



# **Standards for Alert Level 2 operations for tourism activities**

# Introduction

**Version 1, 11 May 2020**

Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) has worked with tourism activity operators, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and WorkSafe to create this minimum standard to support tourism activity operators to manage the COVID-19 risk during Alert Level 2. It sets out the minimum requirements for the development of a COVID-19 safety plan. All operators who intend to be open for business in Alert Level 2, or have staff on-site, must prepare their plans in accordance with this minimum standard.

Tourism activities include a broad range of commercially provided experiences. Many of these activities are regulated under the Adventure Activity Regulations (AAR), Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) or hold Amusement Device Licenses (ADLs). Examples of these include heli-skiing, sea kayaking, river kayaking, ziplining, scenic flights, rock climbing, hiking, quad biking, jet boating, rafting, fishing, hunting, mountaineering, bungee jumping, cycle touring, horse riding, diving, and canyoning. Commercial ski fields have unique circumstances of operational context and scale so have their own guidance. We are currently working on guidance for overnight trips and will update this document as soon as that is done.

Many tourism activities are carried out on public conservation land and waters. Please refer to the website of the [Department of Conservation](#) for information on restrictions to access and use of facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – we will review this guidance regularly and update as required. If you have questions or suggestions, please [contact TIA](#).

For information on what COVID-19 is, what the symptoms are, and how it spreads, visit [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz).

## What operators need to do

Operators must use a planned and documented approach to managing the COVID-19 risk. The plan must be specific to your operation and is for you, your workers, and other people who need to know about it. It must be in place before you open for operation. You do not need to send your COVID-19 safety plan to WorkSafe for review, but it must be made available upon request of a WorkSafe Inspector.

Information in this guidance document supports the development of these individual plans. It should be used in conjunction with the advice from Government for [doing business at Alert Level 2](#). WorkSafe has a COVID-19 [safety plan template](#) which you can use if you want. There are other useful resources listed at the end of this document.



When developing your COVID-19 safety plan, you must use good worker engagement and participation practices in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA). This means that the plan must be prepared in a way that enables staff to have a say on the issues that affect them. Doing so improves the likelihood of them adhering to the requirements of the plan and ensures good practice is being implemented.

## 1. What does Alert Level 2 mean?

We are currently awaiting transition to Alert Level 2. The Government has set out a description of Alert Level 2:

### Alert Level 2 — Reduce, 'Play it Safe'

The disease is contained, but the risk of community transmission remains.

Risk assessment

- Household transmission could be occurring.
- Single or isolated cluster outbreaks.

[Overarching advice for Alert level 2 can be found here](#)

[More detailed information on the Alert levels can be found here](#)

## Golden rules for all business at Alert Level 2

Do everything you can to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at work — we all have a part to play in keeping each other safe and reduce the likelihood of transmitting COVID-19 between workers, customers and other visitors to our businesses.

- COVID-19 is still out there. Play it safe.
- All businesses can operate if they can do so safely which includes meeting the Ministry of Health requirements for public health and safety.
- Involve your workers to identify risks and the best ways to manage them.
- Require everyone, workers, contractors and customers, with cold or flu-like symptoms to stay away from your premises.
- Keep contact-tracing records of anyone who interacts with your business (workers, contractors or customers). These records are to be kept for a minimum of 2 months.

- Keep groups<sup>1</sup> of customers one metre apart at all times.
- Reduce the number of shared surfaces, and regularly disinfect them.
- Wash your hands. Wash your hands. Wash your hands.

The same risk management processes apply for COVID-19 as they do for other critical safety risks within your operation. Use a planned and documented approach to identify, assess, manage, review and improve. Involve your team in the process.

[SupportAdventure website](#) has more information on generic risk management processes and you can see general advice from WorkSafe [here](#).

## 2. Identifying the risk

COVID-19 risks have been identified and assessed by public health authorities. The key areas of concern are:

- maintaining a robust contact tracing system
- maintaining good hygiene practices
- minimising contact

Identify the risk in your operation and how that risk could affect your already existing critical risks.

