

Te Kāhui
Whaihanga
New Zealand
Institute of
Architects



COVID-19 Info

COVID-19 – Returning to work under Alert Level 2: Commercial case study (Contractor's perspective)

On Wednesday 13th at 11:59pm, the alert level was lowered from Level 3 to Level 2 allowing the economy to reopen further and for people to resume many of their everyday activities. Most contractors have remobilised and have resumed site operations in accordance with their COVID-19 site specific safety plan (**SSSP**) developed with the help of the Construction Health and Safety New Zealand (**CHASNZ**) standard and protocols and the guidance provided by WorkSafe New Zealand.

Each construction site operating at Alert Level 2 needs to have in place effective controls to minimise the transmission of COVID-19 and the PCBU who has overall responsibility for the site needs to ensure the control measures are effectively managed and the health and safety of the contractor's personnel are not put at risk. CHASNZ is encouraging all construction sector participants to have a zero-tolerance approach to any serious breaches of the SSSP by either individual personnel or companies.

The following case study illustrates the type of COVID-19 controls that have been put in place to limit the transmission of COVID-19 among the personnel on a commercial construction site.

Health and safety measures introduced on site

Site access

- Prior to arriving on site, all personnel are to be inducted and this is being carried out by phone.¹
- Only those personnel who are required to be on site are allowed on site and access to the site is restricted

1. As per the V&H Construction Protocol, the induction can be carried out in-person, however physical distancing and hygiene protocols needs to be followed. Refer to https://secure.chasnz.org/downloads/resources/New_Zealand_COVID19_Construction_Protocols_LEVEL2.pdf

through fencing to prevent members of the public from accessing the site.²

- All personnel are required to sign-in on the site register.³ The register also requires workers to sign a declaration asking health, travel and COVID-19 contact related questions. A copy of the 'personal health flowchart' has been displayed by the sign-in register to remind all personnel to check that they are safe to be on site. Additional signage has been displayed to remind personnel of the COVID-19 protocols.
- A hand sanitiser station is located at the sign-in and must be used after signing in. The use of the hand sanitiser is compulsory and the failure to use the hand sanitiser will result in the individual being removed from site.

Meetings

- Where possible, meetings are held by telephone or video conferencing.
- Where meetings are necessary, social distance rules are applied (separation of one metre between people).⁴

Physical contact

- All physical contact is to be avoided and social distancing rules (one-metre separation) are to be applied.⁵ Where work can only be carried out safely

2. Where personnel must wait, one-metre circles have been taped to the ground to identify people's personal bubbles.

3. The sign-in is electronic. The information is being retained for a period to assist the District Health Boards if contact tracing is required. Providing false answers will result in the individual being removed from site.

4. Where possible the meeting is to be held in parts of the site that are open, or at minimum, well ventilated to allow fresh air to circulate. When the Architect is required to visit site to carry out their observation duties, the Architect must follow the offices COVID-19 health and safety plan and the contractors COVID-19 site specific safety plan.

5. The V&H Protocol recommends one-metre separation as being the minimum and where reasonably practicable, greater separation is encouraged.

within one-metre, additional PPE⁶ and increased hygiene is required, and the duration of the task is to be reduced.

- Where workers may congregate, e.g. site entry and lifts, tape is to be placed on the floor to help remind personnel to remain separated and to maintain their bubble.
- Prestart meetings and toolbox talks are to be held in large, well ventilated spaces with social distancing rules applied.⁷
- The number of personal able to use the lift at any one time has been reduced to maintain social distancing.⁸
- Corridors and stairs have been reorganised to be one way to avoid personnel passing each other closer than one metre.
- Personal breaks are to be staggered across the day to minimise the number of people in the lunchroom. Personnel are being encouraged to take breaks outside.

Hygiene

- Practicing good hygiene is being encouraged through signage. Hands are to be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and then dried thoroughly before eating, after using the bathroom and after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- All tools that are shared are to be wiped down with disinfectant wipes.
- No shared dishes, cups or cutlery. All dishes and cutlery are to be washed after use.
- All surfaces in the lunchroom are to be cleaned after every break. Cleaning products and cloths have been provided for personnel to use.
- Hand sanitiser has been made available in a variety of locations.

Cleaning

- Bathrooms are to be cleaned four times daily with increased cleaning when required. A cleaner's register is used to monitor cleaning in the bathrooms.
- Surfaces such as door handles, lift buttons, stair balustrades, microwaves and kitchen surfaces are to be cleaned twice daily.
- High traffic areas are being cleaned daily.
- Any person feeling unwell is to either not attend site or leave site immediately and inform their supervision or manager. The person must follow the Ministry of Health guidelines and self-isolate until well before returning to site.

6. The additional PPE includes face masks, glasses and gloves.

7. Tape is to be placed on the floor to indicate the position of the chairs to ensure social distancing is maintained. Where a record of attendance is required, photographs are being taken. Upon exit, the rows are discharged separately to maintain social distancing.

8. The number of personnel allowed in the lift is dependant on the lift car size to maintain social distancing.

Note.

It is important principals, contractors and consultants operate in accordance with the standard and the protocols that have been developed by CHASNZ. The standard and protocols have been shared with Councils and MBIE and it is expected these entities will operate in accordance with them. WorkSafe has endorsed the standard and protocols as industry standards and in the event of a dispute or incident, WorkSafe are likely to use the standard and the protocols to determine what would be considered reasonably practicable.

The information contained in this case study is of a general nature only, and is not intended to address any specific circumstances. The information provided may not necessarily be in accordance with the CHASNZ Standard or Protocols, the guidance provided by Worksafe or the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

The following links will assist your practice in developing its own health and safety systems to help minimise the risk of your staff being infected by COVID-19 as they return to site:

CHASNZ standard and protocols:

- <https://www.chasnz.org/covid19>

Creating a COVID-19 safety plan:

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

Contact tracing:

- https://www.nzia.co.nz/media/5565380/nzia_covidadvicenote_05_24042020.pdf