

# COVID-19 FAQs

4 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 **4.00pm, 4 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.

## Contents

<u>Current Alert Level status across New Zealand.....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Reconnecting Auckland .....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>North west Waikato in 5-day Alert Level 3 .....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>International travel and cargo.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Information for business.....</u>	<u>8</u>

# Current Alert Level status

## **Q. What is the current Alert Level status across New Zealand?**

Auckland remains in Alert level 3. From 11.59pm Tuesday 5 October, Auckland will carefully and methodically transition out of current restrictions over three steps, with regular check-ins to ensure the virus is actively controlled before further easing.

The north west Waikato area has moved to Alert Level 3 for five days as health officials track the source of a COVID-19 positive case in Raglan and another in Hamilton East.

The remainder of New Zealand is at Alert Level 2. This provides the greatest possible protection should the virus transmit across the boundary. The cap of 100 people gathering at hospitality venues will be removed (at 11.59pm Tuesday 5 October), but the “seated and separated” rule will remain. 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, the limit of 100 will continue to apply for these.

## **Q. How are we progressing to have New Zealand vaccinated?**

New Zealand passed the two million mark for second doses of vaccine administered (2,018,305) today. Vaccination continues to be one of our strongest defences against COVID-19.

As of Sunday 3 October, there are still 887,000 eligible New Zealanders who haven't been vaccinated. 79% have had their first dose.

New Zealanders are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Getting vaccinated is the best way to keep us all safe and allow New Zealand to reopen soon.

# Reconnecting Auckland

Aucklanders have worked hard to follow the Alert Level rules and bring the number of cases down. Health advice continues to be that the outbreak is contained to Auckland and that there is not widespread undetected transmission. But returning to zero cases is difficult and even with a prolonged Alert Level 3 might not be possible.

The Government is transitioning the way we manage the virus, keeping case numbers low by vaccinating, testing, and isolating cases when they occur. This is a safe path to enabling greater freedoms in Auckland. The best thing Aucklanders can do to ensure that restrictions continue to ease is to get vaccinated and follow public health advice: wear a face covering, scan in, and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

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

From 11.59pm, Tuesday 5 October, Alert Level 3 restrictions in Auckland will start to ease. These include;

- Outdoor gatherings between two households to a maximum of 10 people will be allowed. The natural ventilation outside makes it harder for the virus to spread.
- Early learning centres will be able to reopen with staff wearing face coverings, and with children in bubbles of 10. ECE teachers are encouraged to get tested before they return to teaching.
- People will be able to travel throughout the Auckland region to undertake an expanded range of outdoor recreation activities. For example, people will be able to visit the beach, sail, and hunt. Activities must comply with the 10-people limit.

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 one go to the COVID-19 [website](#).

**Q. Can ECEs have more than one group or bubble of 10 children?**

Yes, they can have more than one bubble so long as the groups can be kept separate.

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

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

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. When can schools reopen?**

Decision on opening schools is separate to the three steps strategy. The plan is to reopen from 18 October, however the final decision will be made closer to the time.

**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. What do we know about the North Shore Hospital maternity ward case?**

Waitematā DHB has advised the Ministry of Health that late yesterday a nominated visitor to North Shore Hospital's maternity ward tested positive for COVID-19. The baby and the baby's mother were subsequently tested, and the baby has returned a positive result, while the mother was negative.

The mother and baby had been in a single room in hospital – separated from other mothers and babies – for the duration of their care and the positive case visited them twice while potentially infectious. The mother and baby have now been relocated to a COVID-19 appropriate ward and safety protocols are in place.

A small number of staff who have potentially interacted with the visitor have been stood down as a precautionary measure while investigations continue and Waitematā DHB fully assesses the situation to determine if any other actions are required.

**Q. Is there a new COVID-19 case at Auckland City Hospital?**

A person who went to Auckland City Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) yesterday and was admitted to intensive care for non-COVID-19 reasons, has tested positive for COVID-19.

Auckland DHB is working at pace with the Auckland Regional Public Health Service to investigate this case and identify any potential contacts.

The patient was separated appropriately on arrival at the ED as being at risk for COVID-19 and staff were wearing appropriate PPE including N95 masks. The patient had also previously visited the ED and returned a negative test on Saturday, so it is believed the infection has been identified early.

**Q. What is the progress of the truck driver who tested positive and is isolating in Palmerston North?**

Initial tests from all four close contacts associated with worksites of the Auckland-based truck driver, who is isolating in Palmerston North, have returned negative results.