Identify and document risks for COVID-19 in your operations. That means looking at all situations within your operation where these risks exist. Involve your staff in this process.

Factors to identify are:

- during what parts of your operations will staff and customers/visitors, or customers in different groups be within one metre of each other?
- how will you identify unwell people?
- where could people transmit the virus by touching communal surfaces and objects?
- how will you ensure all visitors (customers and others) and staff are able to be contact traced?

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<sup>1</sup> This also applies to individual clients. A group of customers is not several individual clients formed into a group by the operator, it is a group of people who know each other prior to arriving at the operation. e.g. they are travelling together, are a family, a group of friends, or otherwise are part of an extended bubble. Contact tracing will be easily manageable as a 'group' even after they leave your operation.

- are there situations when interaction levels would jeopardise efficient contact tracing? E.g. multiple staff members interact across many individuals and groups within a short period of time
- could vulnerable people be exposed to the virus?
- where and how might COVID-19 safety measures impact on existing critical risks?
- what basic hygiene facilities are available for staff, customers and other visitors? i.e. hand washing, sanitisation, tissues and rubbish bins.

### 3. Assessing the risk

Once you have identified where the risks could be, determine which are the most serious and focus on developing management strategies for those first.

### 4. Managing the risk

Once you have identified where the risks could be, you need to apply the Hierarchy of Control to each risk. The Hierarchy of Control specifies the following approach:

1. **Eliminate** – physically remove the hazard e.g. maintain physical distancing
2. **Substitute** – replace the hazard
3. **Engineering controls** – isolate people from the hazard e.g. use a shield such as we see in supermarkets or direct clients in selecting their own equipment rather than handing it out
4. **Administration controls** – change the way people work e.g. contact tracing protocols, health declarations
5. **Personal Protective Equipment** – protect the worker/client e.g. masks/face shields, gloves

When looking at how to manage a risk, you should always start at number one and work your way down with number five as your last resort. PPE is the least effective form of protection or control for a risk.

*If you cannot eliminate the risk or minimize it to acceptable levels, then you cannot run that part of your operation in that way.*

Play it safe, but do not give up too easily! Get creative, talk with your peers and try to find ways to run your operation safely.

Check whether the controls you are using for COVID-19 have created new safety risks within your workplace. If yes, ensure you manage those risks too.

## 5. Understanding the required public health measures

The Ministry of Health has set out specific public health measures for the management of COVID-19. This section sets out those measures.

### Physical distancing

Physical distancing must be maintained and managed. Face to face interaction closer than one metre presents the highest risk exposure.

In an uncontrolled situation, such as public spaces with people who do not know each other, they must maintain a minimum of two metres separation.

In a controlled situation, such as operating a tourism activity, where the risks are being managed, and hygiene and contact tracing measures are in place, this decreases to a minimum of one metre. This applies to clients who are not part of the same group, and from the guide or any other staff.

Separation is generally measured shoulder to shoulder, however consider how air flows from person to person and remember that moist air presents the highest transmission risk - think of breath in frosty air, where would it travel to? For example, a person sitting behind someone in a high-backed chair (above face height) is at less risk of transmission than if they were sitting behind someone in a low backed chair.

For activities which are effectively 'indoors' there is an increased risk due to build-up of moisture from people breathing. Staff, clients or groups should be separated by one metre and the activity should not be longer than two hours. Some 'indoor' activities, such as vehicle tours, can manage this risk by taking regular breaks and therefore can be longer than two hours.

When managing one metre spacing in outdoor situations, think about airflow and be smart about where you manage and position people. For example, can you use off-set seating arrangements? Should your briefing include telling people not to turn and speak to someone outside their group? How many separate groups/clients can you manage and still maintain clear space? Is the airflow such that you should be treating the situation as one of less than one-metre separation?

