



# **Covid-19 workplace protocols for the road freight transport industry, as at 20 April 2020**

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## **Introduction**

At midnight Wednesday 25 March 2020, the New Zealand Government placed the country under an Alert Level 4 lockdown, effectively making all people in the country other than those deemed “essential workers” remain confined to their homes to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Emerging from the Level 4 lockdown will allow more business activity, but it is important that those businesses able to engage in that activity follow protocols to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

This is a guidance document of protocols for employers and workers in the road freight transport industry managing in the Covid-19 environment, which will be ongoing in some form until an approved vaccine is found and widely available.

## **Road Transport Forum (RTF)**

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Association NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate

16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports 93% of the total tonnes of freight moved in New Zealand.

## Principles

This is a principles-based approach to additional health and safety protocols in the workplace environment while the spread of Covid-19 remains a threat in the New Zealand community. That is, it is not a prescriptive, rather a set of protocols that can guide businesses through the alert levels in a world where there is currently no vaccination to stop the spread of Covid-19.

## Guidance and law

This protocol guidance is designed to work alongside existing New Zealand law, rules and regulations that already cover road freight transport, and New Zealand Government guidance governing workplaces specific to Covid-19 including the:

- [Workplace Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
- [Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996](#)
- [Land Transport Act 1998](#)
- [Land Transport Management Act 2003](#)
- [Road User Charges Act 2012](#)
- Guidance on the Ministry of Health Covid-19 [website](#) which is updated regularly
- Guidance on the New Zealand Government's Covid-19 [website](#) which is updated regularly

The following road freight industry transport-type groups may have additional guidance specific to their sectors:

- National Livestock Transport & Safety Group (NLTSG) – includes the Ministry for Primary Industries safe practice registration for essential services and support services
- Petroleum Industry Safety Forum (PITSF)
- Fuel Distributors Industry Safety Committee (FDISC)
- Log Transport Safety Council (LTSC)
- NZ Intermodal Transport Safety Group (NZITSG)

This guidance does not replace the law and is not legally binding. It is an assurance to Government that road freight transport operators will follow protocols to protect against the spread of Covid-19 and meet all the requirements set out in Alert Level rules issued by the Government.

## Assumptions

There is an assumption that customers sending and receiving freight, as well as those handling it, such as ports, will have their own sets of protocols to protect against the spread of Covid-19.

These protocols sit alongside those. Road freight operators cannot assume the burden of responsibility for their customers at either end of their journey, or the organisations they interact with professionally along the way.

## Alert levels

Full information about Alert Levels can be found [here](#).

Guidance on what business can and cannot operate can be found [here](#).

This is the information about Workers and Businesses on the Government's Covid-19 website – but visit the website for full details.

### Workers and businesses

Most, but not all businesses can start to open under Alert Level 3. Businesses are obliged to eliminate transmission risks where possible, and where not, to substitute work practices or provide as high-a-level of control as possible. We expect that businesses maintain, or create new practices that meet or exceed the MoH guidelines as they are updated.

Workers must work from home if they can.

- Workplaces must operate safely – keeping one metre between workers, recording who is working together, limiting interaction between groups of workers, disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining high hygiene standards.
- Under alert level 3, before your businesses resumes operations, you need to have a Covid-19 safety plan that sets out how you will operate safely. If you're an essential business that resumed operations under alert level 4, you can continue to use your existing plans but it's a good idea to check our safety plan guidance and see if there are any gaps you need to address. More information about what to include in a plan can be found on WorkSafe's website, including a template you can use. <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/covid-19-safety-plan-what-you-need-to-think-about/> Workplaces must engage with employees (as individuals or representatives) in any decision making for changes to work practices. Any staff consultation and/or feedback should be an ongoing process so that workplaces are able to improve practices and learn lessons to continuously improve management and safety.
- Retail and hospitality businesses can only open for delivery and contactless pre-ordered pick up – customers cannot enter stores.
- Supermarkets, dairies and petrol stations can continue to allow customers into their stores, with the same restrictions and measures in place as Alert Level 4.

- Businesses cannot offer services which involve face-to-face contact or sustained close contact (e.g. hairdressing, massage, house cleaning, or door-to-door salespeople).
- Other in home services can be delivered if it is safe to do so (like tradespeople for repairs or installations) – keep two metre separation from those in the house.
- Most workers will not require PPE to stay safe at work. Incorrectly used PPE can create more risk. Good hygiene measures like hand washing with soap and water, physical distancing, sneeze and cough etiquette, and wiping down surfaces is the best defence against COVID-19.

## **Traceability**

The key issue for the Government in allowing businesses to return to activity is that traceability can continue to track and manage any outbreaks of Covid-19.

