

# COVID-19 FAQs

11 October 2021



## Alert Levels and General Information

This contains the most up-to-date and approved messaging on key COVID-19 matters.

Information that changes or is added between grids will be highlighted. Please ensure you are using the most up to date version.

This document answers frequently asked questions about what **Alert Level 3 and Alert Level 2** means for New Zealand.

This information applies from **5.00pm, 11 October 2021.**

Information can be used for any government, agency, local government or relevant sector and business communications.

This is a living document that will be updated frequently. Information that changes or is added between versions will be highlighted. New sections and changes to messages are in **yellow.**

Please ensure you are using the most up to date version.

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## Alert Level Status for New Zealand

Based on the latest public health assessment, Cabinet has decided to hold Alert Level 3 settings in place in Auckland, Northland, and parts of Waikato.

Northland and parts of Waikato will remain at Alert Level 3. This will be reviewed on Wednesday 13 October.

Due to the gradual increase in cases in Auckland, Cabinet decided to keep Alert Level 3, Step 1 settings in place until at least Monday 18 October. Cabinet will review Auckland's Alert Level status on Monday.

The remainder of New Zealand stays at Alert level 2.

The Alert Level boundaries between the Alert Level 3 areas and the rest of New Zealand will remain in place so every effort is made to make sure the virus does not transmit across the boundaries.

## Northland Alert Level status

On Friday 8 October, Northland moved to Alert Level 3, after a case was identified who had been in the region. The case, who travelled to Northland from Auckland, has been transferred to a quarantine facility in Auckland.

This person travelled through Northland, from the 2 October before returning to Auckland. Health officials are tracking down close contacts and locations of interest.

As with Waikato, the easing steps that were announced for Auckland this week do not apply in Northland.

The Auckland boundary will stay in place.

The Level 3 restrictions for Northland will be reviewed on Wednesday 13 October.

### **Q. What should Northland residents do?**

Level 3 requires people to stay home, including working and learning from home if they can. Stay local, wear a face covering when leaving home and keep 2 meters distance from people outside of your bubble.

If you develop symptoms, even if mild, get tested. A list of testing stations is available on the [Healthpoint website](#).

Get vaccinated. Vaccination is the best tool that we have to provide everyone with their individual armour against COVID-19 and reduce the need for prolonged lockdowns in the future. Vaccination centres are listed on the [Healthpoint](#) website.

### **Q. Why is only Northland being placed into Alert Level 3 rather than putting the whole of the North Island in Alert Level 3?**

At the start of this outbreak vaccination numbers were still low, and so we acted hard and fast to put the whole country into lockdown. But with increasing numbers of people vaccinated, the public health advice is that we can extend the boundary safely and avoid putting the whole of the North Island into lockdown.

We need people to keep getting vaccinated and test when they have symptoms. Not just in the Alert Level 3 areas, including Auckland, Northland, and parts of the Waikato, but across the whole of New Zealand. It is the best way to avoid future lockdowns.

### **Q. What travel restrictions will be in place?**

Travel in and out of the area by road or air is restricted. People will only be able to travel for limited permitted reasons and will need to carry evidence of they you are travelling. Police will be patrolling. People should stay home.

### **Q. What are the locations of interest?**

The locations of interest for Northland have been added to the [Ministry of Health website](#).

### **Q. Where are the testing centres and places for people to get vaccinated in Northland?**

There are five testing sites available across the region:

Whangarei – Rock and Roll car park, Pohe Island (9am–4pm); Kamo, 20 Winger Crescent (9am–4pm)

Dargaville – Dargaville Hospital (9am–4pm)

Kerikeri – 1 Sammaree Place (9am–4pm)

Kaitiāia – Kaitiāia Hospital, 29 Redan Road (9am–4pm)

Northland DHB, local iwi and providers are also working hard to ensure as many Northlanders are vaccinated as possible.

Four clinics are open for vaccinations at Kaitaia, Whangarei, Dargaville, and Kerikeri.