There will be some activities whereby the nature of the activity itself means that one-metre separation cannot always be maintained. In these situations, you

should apply the hierarchy of control. For example, can you run your operation differently to avoid that action, or can you erect a barrier or shield? The absolute minimum standards for these situations are to have effective administrative controls (contact tracing etc) and PPE must be used:

- PPE includes a mask AND gloves/washing your hands before and after interactions and sanitising contact surfaces or body parts.
- Masks:
  - at minimum, the staff member must wear a mask or face shield, however there is a higher level of protection if the client wears one too.
  - a face shield is a better protective barrier than a mask and often enables easier communication, however an appropriate mask is acceptable PPE.
  - masks are no longer acceptable as PPE if they are wet.
- If people are using gloves, consider when they should change them e.g. if a guide is wearing gloves to assist people in one group, they should change those gloves before assisting people in another. The same applies for washing hands.

*If you cannot meet these minimum requirements or manage the risk effectively, then you cannot run your activity.* For example, effective use of PPE is unlikely to be practicable on extreme white water activities where clients regularly fall into the water and need to be rescued by the guide, or on a guided multipitch mountaineering route when the client and guide are sharing belay stations.

## Hygiene and cleaning

As an operator, you must ensure people with flu-like symptoms do not participate in your operation and are encouraged (and if staff, supported) to self-isolate and to get tested for COVID-19. Refer to Ministry of Health [self-isolation advice if you are unwell.](#)

Maintain, support, and encourage good hygiene. This includes washing hands often and good cough/sneeze etiquette. Convey this message via staff safety information and client information and briefings. Consider using signage to remind clients and other people within your operation.

Provide ample opportunities for staff and clients to use hand cleaning facilities including drying; hand sanitizer is a great idea. Wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands.

## Communal touch points

- Do a methodical analysis of your operation to determine the communal touch points on surfaces and safety equipment i.e. pens, door handles, handrails, safety connections such as carabiners.
- Eliminate these if it is otherwise safe to do so – can you leave that gate open? Can one person hold something or do a task for others rather than everyone being involved? Can you enable information to be gathered and forms signed online? Can you use PayWave or internet payments?
- If you cannot eliminate touch points, think about what you could do differently to minimise how often they are touched.
- Clean communal touch points between clients/groups, and between staff. Ensure they are dry before use. This may require specialist processes for safety equipment – see the 'equipment' section for more guidance. Shared vehicles are also a common touch point – between staff use, all touch points (control handles and moist breath zones) must be well cleaned.
- Provide facilities for people to wash their hands before and after communal touch points (unless wearing gloves). Give clients and staff clear direction on when this needs to happen.

## Essential facilities such as bathrooms and staff kitchens

These facilities can still operate; however, the use of these facilities must be carefully managed and kept to an absolute minimum. They are only to be used by named staff and clients that have no alternative.

If possible, keep staff and client facilities separate.

Operators should develop procedures to ensure physical distancing and rigorous hygiene practices can be maintained. For example:

- if you have multiple toilets in one place, place a sign on the main door indicating when one of the toilets is in use to ensure that only one person at a time enters.
- heighten the regularity of routine cleaning.
- provide disinfectant spray so that people can wipe down contact areas after use.

More information on cleaning can be found [here](#).



## Contact tracing

All businesses must keep records to facilitate contact tracing.

This must include the person's name (first and last) and at least two of the following from all staff, clients and others who physically interact with your business premises or people (suppliers who come on-site etc):

- an email address,
- mobile or home phone number and
- residential address.

It is preferable to maintain a mobile phone number for immediate and quick contact tracing. Double check all numbers provided.

Remember to record if a client is part of a 'group'. This is key for good contact tracing.

You must be able to trace staff member contacts through your operation – ensure you highlight instances where contact between people is less than one metre. This could involve staff keeping work contact logs, or you may be able to do this by knowing the interactions associated with each job role.