**Q. What is being done to tackle the high transmission rate in Auckland's more transient population?**

A proportion of current cases are among groups of people who are in transitional or emergency housing. People, who because of their personal circumstance, may have been moving around in Alert Levels 4 and 3. The DHB teams are working with a range of agencies,

to provide support and test people in these settings. They plan to follow up with vaccinations soon after.

**Q. What are the suburbs of interest? And what do I need to do if I live in one of those suburbs?**

The suburbs of interest were updated on 30 September. Otara is no longer a suburb of interest and Henderson and Papakura now are. They join Clover Park, Māngere, Favona, Manurewa and Mount Wellington/Sylvia Park.

People in these seven Auckland suburbs of interest are asked to come forward and get tested, whether they have symptoms. This is to help us identify any undetected spread of COVID-19 in those communities.

**Q. What advice is available for Auckland parents with children in school holidays at Alert Level 3?**

While school holiday programmes are not available at Alert Level 3, the [Unite Against Covid-19 website](#) has advice and guidance for parents navigating the school break.

**Q. Have new cases of COVID-19 emerged in upper Hauraki?**

Yes, the first positive case was reported (on 30 September) in a student from Mangatangi school in Upper Hauraki who had been isolating at home for the past 10 days.

Three other household members later tested positive after local public health staff tested the students close contacts. The Ministry of Health's assessment is that because the latest cases have been in isolation at home, the risk of spread is currently regarded as low.

## Alert Level 3 in north west Waikato

**Q. What has happened in north west Waikato?**

Following two positive cases of COVID-19 found in Raglan and east Hamilton north west Waikato moved into Alert Level 3 (at 11:59pm last night Sunday 3 October), for five days. This change will help limit possible further community transmission of the virus.

The level change allows time for health officials to assess the situation and gather information from the contact tracing and community testing now underway. Knowing the source of the infection and how far it has potentially spread will determine next steps.

Introducing Alert level 3 restrictions is one of three key tools to slow or stop rapid transmission of the delta variant. Getting vaccinated - and getting tested if you're symptomatic - are the two other vital actions people in Waikato can take right now to help.

**Q. How should residents respond?**

The north west of Waikato is now in Alert Level 3 which 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.

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

There are COVID testing stations at:

Claudelands Events Centre, Brooklyn Road – 8am – 8pm

Founders Theatre carpark, Norton Rd – 8am – 4.30pm

For more information on testing go to [Healthpoint](#).

To find out where vaccinations are available check [Healthpoint](#)

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

The area includes Raglan, Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Ngāruawāhia, and Hamilton City (based on the Hamilton city boundary).

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

### **Q. How does travel across the new 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 will be processing personal travel exemptions from 7am tomorrow (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](#).

## International travel and cargo

### **Q. When is the next release scheduled for MIQ places?**

Rooms will be released on Tuesday 5 October 12noon (NZT) through the virtual lobby.

- Please arrive on the website between 11am-12noon (NZT). Do not arrive before 11am, as there is no advantage. The room release will start at 12noon (NZT).

This release will be for dates between October - January. There will be approximately 3,700 rooms available.

For more information, please visit the MIQ [website](#).

### **Q. Will non-New Zealand citizens have to prove they are vaccinated before travelling to New Zealand?**

Yes. From 1 November 2021, anyone entering New Zealand (17 years plus), who is NOT a New Zealand citizen will be required to provide proof that they have been vaccinated.

New Zealand has a goal to safely reopen our borders next year. The introduction of a vaccine mandate for these travelers is part of the programme to help us reconnect New Zealanders in Q1 2022. The vaccination requirement will apply to non-New Zealand citizens only entering New Zealand.

Travellers booking their MIQ spot, will be required to declare they are vaccinated prior to booking a place, and may be required to provide evidence of vaccination at airline check-in, boarding and or on arrival at NZ customs.

### **Q. Has Air New Zealand announced a vaccination policy for travellers on the airline?**

Yes, Air New Zealand is asking customers to get ready for international travel by getting vaccinated. From 1 February 2022, the airline will require customers 18 years and over travelling anywhere on its international network to be fully vaccinated. This is being referred to as their no jab no fly policy.

### **Q. What is the Government doing to help maintain international cargo and passenger services during the pandemic?**

The Maintaining International Air Connectivity (MIAC) scheme was due to end 31 October 2021 but today Government announced an extension of the scheme until 31 March 2022 to help with demand over the peak summer cargo season.

Support from the MIAC scheme was originally budgeted at \$170 million for 1 May to 31 October 2021. The Government has agreed to an additional \$195 million to support flights from 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022.



The additional \$25 million allocated to ensure that connectivity is maintained with countries we have quarantine-free travel if there are pauses or suspensions.