Kaitaia – The Old Warehouse Building, 11 Matthews Ave (10am-5pm)

Whangarei – Northland Events Centre (10am-5pm)

Dargaville - 22a Normanby St (11am-6pm)

Kerikeri – 1 Sammaree Place (9am-4pm)

## COVID-19 cases in the community

### **Q. What do we know about the woman who travelled with a companion to Northland from Auckland with COVID-19?**

Whole genome sequencing for the Auckland case who travelled to Northland has been completed on the initial sample, confirming the case is linked to the Auckland outbreak.

Due to sample quality limitations, whole genome sequencing could not link the case to a specific cluster, however resampling has been undertaken and ESR are working to improve the data quality of additional sequencing.

The case remains in an Auckland quarantine facility.

A second person who is thought to have travelled with this case has been contacted but not yet located.

The case was under investigation after returning a weak positive result from a test in Whangarei earlier this week and on Friday returned a positive test result in Auckland.

Public health staff continue to work closely with the person to determine any locations of interest or exposure events associated with the case. There are currently 21 close contacts associated with this case. The household of the case and travel companion are included in this number.

### **Q. Is it correct the second woman from Northland is sheltering at a far north marae?**

Police are working very hard to locate the second woman. The suggestion that she is in the far north is inconsistent with the information they have.

### **Q. Was the case reported in Katikati (Bay of Plenty) negative?**

The Ministry of Health can confirm that a follow-up test, for a person currently in Katikati, in the Bay of Plenty region, returned a negative result.

### **Q. Are there some staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 in North Shore Hospital?**

Two staff members have now returned positive results for COVID-19 following a positive case reported yesterday in a patient receiving treatment in the dialysis unit adjacent to North Shore Hospital.

The connection between the three cases is being investigated.

A few staff have been stood down initially as a precaution, and all those staff who have been tested have returned negative results.

The dialysis unit remains open, with measures in place to manage potential risk to both patients and staff. This includes use of PPE and intensive cleaning between each group of patients and plans to use a mix of rapid PCR and rapid antigen testing for staff prior to them starting their shift.

**Q. Is there also a COVID-19 case in Auckland City Hospital?**

Auckland DHB last night informed the Ministry that a fully vaccinated staff member tested positive for COVID-19 over the weekend.

Auckland City Hospital has now identified all contacts of the staff member, to carry out testing onsite for staff and patients. Two further hospital staff members have tested positive. Of the three, two were tested at a community testing site while one was tested as part of routine workplace surveillance.

Initial investigations have shown there are no links to the NICU parent case.

It's important to note Auckland City Hospital has Infection, Prevention and Control protocols in place and unless you're contacted by public health staff, patients and whānau who've been at the hospital you won't need to do anything further.

**Q. How is the truck driver who tested positive while in Palmerston North progressing?**

The individual from Auckland, who tested positive in Palmerston North and who had been in isolation on the hospital grounds was transferred on Friday (8 October) to Palmerston North Hospital and is currently receiving treatment. The MidCentral DHB report the patient is in a stable condition.

## Auckland Alert Level 3, Step 1

**Q. When will schools reopen?**

Today (Monday 11 October) Government public health advised Cabinet that given the growth in cases in the last week, there is a greater need for robust safety measures to be in place before schools reopen.

While these are put in place schools in areas still under Alert Level 3 will continue beyond next Monday to only provide onsite learning to students whose parents need to go to work. For other students in those regions, distance learning will recommence at the beginning of Term 4 on 18 October.

This will be reviewed next week.

**Q. What restrictions are easing in Auckland this week?**



On Tuesday 5 October, Alert Level 3 restrictions in Auckland started to ease. People are now able to:

Have outdoor gatherings between two households, up to a maximum of 10 people, for example a BBQ or a picnic in the park. Each household should maintain physical distancing from the other.

Undertake organised group activity with up to 10 people, for example outdoor yoga or group exercise classes. The activity organiser must ensure physical distancing is always maintained.

Enjoy recreation activities across the Auckland region such as fishing, diving, hiking and bowls. A maximum of 2 households can gather, with a limit of 10 people gathering. Everyone must maintain physical distancing.

Step 1 is still part of Alert Level 3 for Auckland, and everyone is encouraged to wear a face covering whenever they leave the house.

