Identify any people in your business who fall into these categories and make decisions on whether they can return to work based on each person’s circumstances. Discuss the options available with the individuals involved and make a decision that enables them to return to work in a way that does not put them at risk.

Some options to consider for high risk personnel:

- ◆ Alternative work arrangements:
This may include working from home, or instituting specific safety measures in the workplace and travel to and from work
- ◆ Flexible leave arrangements:
You may wish to allow flexible leave arrangements so that high-risk people or those who are unwell do not have to feel pressured to be at work
- ◆ Discuss retainers, pay and leave:
High-risk employees, consultants, and financial advisers who decide to stay at home but cannot work, should be able to make arrangements relating to their retainers, pay and leave

Communicate with your staff

Whatever you decide is the best way to get your employees working, you must communicate with them, as a whole team and with any individuals involved.

To avoid any doubt, make sure you document your process. You could issue a consultation letter with a feedback/agreement form that each employee returns to you. Make sure you follow up any consultation with a confirmation letter.

Always make decisions in a fair and equitable way and in good faith.

TRAVEL

At Alert Level 2 travel anywhere in New Zealand is permitted. However, the purpose for the travel needs to be considered. A meeting with smaller groups of people is appropriate, conferences involving larger groups of people is not acceptable.

- ◆ All travel for the purposes of conducting business should be recorded in a log. This can be set up on-line.
- ◆ If travel is undertaken, social distancing should be observed. This means only one person in a vehicle.
- ◆ Physical distancing of one metre is required on public transport and larger vehicles transporting work associates. No clients will be passengers.
- ◆ If a company car is used, steering wheels and seats should be wiped down with disinfectant after each use.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The normal health and safety measure you have for your business will need to be enhanced during Alert Level 2. Make sure you have notices and signs around the building that advise employees, consultants, clients or visitors of these measures.

- ◆ Personnel on-site should be advised to sneeze or cough into the crook of the arm to prevent any flu or viral spread.
- ◆ Any employee, consultant or financial adviser, or visitor to the business office or site exhibiting COVID symptoms must stay off the premises. The symptoms include:
 - A sore throat
 - A new or worsening cough
 - A high temperature of at least 38°C
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sneezing and runny nose
 - Temporary loss of smell.

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- ◆ You may wish to have employees, consultants, and financial advisers complete a well-being checklist template daily and submit this to the HR Manager or other designated person. It should be done soon after the person arrives on site. This can be an online template.
- ◆ Regular well-being checks can be carried out with employees, consultants, and financial advisers by the HR Manager or other designated person. These checks can include random temperature checks. All checks should be recorded.
- ◆ High-risk employees, consultants, or financial advisers should be working from home unless this is not possible, or practicable.

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

For detailed information on Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) review the [Ministry of Health guidelines](#):

- ◆ PPE such as hand sanitiser, disposable gloves and face masks should be available for employees, consultants, financial advisers, clients and visitors to the office premises in the following workplace areas:
 - The reception desk and reception areas
 - Meeting and interview rooms
 - On the office desk/workstation of each employee, consultant, and financial adviser.
- ◆ Office equipment, such as desks and chairs in meeting and interview rooms and reception areas should be wiped down with a commercial grade disinfectant after each use. A new disposable cloth should be used each time.
- ◆ All laptops, writing materials and equipment such as pens and whiteboard pens will be confined to the use of an individual employee or client. These items cannot be shared.

REDUCING THE SPREAD

You must take all practicable measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within your workplace. Consider the following suggestions and make arrangements before your staff return to work.

- ◆ A supply of spray bottles, commercial standard disinfectant (avoid ones with a stringent smell), disposable gloves, and disposable cloths should be available. Additional pedal rubbish bins may also be required. A supply of face masks will be important to provide personnel the option of using this level of protection.
- ◆ Visible signs to be posted in all workplace restrooms and public areas reminding employees and visitors to wash their hands thoroughly and often.
- ◆ Liquid soap dispensers to be replenished daily by the designated person.
- ◆ Disposable cups should be provided, or employees, consultants, and financial advisers will need to bring their own tea/coffee cup for personal use in the workplace. No workplace crockery and utensils should be used.

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- ◆ Refreshments in disposable cups may be provided to clients or visitors.
- ◆ Disposable, one-off use, paper cups should be available for water.
- ◆ If, milk, coffee and other items are brought into the kitchen, these need to be personally labelled and kept solely to the use of the owner.
- ◆ Magazines and brochures should be removed from reception or public spaces and not given out to clients or visitors.
- ◆ Mobile phones should be kept on the employee, consultant, or financial adviser in a pocket, or bag and not left on desks or board room tables in public areas.
- ◆ As shared areas of the office are vacated, they should be valeted, i.e., wiped down with disposable cloth and disinfectant.
- ◆ Equipment accessed by all personnel in the office such as photocopiers should be wiped down with a disposable cloth and disinfectant after each use. Make this the responsibility of the person using the equipment.
- ◆ Spray bottles of disinfectant, disposable cloths, and disposable gloves should be placed in each area so they are accessible and convenient. Designate a person to ensure these items are kept filled and restocked throughout the day.
- ◆ Pedal rubbish bins should be conveniently placed in areas around the office. These should to be emptied daily if not more often, by the designated person, using disposable gloves.
- ◆ Door handles, and cupboard handles should be wiped hourly by a designated person using a disposable cloth and disinfectant.
- ◆ The air conditioning/ventilation system in the workplace needs to be in efficient working order. This may need to be checked by the designated person.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing rules that have been in place in New Zealand during Alert Levels 4 and 3 will still be in place at Level 2. Make sure your staff know what is expected of them.