As outlined in the Protocols, businesses must keep accurate records of all human interaction to allow rapid traceability by health officials if necessary.

## **Protocols**

These guidelines and protocols have been developed using the following framework:

- Before people get to work
- When people arrive at work
- While people are at work (including the assumption that customers sending and receiving freight, as well as those handling it, such as ports, will have their own sets of protocols to protect against the spread of Covid-19)
- While people are working in and around trucks
- When people are leaving work

It is expected that all workers will be involved in identifying and managing risks in the workplace.

### **Before people get to work**

#### **Stay home if you are unwell**

Everyone must self-assess their health prior to heading to work. If in doubt, phone Healthline on 0800 358 5453, or your own doctor, to get advice.

#### **General hygiene**

Practise good hygiene at ALL TIMES including:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Put used tissues straight into a covered bin

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Clean and disinfect frequently used hard surfaces
- Clean and disinfect frequently used objects such as mobile phones, keys, wallets and work passes

### **Getting to and from work**

Wherever possible employees are to travel individually, as a single occupant, with no passengers, to and from a work site. Avoid sharing vehicles wherever possible. Ensure you can apply appropriate physical distancing.

### **At work - general**

All managers, supervisors, and individual staff should demonstrate leadership and appropriate self-supervision to ensure that the highest possible standards are met and that they are looking out for the health and safety of their colleagues and community while at work.

### **Hygiene at work**

In addition to practising good hygiene as set out above, all work sites should have available:

- Alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- Alcohol-based cleaning products for wipe down areas
- Anti-bacterial soap and water
- Paper towels to wipe down surfaces and be disposed of
- Tissues
- Gloves
- Bins / bags / waste areas to dispose of used cleaning items

If sanitisers cannot be sourced then frequently wash hands with soap and water, which must be provided.

Make the hygiene rules clear by putting up posters from the Ministry of Health, such as the one in Appendix 1.

### **Physical distancing**

Maintain physical distancing – best practice is 2 metres of separation between people. Separation can also be achieved through staggering start / finish / and meal break times.

Where businesses cannot achieve the preferred physical distance of 2 metres between workers, they should ensure a minimum of 1 metre separation and should put in place additional mitigation measures (e.g. personal protection

equipment). It is important that all businesses adapt the principles of disease control for their specific circumstances.

They must ensure, as much as possible, that people are able to remain within their designated 'bubble' and do not spread the virus.

The following protocols should be discussed and agreed with teams:

- Stagger breaks so that there are no communal lunches, smoko or other gatherings
- Maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres from others
- Where they are available, handheld two-ways could be used to reduce close contact between crew and visitors

### **Traceability – site register**

Have a register for all employees, visitors and service providers to ensure contact tracing can be done by the Ministry of Health (MoH) if there is a Covid-19 case at your workplace.

Ensure up-to-date logs are kept of all trucks on the road, who is driving them, and who each driver interacts with on each and every journey. These should be released to the MoH if there is a Covid-19 case at your workplace.

### **Health assurances from visitors and customers**

You can ask any visitors and customers to inform you if they:

- Are required to self-isolate due to being diagnosed with Covid-19
- Are showing symptoms of Covid-19
- Have been in contact with a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19
- Have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
- Have been in contact with anyone meeting any of the above criteria and/or been instructed to self-quarantine by authorities

### **Paper-based vs electronic**

Where possible replace paper-based documents that have to be handled by numerous people with electronic documents that can be sighted at distance on a mobile phone, or emailed. If this is not possible, you must ensure appropriate hygiene measures around handling of paper documents by multiple parties, e.g. Put them in plastic that can be wiped down with an alcohol-based disinfectant, and/or handle with gloves.

### **Shared vehicles (split shifts, different users on different days, etc)**

Where a vehicle or machine is shared between different drivers/operators, each user must wipe down at the beginning and end of each use:

- Interior (including high touch areas such as steering wheel, gear shift, seat belt and buckle, radio, window controls etc)

- Any handheld devices left in the vehicle (where possible individuals to retain their own handheld devices)
- Communications devices, fixed and mobile
- Exterior high touch areas including door handles
- Keys and/or remote sensor

General guidelines issued by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention for cleaning a truck cab during an influenza pandemic to avoid spread of disease, can be found [here](#).

### **Fuel purchases**

Use hand sanitiser or wash hands with soap and water both before and after refuelling vehicles.

### **Communication and employee welfare**

While face-to-face communication should be limited, these are stressful times and it is important to keep up communication with and between employees.

Make time to check-in on employees to assess how they are coping with a different work environment. Look for signs of stress, depression, or other mental health concerns and have steps in place to manage this via normal human resources processes.