The easing of restrictions does not apply to the Waikato Alert Level 3 area.

Anyone who has symptoms or who has been at a location of interest must stay home, isolate, and get tested.

For more information on what is possible under Step 1 go to the COVID-19 [website](#).

### **Q. What are the golden rules in Auckland for Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

The golden rules in Auckland for Alert Level 3, Step 1 are:

- Continue to work or study from home if you can
- Wear a face covering and keep your distance from people while out and about
- Two households can meet up outdoors with a maximum of 10 people.
- More outdoor exercise such as yoga and group exercise classes. Up to 10 people can take part while maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres.
- Children can return to early childhood centres with 10 children in each bubble. Please keep all older children at home.
- Businesses that require close physical contact cannot operate. Gyms remain closed.
- Keep scanning QR codes and record keeping everywhere you go.
- Travel between regions is still restricted.

### **Q. What are the rules for outdoor social gatherings, outdoor recreation, and outdoor exercise classes?**

Outdoor social gatherings: 10 people maximum, from two households. Social distancing should be maintained.

Outdoor recreation: 10 people maximum, from two households. Social distancing between households should be maintained.

Outdoor exercise classes: 10 people maximum, including the instructor. Physical distancing of 2m must be maintained.

## **Social gatherings at Alert Level 3, Step 1**

### **Q. Can we hug when we reunite with another household?**

People are strongly encouraged to remain physically distanced when meeting up with another household outdoors.

### **Q. Can we share food between the two household 10 people gathering?**

Yes, but you should maintain physical distance between two households when meeting up outdoors.

### **Q. How do you define a household?**

This is the people you live with.

### **Q. Can people have as many outdoor gatherings as they want within a day?**

Step 1 has been created to encourage people to reconnect with close friends and whānau. Please act responsibly as Auckland is still at Alert Level 3.

### **Q. Can we meet in our own backyard or does it have to be a public park?**

You can meet in your garden or in an outdoor public space. People outside your household cannot access your backyard by entering your house or use indoor facilities during their stay.

The golden rule is that your gathering of 10 people is outdoors to reduce the ability of the virus to transmit.

### **Q. Do we have to wear a face covering when meeting a different household outside?**

No, face covering is recommended if you are around people you don't know but you do not need to wear masks when meeting another household outside with no more than 10 people present.

### **Q. Can people have a different child over every day as long as they play outside? Can a visiting child use the toilet in the house?**

Children's play dates can happen, but the intention of Step1 is to allow people to reconnect with close friends and whānau. People are asked to act responsibly by keeping their contacts to a minimum, keep track of who they are seeing and follow health guidelines.

Children visiting the house cannot enter the house to use the toilet or access the outdoor play area.

### **Q. Can we have a beer when we meet another household in a public park?**

Alcohol has been banned from some public places in Auckland. You can check where alcohol bans are in place at the [Auckland City Council website](#).

**Q. Can the two households who are gathering, travel in the same vehicle?**

No, when gathering together two households of no more than 10 people everyone must maintain 2m physical distance from each other. Also travelling in an enclosed space negates the ventilation benefits of meeting outside and could allow the virus to transmit more easily.

**Recreational activities at Alert Level 3, Step 1**

**Q. Can we use outdoor playgrounds in Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

Yes. When Auckland is in Alert Level 3, Step 1 public playgrounds will be open and able to be used by the public.

**Q. Can we go on a regional holiday (within the Level 3 boundary) in our two-household gathering, visit our bach, Airbnb or go camping or hire a campervan?**

No. Auckland is still in Alert Level 3. You cannot take holidays or overnight stays within the region. Recreational excursions are for day trips only.

**Q. Are outdoor exercise classes including boot camps and yoga available?**

Yes, outdoor only exercise classes can take place up to a maximum of 10 people. Participants do not have to be from one or two households only, but they do always need to maintain 2m physical distancing and remain outdoors (i.e. they cannot use gym indoor bathroom or changing facilities).

The instructor is included in the 10 people able to gather outdoors.

**Q. Can we go out on a boat?**

All types of recreational boating can occur (motorised or sailing), only people in one household should take part.

