

# Covid-19 Safe Work Protocols

for the manufacturing industries

Final - 19 April 2020

# Overview

## *Purpose*

- This document is designed to provide guidance on Safe Work Practices under **COVID-19 Alert Level 3** for manufacturers not registered with MPI
- The guiding principle for this document is that all businesses tailor 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. Disease management is founded on the principles of FIND-CONTAIN-CONTROL", and this document is organised around these categories
- The measures listed in this document reflected current government rules and guidelines issued by MBIE, Ministry of Health and WorkSafe; most can be found in various parts of the official website ([covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz))

# A. FIND: Identifying and intercepting potential sources of infection before they enter your site

## 1. Check returning employees upon arrival on Day 1

- a) Obtain signed declaration / Return-to-Work (RTW) questionnaire.
- b) Ensure signed declarations are stored safely and easily accessible

## 2. Check *anyone* arriving on site for symptoms every day

- a) Upon arrival each day, obtain signed declaration from each employee that they are free of the following symptoms: **cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, head cold (e.g. runny nose, sneezing), loss of sense of smell, with or without fever** before they are allowed on site
  - If you already have an electronic visitor registration system, you may be able to use that – and, ideally, link it to an App so that people can fill in and sign the declaration on their phones
  - If you have a manual clocking-in system, be aware that creates a potential hazard – everybody touching the same surface when clocking in. We recommend you find a less hazardous / contact-less method for attendance recording / time keeping
- b) Instruct those reporting symptoms to go home and contact doctor or Healthline ([0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)) immediately
- c) Employees developing symptoms while away from work must stay home and contact doctor or Healthline ([0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)) immediately. The employee must call her/his supervisor or appropriate manager and confirm they have called doctor or Healthline
- d) Essential contractors will also have to complete the questionnaire (see 1.a above), be issued with a contractor access policy, and told requirements for Covid-19 safety at site they are expected to follow.

# A. FIND: Identifying and intercepting potential sources of infection before they enter your site

## 3. Contact tracing

*means following up on the movements and social encounters of people who have been in close contact with a Confirmed Case of COVID-19*

- a) (Manual) Recording of all movements and contact details of employees, casual labour, contractors and goods on site (arrival and departure)
  - existing HR and visitor registration systems can be expected to cover most (and in many cases all) of the requirements to record the movement of employees, casual labour, contractors onto and off the site
  - Maintain a location record for every shift – the usual place of work (home base) for each employee, *i.e.* where they will spend most of their time while at work. This is particularly important in situations / processes where employees work at between 1 m and 2 m distance
  - for temporary staff the employer must obtain a declaration from the labour hire firm that the firm will be able to provide upon request a complete record of locations the temporary staff have been deployed at in the preceding fortnight
  - the employer must obtain a declaration from any contractor coming on site that they will be able to provide upon request a complete record of locations they worked at in the preceding fortnight
  - track & trace technology already in use in logistics will help in identifying movements of goods potentially carrying virus material through supply chains

## 4. Suspect, Probable and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- a) Suspect Cases are people showing the symptoms of COVID-19: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, head cold (*e.g.* runny nose, sneezing), loss of sense of smell, with or without fever:
  - must stay home and contact doctor or Healthline ([0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)) immediately. The employee must call her/his supervisor or appropriate manager and confirm they have called their/a doctor or Healthline. Unless investigated by health authorities and declared to be 'not a case', suspected cases must isolate at home (if mild symptoms) till 48 hours after symptoms resolve and at least 10 days after symptom onset
  - employees in the team the suspect case was part of, and others having been in face-to-face contact within 2 metres for 15 minutes or more (close contacts), must be identified (including address and phone numbers) in case public health needs to trace them
  - close contacts of suspect cases should be meticulous with physical distancing, hand hygiene and cough etiquette. They do not need to self-quarantine. If symptoms develop within 14 days of the last exposure to the suspect case, however, they should immediately self-isolate and phone Healthline

## B. CONTAIN: Ensure that any undetected source of infection on your site cannot infect others

### 1. Restriction of Access

- a) The shift or other designated manager decides who is allowed on site (contractors, etc.) during their shift. Only employees essential to operating and maintaining production at the agreed level to be allowed on site. This includes employee representatives where other access cannot be accommodated
- b) No unnecessary movement of employees off-site during shift (during meal breaks, *etc.* which, depending on the employment agreements in place, may require paid meal breaks) - essential business functions only

### 2. Manage Supply Chain Risk

- a) The designated manager decides where inward goods are to be dropped off based on priorities for production
- b) Written declaration from suppliers that no suspect or confirmed cases of COVID-19 have occurred on their site in the fortnight preceding dispatch of the goods at their end.
- c) Wherever possible, quarantine incoming goods for 72 hours. Alternatively, wipe down the most likely high-touch surfaces using antimicrobial sanitisers

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### 3. Transport to, from, at and for work