- ◆ All physical contact such as handshaking, embracing, kissing, or hongi is restricted to non-contact recognition such as smiling or waving.
- ◆ Physical distancing of one metre or more is required in the workplace between employees, consultants, financial advisers and other personnel usually expected to be on-site working.
- ◆ A one-metre distance is required between on-site personnel and clients or visitors. However, a two-metre distance should be established between 'strangers' where it is not so easy to contact trace.
- ◆ The number of people in a meeting or interview room will be limited according to the size of the room in order to maintain the social distancing requirement.
- ◆ Visits by clients on your premise is limited to two hours.
- ◆ Desk/workstations will be separated at least one metre apart.

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- ◆ Lift occupancy is limited to two people at any one time to maintain the one-metre distance. If the lift is small then it will be one person at a time – signage will be required to let people know the protocol.
- ◆ Workstations, cadenzas, and office chairs will not be shared - so no 'hot' desking will be permissible.
- ◆ Where there are wider passageways in the office the area can be designated as 'one way' traffic, or divided into safe passing lanes. Otherwise, it is a 'give way' protocol.
- ◆ The use of on-site toilet/bathroom facilities should be limited to a 'one out and one in' protocol. The external door to the toilet/bathroom will need to have an engaged/vacant sign installed.
- ◆ Protocols for use of the stairwells will need to be implemented to ensure the one-metre distancing is maintained. For example, where there are stairwells on both sides of the building, one side can be designated for upwards traffic and the other side can be designated for downwards traffic. Where there is only one stairwell, then this can be restricted to one-way movement only or a 'give way' protocol.
- ◆ Access to a small kitchen area may be controlled with a 'one out and one in' protocol, whereas larger kitchen/café areas will need to reduce and rearrange tables and chairs to ensure they are one metre apart from all angles – this will also restrict access to a limited number of people at any one time. Tea and lunch breaks could be staggered.
- ◆ The number of people in the reception areas at any one time will need to be limited. Some seating will need to be removed and other seats will need to be rearranged. While the responsibility for managing the reception area will be assigned to the receptionist, signage will support the protocol.
- ◆ Gatherings of people of up to a maximum of 10 people for indoor and outdoor events are permissible as long as the one-metre social distancing is observed (note these numbers are being reviewed regularly – this number was valid on the 11 May 2020).

CONTACT TRACING

All businesses require a contact tracing register. This can be an automated application which is the most secure option, or a hard copy register available at the reception desk.

- ◆ The contact tracing register must be treated as confidential and should be available to only the Ministry of Health through the relevant Public Health Unit if required for contact tracing. *(Formal contact tracing under the Health Act must be completed by a medical officer of health, health protection officer or suitably qualified health or community worker nominated by a medical officer of health or DHB).*
- ◆ All employees, consultants and financial advisers usually working on the business premises, should enter their name, address, workplace, phone and email details into a logbook.
- ◆ All visitors, including company personnel who would not usually be working on the business premises, should enter their name, address, workplace, phone and email details into a

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logbook. Time in and time out will need to be recorded along with the business personnel they visited on the premises.

- ◆ All details relating to off-premise visits made by employees, consultants, and financial advisers should be logged, such as date, time, location, and personnel contacts.
- ◆ A designated person can take down the information, otherwise personnel need to sanitise their hands before and after completing the details or use disposable gloves and use their own pen.

Protection of people's private information is very important, so once the information is recorded it must be stored in a secure place. A third party should not be able to access this information or take a photo of it. The information must be destroyed within a two-month timeframe. This means not throwing it in the bin, but shredding it.

OUT OF OFFICE CONTACT WITH CLIENTS

Contact with clients in venues other than the business premises, will need to adhere to the same requirements for personal contact, distancing and hygiene, as in the business premises.

- ◆ No physical contact with clients such as handshakes etc.
- ◆ Seating should be one metre apart.
- ◆ The requirements should be explained to clients or prospective clients at the time the visit is arranged.
- ◆ A home visit should be postponed if a client or prospective client is in self-isolation due to COVID-19 risk of contamination.
- ◆ A home visit should be postponed if a client or prospective client has COVID-19 symptoms or has recently recovered from COVID-19.
- ◆ Where a meeting is arranged at a public venue with a client or prospective client, social distancing and hygienic practices should be maintained.
- ◆ Do not share any office equipment such as pens and clipboards with clients or prospective clients.
- ◆ All addresses, locations and client or prospective client details to be logged including times of the visits and vehicles used.

MANAGING PERSONAL RISK

There are various measure the business can take to help your employees, consultants and financial advisers to manage their personal risk. Some suggestions include:

- ◆ Have them complete a daily wellness check and record this on a specified report sheet.