**Q. Can commercial tour or recreational businesses operate?**

No businesses such as Kayak hire or boat tours should not operate in Alert Level 3, Step 1.

**Q. Are all recreational water sports included in Step 1?**

Yes, cruising, fishing, diving, collecting seafood, and water sports are all allowed under the new Alert Level 3 settings for recreation in Auckland.

**Q. Can mainland Aucklanders travel to Waiheke or Great Barrier Island for a recreational day out?**

No, you cannot travel to Waiheke Island or Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) if you do not already live there.

**Q. Can I go flying as my recreational activity?**

Yes, recreational flyers in Alert Level 3, Step 1 can go flying.

## **Additional information**

### **Q. Are there any changes to the Auckland boundary area and travel across it?**

No. Air and land boundaries between Auckland and the rest of the New Zealand remain heavily restricted, and most people will not be permitted to travel across it without specified permission or exemptions. This is to provide confidence that COVID-19 will not be transmitted across the boundary.

Most people who are permitted to cross the boundary for business or personal reasons will require a COVID-19 test, with people travelling for permitted personal reasons requiring evidence of a negative result taken within 72 hours of travelling.

Information about permitted travel is available on the [Unite Against Covid website](#).

### **Q. When will gyms be able to reopen?**

Auckland remains at Alert Level 3, and gyms and indoor recreation facilities cannot open. Gyms are not currently included within the 3-Step plan for easing restrictions in Auckland, due to the high risk of transmission created by gym-going activity within confined indoor spaces.

## **Early Learning Centres at Alert 3, Step 1**

### **Q. What are the key guidelines for Early Learning Centre opening under Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

The Government has announced that with the right precautions, early childhood services in Auckland can now reopen. Early childhood services are expected to organise children in bubbles of no more than 10 children.

Teachers can only work with a single bubble while these restrictions are in place and it is expected that bubbles of children will not mingle with other bubbles.

Early childhood services will contact parents to advise of the number of children that they can safely manage on-site under these restrictions.

Parents, caregivers and staff will need to wear face coverings during pick-ups and drop-offs.

Educators are encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test and parents and staff need to wear masks at pick-up and drop-offs

Staff are not required to wear face coverings in the classroom.

## **Next steps**

### **Q. What are the next Steps after this initial easing of restrictions?**

Further Steps to ease restrictions will depend on public health advice. In Step 2, the plan is to open retail and public facilities, with the outdoor gathering limit increased to 25.

In Step 3, the plan is to reopen the hospitality sector, as well as close contact facilities like hairdressers and event facilities. Outdoor and indoor social gatherings of up to 50 could be permitted.

These changes will depend on what happens in the coming weeks. The best way for Aucklanders to ensure that restrictions are eased is to get vaccinated and follow the public health advice.

Everyone should continue to wear face coverings and maintain social distancing.

Cabinet will review each Step weekly to ensure it's safe to move before confirming the next Step. The wage subsidy will continue to be available.

**Q. In step 2, when retail and public facilities open will food courts in shopping malls be able to open?**

No, hospitality inside retail areas cannot open until Step 3. Food courts will stay closed in Step 2.

## Changes to Alert Level 2 restrictions

### General information

**Q. Have the rules changed regarding people standing on public transport in Alert Level 2?**

Yes, this rule has been removed and passengers are now able to stand when travelling on public transport in Alert Level 2.

**Q. What are the event facility capacity changes allowed for businesses in Alert Level 2?**

For event facilities, such as cinemas, theatres, stadiums, concert venues and casinos, the event facility capacity limit of 100 has been removed. Instead, capacity will be constrained by a 1m physical distancing rule.

This means that larger venues can now have more than 100 people, if the 1m physical distancing rule can be maintained.

This will apply for both ticketed and non-ticketed events, and for indoor and outdoor event facilities.

The 'seated and separated' rule remains for hospitality. Maximum capacity will be determined by the number of customers that can be physically separated by 1 metre. Because social gatherings do not use the seated and separated rule or physical distancing, the limit of 100 will continue to apply.