It would be useful for staff to keep a personal contact log for life outside of work, you could suggest that it is a good idea for clients to keep a personal contact log too.

Remember the aim to support efficient contact tracing. Expectations of good practice on this topic may change – we will keep this guideline up to date.

A good idea is to imagine a person (staff, supplier, shuttle driver or client) has been involved with your operation and has COVID-19. What would you need to be able to identify about their movement and interactions?

## Vulnerable people

People are at high risk if they are over 70, pregnant or have underlying health conditions. Underlying health conditions include those with liver disease, cancer, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, respiratory issues or those with a compromised immune system, or who are on immunosuppressant medications.

Consider whether you can manage the COVID-19 risk for vulnerable people participating in your activity. You may choose not to take them at this time. But to do this, you need to be able to identify them and be considerate of their right to privacy.

Vulnerable people may include staff. Ensure you follow consultative and lawful processes when discussing how and whether they should work during this Alert Level.

## 6. Good practice advice

This advice is in addition to that supplied by Government on doing business at Alert Level 2. Check again soon - currently the guidance is for [Alert Level 3](#).

### Preparing your business for restart/reset

- Induct your staff into all your new systems, emphasise the shared and individual responsibilities for managing the risk.
- Check equipment and safety infrastructure is safe to use after this extended period of business shutdown.
- Consider running a 'mock' tour to test your new protocols.
- Check for new operational risks created through COVID-19 control measures.
- Procure enough COVID-19 PPE and cleaning products – you may need to work with other operators to source quality and competitively priced products. (Note that the cost of running your trip may be higher due to PPE requirements, staffing ratios etc. Consider adding a surcharge to your trips to help recover costs.)
- PCBU relationships – contact operators with whom you have a PCBU relationship. Request to see their COVID-19 safety plan and work together to ensure there are no conflicts in approach and that you know how each other will be working. If relevant discuss how you will ensure that linking your trips does not inadvertently create a 'gathering' (links in a chain) of more than 100 people.
- Marketing and booking messaging – include safety information in your messaging channels and booking processes. Before they commit to participating in your activity, your clients must understand the nature of the risk they are accepting and the controls you will use, and that they will be expected to adhere to these, and to provide personal information for contact tracing purposes. They also need to understand the consequence of not adhering to staff requests (i.e. if they are unwell, they may be asked to leave immediately).
- Cancellation policies – determine what you will do if a booked client becomes unwell and can no longer come on your trip, or if you must cancel trips due to exposure of your business to COVID-19.
- Ensure that whatever you have shut down or put on hold, such as licences, vehicles and insurance are ready to go before you open shop.

# Staff

## Wellbeing

- Establish protocols to check staff physical and mental wellbeing.
- Ensure staff know not to come to work if they feel unwell and what their rights are for remuneration during that time. If they feel unwell, they should call their GP and if concerned about COVID-19 symptoms call Healthline on 0800 358 5453. Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should get tested.
- You could use a register for your staff to sign in each day to confirm that they are not feeling unwell. You could consider using a thermometer to support decision making if a staff member appears flushed but says they feel fine. If in doubt they should not be at work.
- Regularly check staff mental wellbeing. These are unusual times and staff may be feeling stressed which could affect their wellbeing and their ability to perform safety tasks.

## Induction

- Induct your staff in your new safety procedures. Staff need to be competent in any new procedures before you take clients on your trip.

## Communication

- Discuss COVID-19 risk and controls in staff safety meetings and consider using signage on-site to reinforce messaging. This will be especially important if you have staff with language barriers.
- Consider increasing the frequency of your safety meetings, particularly in the first few days of opening at Level 2. Safety meetings do not need to be in person, they could be via the internet.

## Rosters

- Rosters can be used to help to manage transmission risks and enable efficient contact tracing. Consider establishing staff bubbles at work, using staggered start times and lunch breaks and (where relevant) including bubble carpooling to and from work.
- Use rosters to help minimize the number of people that any one staff member has contact with over several days – particularly where their role involves contact with clients closer than one metre, e.g. two staff work the morning tours, and two different staff work the afternoon tours.