- a) Driver-only use of own vehicle, car-pooling, or transport in van or bus organised by the employer. Use of public transport should be avoided wherever possible. Follow physical distancing rules where use of public transport is unavoidable
- in a car alone or in a car pool with people from your own household / bubble:
    - Wash hands before and after every journey. If possible, sanitise wipe down high touch surfaces
  - in an approved car-pool:
    - Car-pool group must be recorded and from same work team in workplace
    - Sanitiser-wipe of high touch areas before and after journey to and from work
    - Wash hands before and after every journey
  - in a van / bus provided by employer:
    - Sanitiser-wipe of high touch areas before and after journey to and from work
    - A 2 metre distance needs to be applied. Minimum 1 metre distance with appropriate PPE (mask)
    - Wash hands before and after every journey
  - pool cars use to be limited to a small number of drivers (1?). Employees should use their own cars and be reimbursed for mileage if they need to travel for work
    - set car aircon to fresh air, not recirculate
  - as for other machinery and equipment, high-touch surfaces on vehicles at work (e.g. forklifts) should be cleaned/sanitised frequently, and at least between shifts.

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### 4. Physical distancing

- a) A minimum distance of 2 metres is to be observed *as a general rule*. This includes changing (putting on and taking off any work wear or PPE), rest breaks, meal breaks and use of toilets
- b) Where operationally required and unavoidable, a minimum distance of 1 metre can be applied on the condition that at all times your records will allow contact tracing for all involved if required (see 3.a above)
  - As a general principle, avoid face-to-face configurations when working at 1 metre distance, or use physical barriers (plastic/Perspex sheeting) or face masks
  - In assembly operations, you also may get a single employee to complete more (than one) assembly task that would normally be performed by two people where a physical separation of assembly stations to achieve the 2m distance would otherwise be hard to implement
  - Keep in mind that you can only permit working at less than 2m distancing, but at a minimum of 1 m distance, if all employees involved in such activities can be traced if required at all times
- c) Apply floor markings showing safe ( $\geq 2\text{m}$ ) walkways and distance between workstations
- d) Establish protocols for communication and activity when equipment breaks down (fault diagnosis and repair) to ensure 2m distance is maintained as a general rule
- e) Ensure communication is possible without violating the 2m rule in noisy environment – move to quiet area or use cell phones. *n.b.* - if masks are worn, direct verbal communication at a 2m distance is unlikely to be possible in many factory environments

## B. CONTAIN: Ensure that any undetected source of infection on your site cannot infect others

### 5. Reduce / avoid aggregation and encounters of employees

- a) Maintain 2 metre distance for all movements while arriving at / departing from work. Use staggered entry and exit and separate access routes for teams where appropriate
- b) Maintain 2 metre distance throughout meal breaks and toilet visits
  - In assembly operations, you also may get a single employee to complete more (than one) assembly task that would normally be performed by two people where a physical separation of assembly stations to achieve the 2m distance would otherwise be hard to implement
  - unless on-site cafeterias / catering facilities cannot be managed in accordance with the measures below, they should remain open to avoid employees leaving the site during meal breaks
  - staggered meal and rest breaks; stagger shifts and lunch and rest breaks between different processing areas
  - do not mix different teams of employees in the same space at the same time and ensure sufficient time between breaks to avoid accidental contact in corridors and areas people have to move through to get to their assigned areas
  - set up areas to maintain physical distance of at least 2 meters from others (*i.e.* space tables and chairs further apart where able). Only 1 person per table
  - temporary break areas (such as marquees) may need to be established to ensure compliance
  - additional toilets may have to be hired to comply with physical distancing requirements
  - if necessary, encourage employees to eat in car. This may be the only option for some sites with a large number of employees
  - lunch and rest areas to be cleaned and disinfected between use by different teams
  - do not share utensils (cups, plates, cutlery) or food
  - Smokers areas should reflect the above rules and make use of enclosed cigarette disposal receptacles to minimise the likelihood handling or dispersion of discarded cigarettes.

## B. CONTAIN: Ensure that any undetected source of infection on your site cannot infect others

### 5. Reduce / avoid aggregation and encounters of employees (continued)

- c) Maintain 2 metre distance for toolbox talks. Consider using virtual meeting room tools
- d) Establish smaller fixed work teams so that you minimise mixing between staff. If one of the team gets sick, quarantine the whole team (if they are considered close contacts) and use a replacement team. Team composition could be functional, so that all critical functions in a particular manufacturing process are covered, or by location, so that all team members work in the same area of the factory
- e) Change shift patterns or reduce the shift duration so that there is a minimum gap between shifts to avoid encounters during shift changeovers and allow for cleaning ( $\geq 30$  minutes?). Avoid shared use of changing rooms between shifts, and between teams on the same shift.

### 6. Management of at-risk Groups

Employees over 70, and/or those with compromised immunity (*i.e.* respiratory illness, immune suppressant medications, *etc*) are to be given the option to go home or, if possible, placed on work at reduced contact.