**Q. What defines a private social gathering? For example, can people host a cocktail function for a business for workplace without any social distancing?**

If it is held at an event or hospitality facility, then the 1 metre rule applies. If, for example, someone hired a “defined space” then social gathering rules apply – a 100 people limit, with no restrictions on physical distancing. A defined space is an indoor or outdoor space which has no shared airflow with other spaces and has separate entrance, bathrooms, and point of sale to any other areas.

For more information see the [Unite Against Covid website](#).

**Q. Are attendees at events required to wear face coverings?**

At events, attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering unless eating and drinking.

For hospitality settings, people are encouraged to wear a face covering unless eating or drinking.

For social gatherings, attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering.

**Q. Under current Alert level 2 restrictions, is there a cap on numbers allowed at outdoor events e.g. Christmas parades?**

At Alert Level 2 if an event were taking place outdoors but not within an event facility, it would be considered a gathering under the Health Order, and the 100-person limit would apply.

The change in capacity limits that came into force on Tuesday 5 October relates to defined event facilities, such as theatres, conference venues, casinos, and stadiums.

**Venues – stadiums at Alert Level 2**

**Q. How do the restrictions apply to event facilities with seating? Can people be standing at appropriate event facilities as long as they are 1m apart?**

Event facilities are able to operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, as long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained. If a hospitality venue is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

**Q. Can we now host rugby at our stadium with the only restriction of being physically distanced (1m apart) across all areas?**

Yes. Under the new requirements, event facilities can operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, so long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained.

If a hospitality venue (e.g. a café or bar) is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

**Q. Do we need to ensure guests are seated 1m apart?**

Yes. Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

### **Q. Can guests within bubbles be seated together?**

Yes, people can sit with those they live with.

### **Q. Do venues need to shut off every second toilet cubicle and urinal?**

Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

## **Venues – Dining, restaurants, cafes at Alert Level 2**

### **Q. If the event is a 200-person seated dinner, can people within their bubble sit at a table of 10 without being 1m apart?**

Yes, but event organisers should have systems in place to maintain physical distancing.

### **Q. Do tables need to be at least 1m apart?**

Yes. Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

## **Venues – General admission at Alert Level 2**

### **Q. Do the guidelines only apply to fully seated events? What about concerts with a standing area or an even with roaming patrons?**

Event facilities can operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, as long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained.

Event organisers should have systems in place to maintain physical distancing. This could mean only providing seating.

If a hospitality venue is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

# **Alert Level 3 in Waikato**

### **Q. What has happened in Waikato?**

As cases were found in Kāwhia and Karapiro, outside the initial Waikato Alert Level 3 boundary, the boundary was extended from 11.59pm, Thursday 7 October to cover the Waitomo District including Te Kuiti, as well as the Waipa and Ōtorohanga Districts.

### **Q. Why are you extending the boundary rather than putting the whole of the North Island in Alert Level 3?**

At the start of this outbreak vaccination numbers were still low, so the Government moved quickly to put country into lockdown. With increasing numbers of people vaccinated, the

public health advice is that the boundary can be extended safely without putting the whole of the North Island into lockdown.

### **Q. What should Waikato residents do?**

Level 3 requires people to stay home (including working from home), stay local, wear a face covering when leaving home and keep 2 meters distance from people outside of your bubble.

With new cases in Karapiro and Kāwhia local residents are asked to check if they have visited locations of interest and get tested.

People in the Waikato and wider New Zealand should get vaccinated.

To find out where vaccinations are available in the Waikato check here.

To find out more about testing stations in the area go to the Waikato District Health Board website.

### **Q. How is COVID-19 testing and containing the outbreak progressing?**

There are five pop up testing sites operating in Hamilton, Raglan, Huntly and Tokoroa, with all five being open for extended hours to cater to any lift in demand.

An existing site at Founders Theatre car park in Hamilton remains open.

An existing testing provider in Kāwhia has been expanded. More details on exact locations and hours are available on the Healthpoint and Waikato DHB sites.

### **Q. What are the boundaries for the places now in Alert Level 3 in the Waikato?**

The Alert Level 3 boundary has been extended and now covers the Waitomo District including Te Kuiti, as well as the Waipa and Ōtorohanga Districts.