## **Operating with different staffing levels**

- Many operations will have scaled down staffing levels. Ensure that safety critical roles are competently staffed and that you have capacity to manage fatigue and stress.
- You may need to provide induction and training for staff whose roles have changed or are new to the business.
- Ensure that you continue to meet legal responsibilities such as having staff health and safety representatives.

## **Records**

- For contact tracing, keep thorough records of who worked where and when.

# **Clients**

## **Risk disclosure**

- Ensure that clients are well informed of the degree of exposure to COVID-19 risk within the activity, and their responsibility for following risk controls. This could be included in your existing risk disclosure procedures.
- Most will want to follow the new rules, but if not, remind them of the reason why you are implementing the controls. We all have a part to play, including them.

## **Disclosing COVID-19 protocols**

- Before they commit to the activity, ensure clients know the nature of the COVID-19 controls you will be using such as PPE, the need for contact tracing information, any restrictions on participation such as bubble-only products or vulnerable people exclusions, and procedures for if they become unwell during the activity.

## **Client screening**

- Include wellbeing declarations in your client screening process.
- As with staff, you could consider using a thermometer to support decision making if a client appears flushed but says they feel fine.

## **Arrival and sign-in procedures**

- Maintain physical distancing and minimise communal touch points during these processes. Options could include:
  - using separate shared pens – do not share

- using online sign-in procedures
- staggering times for clients/groups to arrive
- asking clients to wait in their cars until you call them in
- designating parking spaces to maintain additional space between vehicles
- limiting the number of people allowed to enter or be in one space such as a reception area at any one time

### **Client briefings**

- Include COVID-19 protocols and responsibilities in your safety briefings. Ensure you cover:
  - maintaining spacing
  - not sharing personal items such as phones, cameras, drink bottles or food
  - general hygiene expectations – washing hands, cough/sneeze etiquette
  - communal touch point protocols – where, what to do/not do, include information on using toilets
  - PPE protocols where relevant
  - what to do if they feel unwell during or after the trip

### **Post-activity**

- If a client feels unwell within two weeks of being on your activity, you need to know.
- NZ's Health Services should contact you, however it is useful if you remind clients of their responsibility to track their movements, including that they were here doing your activity at this time.
- You should communicate this during your booking and sign-in processes and could remind them again during any follow-up communications.

## **Transport**

### **Staff**

- Provide your workers with guidance on keeping well while travelling between home and work. Some businesses may choose to make travel arrangements to support their workers to stay well, this could include 'bubble carpooling' for those on the same roster or providing a courtesy vehicle with strict cleaning measure between use.



## Clients

- Maintain one metre spacing between staff, clients and groups. This could involve removing seats in your vehicle or leaving some seats empty.
- You may need to allocate seats and establish loading and unloading protocols e.g. enter through the front of the bus and exit through the back.
- Remember that personal belongings can transmit COVID-19 too – ensure you know how they are being transported e.g. clients hold on to their bags, or bags are stowed in a specified area.
- Clean touchpoints between clients/groups, including baggage storage areas.
- Clean touchpoints if changing drivers – including steering wheel, indicator and light controls, dashboard components such as stereos, door handles and seat belts.
- You could choose to ask clients to wash their hands before entering the vehicle. You may also need to provide hand sanitiser.

## Activity procedures

The procedures you follow when conducting the activity itself are where managing physical distancing and communal touchpoints requires careful thought.

If you cannot eliminate the risks, you need to mitigate them using the Hierarchy of Controls as per the guidance on pages 3 and 4.