### **Assessing the health of your employees**

Staff are not to attend a workplace if they have any symptoms of feeling unwell or are being tested for COVID-19.

Staff are not to attend a workplace if they have been in close contact with anyone who is displaying respiratory symptoms, being tested for Covid-19, or has a confirmed or probable case of Covid-19.

Staff are not to attend a workplace if they, or someone they come into close contact with, are considered 'higher risk' of becoming severely ill from Covid-19 ([Ministry of Health - most at risk](#)).

Where appropriate, an employer may recommend such employees are relocated, or assigned alternate duties for added protection.

### **Meetings**

Meetings should be conducted using phones or internet-based technologies that can operate on a range of devices.

Where meetings must take place on-site, the 2 metre distancing should be observed.

## **Training**

No face-to-face training should be provided either onsite or offsite until further notice.

## **Working from home**

While working from home is not an option for many road freight transport employees, businesses must identify work from home options for those employees for whom this is an option. Businesses should provide their employees with the tools to work from home.

## **Random drug testing**

Random drug testing is a regular practice in road freight transport. Discuss with your drug testing provider how this can be done under Alert Level 3.

## **Protocols specific to people working in and around trucks**

### **Arriving at Work**

- Ensure you are well rested the night before, ready for the day ahead
- Driver to self-declare that they are Covid-19 symptom free (using an app or day sheet) – you may want to consider temperature testing
- 1 driver inside the drivers' room or toilet at any time
- Maintain 2 metres distance between yourself and workmates
- Complete your pre-start checks
- If it is a shared truck, then follow protocols and wipe down cab with sanitiser
- Check you have an extra water bottle filled ready to wash hands on the road. Wash your hands prior to departing the yard with sanitiser or soap and water
- Carry soap and hand sanitiser with you on the road
- Ensure you have a way of storing and disposing of tissues and other rubbish used while on the road

### **Loading**

- Ensure there is clear communication with customers regarding loading and unloading. Do this remotely if possible, either via the dispatcher, communications devices, or pre-arranged agreement
- If discussing with loader in open air environment maintain 2 metres between yourself and loader, always avoid this process where possible – use communications devices as often as possible
- If you have exited the cab, wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

- Use electronic documents and maintain the 2 metre rule when showing/ viewing documents on another person's phone/electronic device
- If documents are paper-based, observe appropriate hygiene measures around handling and storing of paper documents by multiple parties – maintain the 2 metre rule during handling of documents
- Where appropriate use gloves and any other PPE gear determined appropriate by your employer/[MoH guidelines](#) (Appendix 2)
- Wipe down any surfaces you have touched during loading
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

### **On the road**

- Not all food outlets or public toilets are open, so ensure you have adequate food and drink for your journey, or know where you can stop in advance of starting your journey
- Stay in touch with your dispatcher and report any human interactions in case tracing has to occur
- RTF is maintaining lists of public toilets open in the North and South Islands – these are updated regularly. Check the RTF Covid-19 website [here](#)
- If you leave the cab, wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

### **Arriving at pick-up/delivery point**

- Discuss any loading/unloading process with loader operator remotely
- Remain in your cab at all times where possible
- If you need to speak with somebody in person, maintain 2 metres distance between yourselves
- Ensure the public do not make contact with your vehicle. If contact is made, ensure the area is cleaned prior to departure while wearing gloves and using a sanitiser wipe/spray.
- Transfer documents electronically – or by sighting on a phone/device at 2 metres distance
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab after loading/unloading

### **Weighbridge**

- Avoid contact with other people
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to entering the weighbridge kiosk. Do not enter unless unavoidable
- Weigh loads as instructed making sure distancing advice is observed
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water on leaving the weighbridge kiosk (Weighbridge owners to provide sanitiser on site)
- Wear your gloves when operating gantry controls

- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

### **Refuelling**

- Enter your fuel pin etc at the machine
- If you are using a public service station, observe the 2 metre distance rule
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water
- Wearing your gloves, start refuelling process
- Once complete, hang bowser back
- Remove your gloves and wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

### **Back at the yard - end of day**

Where a vehicle is shared between different drivers, each user must wipe down at the beginning and end of each use:

- Interior (including high touch areas such as steering wheel, gear shift, seat belt and buckle, radio, window controls etc)
- Any handheld devices left in the vehicle (where possible individuals to retain their own handheld devices)
- Two-way radio
- Exterior high touch areas including door handles
- Keys and or remote sensor

General guidelines issued by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention for cleaning a truck cab during an influenza pandemic to avoid spread of disease, can be found [here](#).