Raglan, Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Ngāruawāhia, and Hamilton City (based on the Hamilton city boundary) were already inside the alert level boundary.

A map of the Alert level 3 areas in the Waikato can be found on the Unite Against COVID-19 website.

### **Q. Hamilton Airport is inside the extended boundary. What does this mean for air travel?**

Restrictions on travel by air will be in place. People will only be able to travel for limited permitted reasons.

### **Q. What happens if I have a flight booked to Hamilton?**

People outside the boundary who have travel booked through Hamilton airport will not be able to enter into the Alert Level 3 and will need to make alternative arrangements.

## **Q. How are spot checks at the Waikato Level 3 boundaries working?**

Police are conducting spot checks and high visibility mobile reassurance patrols throughout the Waikato Alert Level 3 area. There is no hard boundary to the south and east of the area and Police will be conducting random spots checks and patrols to ensure compliance.

Anyone unable to provide evidence of permitted movement may be turned around and may face prosecution for breaching COVID-19 regulations.

Police, supported by Aviation Security, will also be conducting checks at Hamilton Airport.

Police urge the public to respect the restrictions and expect the vast majority of people will do the right thing to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

A hard boundary between Auckland and Waikato remains in place with the pre-existing checkpoints at five locations.

## **Q. How does travel across the Waikato boundaries work?**

People can travel in and out of the Waikato Alert Level 3 area for limited permitted reasons. This includes for work in permitted business and services. Most people are not permitted to travel.

People can also cross into the Waikato Alert Level 3 area from an Alert Level 2 area to work in any business or service which is open in the Alert Level 3 area.

But people cannot cross from the Waikato Alert Level 3 area to work in an Alert Level 2 area, except for work in permitted businesses and services.

If you are travelling in and out of the Waikato Alert Level 3 area - other than across the boundary with Auckland – you are not required to provide evidence of a recent test.

If you are travelling for a permitted reason carry evidence of the purpose of travel and be prepared to explain reasons for travel should they be stopped at a checkpoint or spot check.

A formal business travel document is not required however we recommend people source a letter from their employer confirming place of work and need to travel

More information and travel advice will be available on the Unite Against COVID-19 website.

## **Q. Can I apply for a personal travel exemption to cross the new Waikato Alert level 3 boundary?**

Yes, with the change to alert levels in parts of Waikato, the Ministry of Health are processing personal travel exemptions (since Tuesday 5 October), in the same way they process applications for Auckland personal travel exemptions.

The criteria for personal travel exemptions into or out of the Waikato Alert Level 3 region will be the same as they currently are for the separate Auckland Alert Level region. For more information go to the MoH [website](#).

## **Q. Can Waikato residents go to Auckland (and vice versa) now we are both in Alert Level 3?**

No, the Auckland boundaries remain in place with checkpoints to ensure only permitted travellers cross.

Placing the north west Waikato into Alert Level 3 is intended as a temporary measure to allow health officials to trace and contain the small outbreak quickly before it spreads further.

# Information about testing

## **Q. What is the rapid antigen test pilot?**

Rapid antigen tests will be used in Auckland and Christchurch as a point-of-arrival test in the self-isolation pilots taking place in Auckland and Christchurch from the end of this month and into December.

## **Q. Does this mean New Zealand will introduce wide use of rapid antigen testing?**

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Businesses Innovation and Employment (MBIE) are working with businesses that are keen to accelerate additional levels of testing for their workforce.

# Vaccination information

## **Q. Government announced mandatory vaccination requirements today, who is impacted and when do they need to be vaccinated by?**

High-risk workers in the health and disability sector to be fully vaccinated by 1 December, 2021, and to receive their first dose by 30 October. This group includes general practitioners, pharmacists, community health nurses, midwives, paramedics, and all healthcare workers in sites where vulnerable patients are treated (including Intensive Care Units).

School and early learning staff and support people who have contact with children and students to be fully vaccinated by 1 January, 2022, and to receive their first dose by 15 November.

Weekly testing will be required for those not fully vaccinated by 1 January 2022.

All school employees in Auckland and other Alert Level 3 regions will be required to return a negative COVID-19 test result before they can return to work onsite.

