

Te Kāhui  
Whaihanga  
New Zealand  
Institute of  
Architects



# COVID-19 Info

## COVID-19 – Returning to work under Alert Level 2: Residential 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 residential construction site.

### Health and safety measures introduced on site

#### 1. Site access

- Only those personnel who are required to be on site are allowed on site, and access to the site is restricted through fencing to prevent members of the public from accessing the site.<sup>1</sup>

1. Non-essential visitors can undertake site visits with prior notice. The visitor must ring the site manager to organise a time to attend. The site manager sets up the sign in station in advance of any workers arriving on site. Site signage makes it clear to personnel and visitors of the contractor’s commitment to maintaining COVID-19 controls. On some sites where the personnel numbers are high, two-metre circles taped to the ground identify people’s personal bubbles.

- All personnel including companies making deliveries, council inspectors and clients are required to sign-in on the site register.<sup>2</sup> The register also requires workers to sign a declaration asking health, travel and COVID-19 contact-related questions.
- All personnel are required to be re-inducted onto site.
- All personnel entering and exiting the site are required to use the wash station.
- Signage has been installed at the site entry outlining the sites commitment in controlling the spread of COVID-19.

#### 2. Meetings

- All meetings with principals, consultants<sup>3</sup> and subcontractors are being carried out by telephone or video conferencing.<sup>4</sup>
- Council inspectors are required to follow the same process as other personnel and must maintain social distancing (two-metre physical distancing) and are not to touch any surfaces unless necessary. Where a representative of the contractor is required to accompany the inspector, only one member of the contractor’s personnel attends.

#### 3. Physical contact

- All physical contact is to be avoided and social distancing rules are being applied. It is recommended that all personnel stay two metres away from those outside of their work bubble. For those personnel inside

2. The sign-in is manual and all personnel are required to bring their own pen. 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.

3. 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.

4. Meetings to assess the effectiveness of the controls are being carried out weekly for personnel to express their views and to suggest improvements or raise concerns.

their work bubble, a minimum separation of one-metre must be maintained. Where a person is required to work closely with another person on health and safety grounds, this two-person team (work bubble) must work together for as long as possible.

- No personnel are to share tools or equipment unless necessary. Where tools have been shared, the tools must be cleaned and sanitised daily.
- Prestart meetings and toolbox talks are to be held outside with social distancing rules applied. Tape is to be used to help maintain a person's personal bubble.
- Personal breaks are being staggered across the day to minimise the number of people in the lunchroom. Personnel are being encouraged to take breaks outside to limit contact with others.

#### 4. Hygiene

- Practicing good hygiene is being encouraged through signage. A handwash station is installed and 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 surfaces in the lunchroom are to be cleaned after every break. Cleaning products and cloths are provided for personnel to use.

#### 5. Cleaning

- Bathrooms are to be cleaned daily.
- If a person is unwell and has been removed from site, the area the person has been in is to be sealed off until the area has been cleaned.
- Any person feeling unwell is to either not attend site or leave site immediately and inform their supervisor or manager. The person must follow the Ministry of Health guidelines and self-isolate until well before returning to site.

#### 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](https://www.nzia.co.nz/media/5565380/nzia_covidadvicenote_05_24042020.pdf)

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