- Check drivers' room and if/once empty, go inside – 1 person at any time
- Hand over completed dockets and day sheets electronically. If these are paper-based have a contactless hand over system in place
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water

### **Punctures/blow-outs on the road**

- Contact office or supplier and notify of issue, which tyre, tyre size, your location
- Upon arrival of tyre repairer, remain in your cab and avoid any unnecessary contact with repairer – if you need to speak with repairer, do so in an open air environment and maintain 2 metres of distance. Do not assist with changing the tyre
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

## **Tyre changes [designated supplier]**

- Call ahead via office and notify of issue, which tyre and tyre size
- Park vehicle in designated area at supplier
- Avoid contact with supplier staff
- Remain in cab or outside of supplier building while repairs are completed
- Once complete, wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab

## **Workshop**

- Call ahead via office and notify of issue requiring repair on vehicle
- Complete vehicle fault sheet electronically, if paper-based, leave inside cab
- Park vehicle outside workshop
- Wipe down cab with sanitiser spray
- Do not enter workshop
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to the cab

## **CVST – NZ Police – other enforcement officers**

If stopped on your journey:

- Remain in your cab and advise officer you would always prefer to keep 2 metres from them, suggest they speak to you from the passenger side with door open and engine off
- If an officer needs to look at your logbook, request they use their sanitiser
- If you exit the vehicle for any reason, maintain 2 metres distance
- Wash your hands with sanitiser or soap and water prior to returning to cab
- Follow instructions and assist them in their job safely
- Advise your dispatcher so this can be recorded in the event of contact tracing being required

## **Talking with workmates**

- If you need to talk to workmates then do so either by phone or if possible, have a conversation outside in an open-air environment maintaining 2 metres of distance for less than 10 minutes

**AT ALL TIMES, MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCE, WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER AND KEEP YOUR SELF AND OTHERS SAFE.**



## Appendix 1

# Protect yourself and others against COVID-19



Cover your coughs or sneezes with tissues or your elbow



Put your used tissue in the rubbish bin or in a plastic bag



Wash and dry your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing – use soap or hand sanitiser



Stay away from others if you're unwell



**COVID-19  
HEALTH ADVICE  
0800 358 5453**

For international SIMs call +64 9 358 5453

[health.govt.nz/COVID-19](https://health.govt.nz/COVID-19)

**Protect your family/whānau from COVID-19 (coronavirus)**

New Zealand Government

February 2020 | HP7328

## Appendix 2

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirement for essential non-health<sup>‡</sup> workers - COVID-19

Basic hygiene measures for everyone include; physical distancing, good hand hygiene, cough etiquette, regular cleaning of surfaces and frequently touched items, avoid touching face, eyes, mouth and nose

Group	 Mask	 Gloves	 Eye Protection*	 Long sleeve gown
Accommodation Camp grounds	✗	✓ Use for cleaning	✗	✗
Border: Customs, Maritime pilots, Stevedores	✓ If not able to maintain physical distancing	Follow usual health and safety aspect of job and wear what is 'business as usual'	✗	✗
Building and Construction Plumbers, builders and electrician	Follow usual health and safety aspect of job and wear what is 'business as usual'			✗
Courts, tribunal workers	✓ If not able to maintain physical distancing	✓ If having physical contact with person and a risk of contact with body fluids		✗
Fast moving consumer goods, Delivery drivers (all goods including courier service)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Supermarket staff	✗	Staff may wish to wear for reassurance	✗	✗
Financial services – personnel/customer facing	✗	✗	✗	✗
Local and National government Staff involved in COVID-19 response <b>office based</b>	✗	✗	✗	✗
Primary Industries. Food production, processing food,	Follow usual health and safety aspect of job and wear what is 'business as usual'			
Primary Industries. Animal welfare staff and veterinarians	Follow usual health and safety aspect of job and wear what is 'business as usual'			
Police, Fire -in first responder role, Prison staff, Court staff,	✓ If not able to maintain physical distancing	✓ If having physical contact with person and a risk of contact with body fluids		✗
Public safety and National security, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice	✓ If not able to maintain physical distancing	✗	✗	✗
Social Services	✗	✗	✗	✗
Utilities and communications, including supply chain	✗ However if your usual standard operating procedure or Health & Safety guidance requires you to wear, then continue to follow that guidance	Follow usual health and safety aspect of job and wear what is 'business as usual'		

<sup>‡</sup> Refer to <https://covid19.govt.nz/government-actions/covid-19-alert-level/essential-businesses/> for your business sector

\* Face shield or goggles. Prescription glasses are not classed as eye protection. Remember to clean reusable eye protection between use.