## **Vaccination rates in different groups?**

### **Q. What support is available to assist people with disabilities to be vaccinated?**

DHBs provide a range of services that are designed to meet their communities' needs and have a range of support and accommodations in place. These include mobile vaccination services, residential disability services, and in some instances home visits.

To speak with a support specialist, people can call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 for free 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 'push 2' to speak to one of the team.

A toolkit is available for people supporting disabled people with key messages, digital assets for social media channels, newsletters and website, frequently asked questions, and links to further information and resources. The toolkit can be found [here](#).

If anyone or someone they support, might need a home vaccination it is best to call the COVID-19 vaccination helpline – 0800 28 29 26 – to discuss options available. They will also be able to connect you with someone at the local DHB to confirm that it is suitable to have a home visit and organise logistics.

### **Q. Is it possible to organise a home visit for people with disabilities wanting vaccination?**

Yes, home visits may require more organisation which sometimes takes time to work through.

Under Alert Level 3 and 4, some mobile services, including home visits may not always be possible in some regions to ensure people can remain safely in their bubble and to manage workforce constraints.

### **Q. How are plans to vaccinate 12- to-15-year-olds going?**

More than 60 percent of the 12- to 15-year-old group has already received at least one dose. Uptake in this group has been faster than in any other age group.

### **Q. What are the plans to vaccinate children under 12?**

For Medsafe to consider whether to grant provisional approval for the Pfizer vaccine for people under the age of 12, Pfizer must submit an application to Medsafe. They have not yet received an application from Pfizer to vary the approval of their COVID-19 vaccine for people under the age of 12 years. It has provisional approval for use in people aged 12 and over.

When Pfizer does apply, Medsafe will prioritise the assessment of the data for this age group. If Medsafe provisionally approves the Pfizer vaccine for people under 12, further clinical and scientific advice will be sought from the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) and that will inform the "decision to use" advice considered by Cabinet.

## **Vaccination supply and expiry dates**

### **Q. How do we store and ensure the Pfizer vaccine we have is safe and working?**

All the vials currently in central storage (stored at -70c), have an expiry date of either 31 December or 31 January. The MoH is working with Medsafe and Pfizer to apply the new storage requirements, which further increase the stock life in freezers.

## **Q. Is there a risk the vaccines we have in storage will expire before they are used?**

The Ministry of Health is proactively managing stock at every vaccination site. Vaccine stocks are checked each day for doses near expiry. Stock management processes include “first to expire, first out” Any expired vaccines that expire are destroyed.

## **Q. Is there a regular supply of Pfizer vaccine coming to New Zealand?**

Aotearoa will continue to receive regular scheduled deliveries from Pfizer for the remainder of 2021. With 4.38 million doses scheduled for delivery by the end of the year.

## **Q. Is there much wastage of the vaccine?**

No, wastage is kept to a minimum currently tracking at around 0.22 per cent week to week, well below New Zealand’s own target of less than 2 per cent. This translates to around 155 vials. We know an effective immunisation programme recognises that some wastage is inevitable.

Information on this is updated and published this every week on the Ministry of Health’s website.

## **Q. What is the Government doing to encourage people to be vaccinated?**

A national day for action for vaccination is planned for Saturday 16 October.

The event will have vaccine clinics open throughout Aotearoa all day and into the evening. Political and civic leaders, communities and businesses are being asked to contribute to a big collective effort to get people to the event and vaccinated.

## **Introducing My COVID Record**

From the end of November, everyone in New Zealand will be able to access a scannable QR code as proof of vaccination and COVID-19 test results.

This will help reduce the risk of the virus spreading at large gatherings and events over the summer and into next year.

The first phase of this project launches next week with the website My COVID Record, where people will be able to view their vaccination records.

This is the same platform that will later allow you to download digital vaccination and COVID-19 test certificates for use in New Zealand and overseas.

Users will be able to either print or save the QR codes on their smartphone in an Apple or Google Wallet.

There will be separate codes for domestic and international verification of vaccination records and COVID-19 test results.

## **Q. What if I had my vaccinations overseas?**

My COVID Record draws upon information in the national COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR).