- ◆ Advise them to get immunised against infectious diseases.¹
- ◆ Ensure they remain at home if they are sick.

¹ See Ministry of Health recommendations

SAFETY PLANNING

At Alert Level 2 the business is required to ensure the environment is safe for work.

The responsibility for a safety assessment is on the business. Worksafe, the government agency have proposed that a COVID-19 safety plan should consider the following issues:²

- ◆ The plan should be discussed and shared with everyone at work before work starts.
- ◆ Are there any risks arising from restarting your business or a business activity that has been shut down during alert levels 4 and 3, and how will you manage these?
- ◆ How will you ensure all workers know how they are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- ◆ How will you gather information on the wellness of your workers to ensure that they are safe and well to work?
- ◆ How will you operate your business in a way that keeps workers and others safe from exposure to COVID-19?
- ◆ How will you manage an exposure or suspected exposure to COVID-19?
- ◆ How will you evaluate, and continuously review, whether your work processes or risk controls are effective?
- ◆ How do any changes impact on the risks of the work you do?
- ◆ The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated as circumstances change.

See the Worksafe safety plan template <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/covid-19-safety-plan-what-you-need-to-think-about/>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Make sure you have read the latest information from the various government websites:

- ◆ Unite Against COVID-19: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>
- ◆ The Ministry of Health: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>
- ◆ Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/about/open-government-and-official-information/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- ◆ Worksafe New Zealand: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/>
- ◆ PPE information for non-healthcare workers: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-workers/personal-protective-equipment-use-non-health-workers>

² WorkSafe.govt.nz

CHECKLIST FOR OUT OF OFFICE CONTACT WITH CLIENTS

- Clients and potential clients are asked what their safety requirements are for home visit contacts, or out of office contacts on other premises.
- The safety requirements for an organisation is explained to clients or prospective clients at the time the visit is arranged.
- No physical contact with clients such as handshakes etc.,
- Seating is one metre apart.
- A home visit is postponed if a client or prospective client is in self-imposed isolation due to COVID-19 risk of contamination.
- A home visit is postponed if a client or prospective client has COVID–19 symptoms or has recently recovered from COVID-19.
- Where a meeting is arranged at a public venue with a client or prospective client, social distancing and hygienic practices are maintained.
- Office equipment such as pens, whiteboard pens, clipboards, briefcases, satchels, folders are not shared with clients or prospective clients.
- All addresses, locations and client/prospective details are logged including times of the visits and vehicles used.

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CHECKLIST FOR A SAFETY PLAN

The plan addresses three core safety issues: 1. Physical/social distancing, 2. Hygiene & contamination control, 3. Contact Tracing

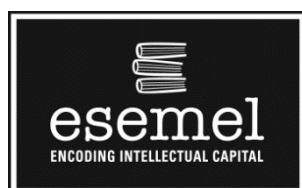
Date Completed/Reviewed	Activity	Person Responsible
	The COVID requirements and safety plan are promulgated throughout the office and to all employees, consultants, and financial advisers.	
	Signage is designed and posted in visible and strategic places through-out the office.	
	Flexible work rosters are devised to allow some employees, consultants, or financial advisers to work from home where this is possible; day on day off rosters are arranged if required.	
	At-risk employees, consultants and financial advisers are identified and flexible working arrangements are agreed and put in place.	
	All workplace areas and venues, including vehicles, lifts and stairwells, that are occupied, inhabited or frequented by employees, consultants, financial advisers and clients and visitors, including tradespeople, are identified, organised, and rearranged if required, to ensure a metre physical distance can be observed at all times and in all events.	
	Alternative workplace strategies are devised to limit contact or association between people in all areas of the office -, including kitchen/café, lifts, stairwells and toilet facilities.	
	Office equipment, furniture, and fittings commonly used or applied in the workplace by employees, consultants, financial advisers and clients and visitors, including tradespeople, are identified for hygiene control.	
	Commercial strength disinfectant, disposable wipes, disposable gloves and masks, pedal rubbish bins are provided and available, and regularly replenished throughout the office and building.	
	A daily schedule for hygiene control, wipe downs and cleaning are set up, adhered to and reviewed.	
	Wellness checks are completed on a daily basis by employees, consultants, and financial advisers, and wellness records are completed.	
	Sick/unwell employees, consultants, financial advisers are identified and remain at home until well again.	
	A contact register is instituted and completed each morning on arrival; on each entry after an out of office visit, meeting or meal, by all employees, consultants, and financial advisers.	
	A contact register is instituted and completed on arrival by clients and visitors including tradespeople at the office.	

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Disclaimer

Esemel Limited, on behalf of Financial Advice New Zealand, has compiled the information contained in this document from information currently available during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sources include the government's Unite Against COVID-19 website, and the websites of The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, Worksafe New Zealand, and various human resource management organisations.

The advice available to businesses from the government is changing daily, and member organisations are encouraged to confirm information as accurate. Esemel Limited and Financial Advice New Zealand are not liable for any damages arising in contract, tort or otherwise from the use of any material contained in this document, or from any action or decision taken as a result of using this document.



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