## C. CONTROL: Minimise the risk of cross-infection from shared surfaces

### 1. Personal Hygiene

- a) Ensure that employees have facilities to be able to wash their hands properly and regularly at scheduled intervals, with reminders that hands need to be washed well with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and properly dried, especially upon arrival at work, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose, and before eating
- b) Display posters (visual guides) for correct handwashing procedures as appropriate
- c) Encourage employees to wash their hands again upon arrival at home, using the above process. That will help to ensure the entire household is following good handwashing practice
- d) Where frequent washing of hands poses a potential health risk (Dermatitis on hands, etc.), the use of disposable gloves can be used as an alternative. These must be discarded and replaced at the same frequency as the hand washing instructions in this document
- e) Continue to reinforce messages around respiratory and hand hygiene - remind staff to cover coughs, sneezes with their elbow or tissues (dispose of any tissues promptly)
- f) Remind staff that they should avoid touching their face unless they have washed their hands
- g) No or extremely limited use of showers at work; require employees to shower at home where this does not breach an employment agreement or can be agreed via temporary variation without creating a new hazard/risk for the employee and those in their bubble
- h) Increase monitoring of handwashing and personal hygiene.

# C. CONTROL: Minimise the risk of cross-infection from shared surfaces

## 2. Cleaning of Shared Surfaces

- a) Set up detailed protocols for the cleaning of shared surfaces
  - in high-risk areas (see below):
    - Use antimicrobial sanitisers (see below) to wipe or spray clean contact surfaces or high traffic touch points
    - Clean surfaces such as office amenities, ante/washing rooms, lockers and change rooms in between shift change overs
    - Likewise, clean high-touch surfaces on machinery and equipment, frequently-used tools, etc. in between shift change overs
    - Clean and disinfect rest break and meal break communal areas after each break OR every 2 hours
    - Keep and display a record of the above activities (as per the practice in airport toilets, for example)
    - No self-service from cabinet's, pie warmers, etc in the cafeteria to prevent touching the door handle
  - medium-risk areas must be sprayed / wiped down daily:
    - Exterior of plant: pedestrian gates / hand rails
    - Engineering workshop benches (particularly kiosks and contractor spaces)
    - Maintenance tools
    - Keep and display a record of the above activities.

# C. CONTROL: Minimise the risk of cross-infection from shared surfaces

## 2. Cleaning of Shared Surfaces (continued)

### *High-risk areas*

- Doors / turnstiles
- Canteen table tops / chairs / microwave / toaster/pie warmers, tea/coffee facilities, and fridge doors
- Hand dryers / towel dispensers / vending machines
- Corridors
- Smoking areas
- Offices used by multiple people - desks, keyboards, door handles, window latches, *etc*
- Lockers
- Laundry / gear collection / Tuck shop benches and exteriors of food cabinets
- Toilet doors
- Hand basins
- Soap dispensers
- Sprayers
- Hand rails (stairwells)
- Control panels/consoles, processing tablets, keypads, frequently-used tools, *etc.*

### *Antimicrobial sanitisers*

- Surface disinfecting wipes *e.g.* Mediwipes / Azo-wipes / Sanitiser spray, gel or equivalent; *e.g.* Sanicol
- Any sanitiser with a “Flash off” ingredient, such as ethanol or iso-propyl alcohol that doesn’t leave a residue on the applied surface
- Attention must be drawn and sufficient training provided where sanitisers may be flammable in order to avoid creating another hazard.

# Some useful general tips

- Implementing these measures will require a significant re-engineering of manufacturing processes in many cases. To help with the transition, run reduced volumes and/or reduced number of product groups to simplify logistics and process flow at least at the start of return to work
- ‘Conventional’ health and safety practices are well-embedded in most factories, with a good culture of compliance. The more we can present these (temporary) measures as an extension of those conventional practices, the more quickly we’ll be able to bed them in
- Make best use of (union) workplace H&S representatives, **workers** and committees in the planning, introduction and monitoring of these measures. It’s important to note that PCBUs **must involve** their workers when assessing risks and identifying solutions.
- There will be a range of responses from employees to the above measures when imposed – from ‘highly concerned’ to ‘blasé and sloppy’. Supervisors / team leaders will know their ‘usual suspects’ from the latter group. Use the same approach as for conventional H&S management to ensure compliance. Also, point out that failure to comply will not only put others in the team at risk, it’ll jeopardise the entire sector. The government has indicated it will take severe measures should manufacturing give rise to additional COVID-19 clusters
- In a lot of factories (except for assembly), physical distances between work stations is well over 2 metres anyway (CNC machines, *etc.*), so operators may think that these rules don’t apply to them, because they are far apart already. You may have to talk to them about still focusing on physical distancing **at all times**.
- **There will be a tendency to ‘de-risk’ the situation and resume business as usual routines as everyone becomes used to the return to work. Managers and supervisors will need to repeatedly articulate the ongoing requirement for protective measures, ensure they are being consistently applied and enforce violations when found.**