In time if you have received a suitable COVID-19 vaccination(s) overseas and this is registered in the New Zealand COVID-19 Immunisation Register, it will be displayed in My COVID Record.

**Q. How can I access My COVID Record?**

Details will be published on the Ministry of Health website next week. It will be compatible on a smartphone or computer.

**Q. From when will I be required to show the QR Code at events?**

The exact timing for when proof of vaccination will be required is still being discussed. Government is also consulting with business, hospitality and events sector on the finer details of how it can work.

**Q. What are the options for people who can't be vaccinated due to medical reasons?**

The Ministry of Health is looking at options for how non vaccination for health reasons can record this in the COVID Immunisation Record (CIR) and how this would work in practice.

**Q. Can I use the purple card I received at my vaccine appointment instead?**

The purple appointment cards don't provide proof of vaccination status as they could be easily forged or altered. They are appointment reminder cards – so people know when their second vaccination appointment is.

**Q. What if I need proof of vaccination today?**

In the interim, before the certificates are launched, if people need formal proof of their COVID-19 vaccination, they can request a vaccination confirmation letter from the Ministry of Health.

**Q. Will records be required at all restaurants and events?**

The MoH is still working through the settings where proof of vaccination will be compulsory.

**Q. Will it cost me any money to use the app?**

The app will be free.

**Q. Is My COVID Record the same App as the NZ COVID Tracer App?**

No, but there will be a link to My COVID Record within the COVID Tracer App.

**Q. Will it be mandatory to use My COVID Record when going to events and businesses?**

Government are working within the events and hospitality industry to determine when proof of vaccinations might be required for entry to events and venues, and to ensure the technology is fit for purpose.



Equally important is clarifying areas where it should not be required, for example people accessing essential services.

**Q. Why haven't you asked for ID for people getting vaccinated and how do we know it was the right person?**

A conscious decision was made earlier on in the vaccination programme rollout to support as many people to be vaccinated as possible which meant trusting New Zealanders to do the right thing. While it is possible to get vaccinated in someone else's name we are asking New Zealanders to act in a trustworthy way. It is worth noting that this is an offence under the COVID Act, and there are health risks to receiving treatment intended for another person.

**Q. Will the certificates will be accepted overseas?**

The international certificates are separate to the domestic certificates. These will meet EU standards for proof of vaccination to enable international travel. The government is currently talking with EU officials to make sure it is accepted there, and officials have begun the same conversation with other international jurisdictions.

At this point, it is the closest thing that exists to a universal way to prove a person's vaccination status for international travel.

## International travel

**Q. Why aren't New Zealand citizens required to be vaccinated before returning to New Zealand?**

Legally we cannot preclude New Zealand citizens from returning to their home by placing conditions, such as a vaccination order, on their right to enter.

**Q. What are the plans to help Cook Islanders stranded in NZ by COVID-19 lockdown?**

For Cook Islanders at Alert Level 3 in Auckland, a flight is scheduled to depart from Auckland Airport to Rarotonga on 15 October.

People intending to travel on this flight will be required to have a COVID-19 test 72 hours before departure.

Travellers flying from Auckland will need to complete up to 14 days of Managed Isolation and Quarantine on arrival.

## Information for business

**Q. Are forestry and logging trucks one of the permitted industries to travel across boundaries?**



Yes, from 5 October necessary forestry and wood processing is a permitted reason for travel across Alert Level boundaries to reduce possible implications to the supply chain.

More information about the testing and documentation that workers will require is available on the Unite Against Covid-19 [website](#).

**Q. When does the fourth round of wage subsidy support begin?**

Applications for the fourth round of COVID-19 Wage Subsidy opened on Friday 1 October and will close at 11.59pm on Thursday 14 October.

Businesses in any part of New Zealand can apply if 40% of their revenue decline is due to the effect of Alert Levels 3 or 4, and they meet the other eligibility criteria.

More information is available on the [Work and Income site](#).

**Q. When is the next Resurgence Support Payment available?**

Another round of the COVID-19 Resurgence Support Payment will also be made available, from 8 October.

More information will be made available on the [Inland Revenue](#) website.