Can you eliminate the risk by increasing the distance or stopping communal contact? Some ideas to consider:

- physical barriers to transmission e.g. Perspex barriers at customer service points
- removing/not using adjacent seats
- physically marking places where people can stand or where they cannot
- clearly briefing people on where they can stand and where they cannot
- having fewer people in that place/doing that activity at a time – do you need to give that briefing in that place?
- rather than using your staff to fit safety equipment to clients, can clients put on their own safety equipment and use someone in their group to physically check it? This is only an option if it can be done safely, such as under close instruction and supervision by a suitable staff member.
- rather than handing out gear to clients, direct them to collect their own equipment.

- designing a 'turn by turn' experience rather than one where people stand and wait together e.g. having clients stand in a well-spaced line until signalled to come onto a platform for their turn on the zipline
- could you use dedicated staff to client groups rather than having multiple staff interact with each group?
- could you utilise a barrier like those in supermarkets?
- consider additional staffing to manage and control lines and spacing of clients/groups.

## Food

If you are serving food and beverages as part of your experience it must be managed within physical distancing requirements. The golden rule is to observe the three S's:

*Seated* – ensure your clients are not moving around when eating (to maintain physical distancing)

*Separate* – ensure there is at least one metre space between clients or groups while eating

*Single server* – if serving food, try to have one staff member serve one client or group. If you need to serve more than one client, you must wash your hands between serving.

- buffet arrangements are not suitable, consider things such as issuing pre-packed lunches
- heighten your normal food preparation hygiene protocols and cleaning procedures. Wear gloves and masks.
- consider asking people to bring their own food and drinks.
- for more information on catering obligations see the [guidance for accommodation operators](#).

## Safety equipment

Identify which pieces or parts of safety equipment come into close contact with staff or clients and determine how often they need to be cleaned or changed to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Consider items such as:

- helmets
- gloves
- carabiners

- harnesses
- life jackets
- warm clothing
- seatbelts /buckles

Consider asking clients to bring their own equipment if it is safe to do so e.g. warm clothing or gloves

Ensure cleaning products will not compromise the safety of the equipment. Check manufacturers' recommendations.

Consider the option of quarantining equipment for three days in-between use – there may be options for combining equipment with other operators to provide enough quantity to enable this. If using this method, ensure equipment is clearly marked as 'in quarantine' or in a clearly designated place.

## 7. COVID-19 exposure response plan

Develop a plan on how you will respond if an employee, client or visitor shows symptoms of COVID-19 while participating your operation or becomes a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case and has been at your workplace while potentially infectious.

There are standard processes that must be followed, they are outlined [here](#).

Include details such as:

- how you will identify where they spent time and interacted with people or touched surfaces that others may interact with.
- how you will isolate spaces where they have spent significant time, how you will conduct thorough cleaning, and what equipment you might need to achieve this.
- how you will communicate with, and manage, other groups who might be or might have been involved in your operation.

### Review your existing emergency response plans

Review your existing emergency response plans to ensure they are fit for purpose in the current context. Consider:

- impacts of scaled down staffing levels or scaled up
- implications of trying to maintain physical distancing where possible

- impact of new controls put in place to eliminate or minimise COVID-19 risk
- new administrative procedures or protocols
- PPE requirements e.g. first aid kits

Brief staff on any changes and ensure:

- they understand expectations of controls and PPE use in emergency situations
- that fears of COVID-19 infection do not undermine appropriate response to first aid or other emergency scenarios.

## 8. Review and improve

Part of having good health and safety management for COVID-19 is evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of the measures you put in place. Your safety plan must set out:

- how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your controls
- how you plan to review all evaluations
- what happens as a result of that review?

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – set out when you will regularly review your plan and make changes as required. Involve your staff in this process and review client feedback.

Different Alert Levels require expect different risk management. The guidance in this document is designed for Alert Level 2.

## 9. Safety planning tools, templates and further information

[WorkSafe guidance and planning template](#)

[COVID-19 posters, contact tracing register and useful signage](#)

[Construction protocols including signage – if you use them please credit sitesafe.org.nz.](#)

<https://www.supportadventure.co.nz/>