More information about scheme is available on the [Ministry of Transport website](#).

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

Two repatriation flights will depart New Zealand for Rarotonga to take home Cook Islanders stranded in New Zealand by COVID-19 lockdowns.

For Cook Islanders in Alert Level 2 regions in New Zealand, a flight is scheduled to depart from Christchurch Airport to Rarotonga on 7 October.

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 these flights will be required to have a COVID-19 test 72 hours before departure.

Travellers flying from Christchurch will need to complete at least seven days of Managed Isolation and Quarantine on arrival in Rarotonga, while travellers from Auckland will need to complete up to 14 days.

## Information for business

**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](#).

**Q. What is changing in the QR code display requirements?**

Three new requirements for display of QR code posters are being implemented and come into effect at 11.59pm on Tuesday 5 October.

**Q. What are the new QR code requirements?**



Additional copies of a QR code poster are displayed, in places other than just in the entranceway. (This is in addition to copies already required to be displayed at or near the main entrance of a workplace).

QR code posters will now be required to be in good condition.

The QR code must not be altered in a way that makes it unclear that it has been issued by the NZ Government for the purposes of contact tracing (meaning workplaces must use the official COVID-19 QR code poster).

**Public transport operators** must also display additional copies of QR codes. This is in addition to the existing requirement to display a copy in a prominent place on or inside any vehicle (vehicles with 5 or fewer seats - taxis/ride shares - are exempt as are aircraft).

QR code posters are required to be in good condition.

the QR code must not be altered in a way that makes it unclear that it has been issued by the NZ Government for the purposes of contact tracing.

### **Q. Why implement these changes?**

The aim of these changes is to limit any potential barriers for scanning to take place [or people to record their visit] and ensure people are given as many opportunities to scan in (which should be as easy and accessible) as possible for everyone.

Forgetting to scan in has been found to be a key barrier to scanning in low frequency locations including workplaces, schools and public transport. More QR code posters provide more prompts and opportunities for people to scan in.

Inattention, social pressure from others wanting to scan and doorway bottlenecks have also been found to be barriers to scanning. Requiring at least one QR code in a location other than the entranceway may alleviate some of the pressure and potentially increase scanning frequency.

The reduced likelihood of queues forming at locations could be an additional benefit from a public health perspective too.

### **Q. What are current requirements?**

Current requirements only require one QR code to be displayed at the entrance of a workplace. This could deter people from scanning in, particularly at some businesses or workplaces where there is a queue to scan the QR code poster at or near the main entranceway and physical distancing can become a challenge.

### **Q. Who does this apply to?**

This applies to all workplaces that are already required to display a QR code. Under all alert levels, all businesses and services, unless exempt, need to display the official NZ COVID Tracer QR code poster in a prominent place at or near the main entrances to each of their premises.

## **Workplaces are defined as:**

(a) means premises where work is being carried out, or is customarily carried out, for a business or service; and

(b) includes premises where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.

Public transport operators are also included and will need to display additional copies of QR codes. This is in addition to the existing requirement to display a copy in a prominent place on or inside any vehicle. Vehicles with five or fewer seats including taxis and ride shares are exempt from displaying additional copies.

## **Q. What are the consequences of not following requirements?**

Existing enforcement options for non-compliance with QR code display requirements will continue to apply (a fine of \$300 or court imposed fine of \$1000).

## **Q. What is the minimum number of posters I now need to display?**

At least 2 posters should be displayed, that includes 1 or more copies of the QR code displayed in one or more prominent place elsewhere within the workplace and 1 at the entrance.

## **Q. What does it mean not to alter a QR code?**

Business cannot design their own QR poster for people to scan. Businesses and locations must use the official COVID-19 QR code posters issued by the Ministry of Health. The QR code must not be altered in a way that makes it unclear that it has been issued by the NZ Government for the purposes of contact tracing. This also ensures people know the QR code they are scanning links to the COVID tracer app and is for contact tracing purposes.

## **Q. Are events also included?**

Yes, businesses and event organisers legally must have a way for customers and visitors to record that they have entered their premises or attended a gathering or event.

At an event, either the venue owner or operator, or the organiser/hirer of the venue can be the person who is responsible for making sure there are ways for people to record their visit.

## **Q. What if I already have existing measures in place to record visitors?**

These additional requirements apply even if you are a workplace or public transport operator or other place already required to display a QR code.

## **Q. Are public transport operators expected to enforce QR code scanning?**

Public transport operators may encourage passengers to scan QR codes but are not enforcement officers. Please do not be offended if you are encouraged to scan on a public transport service and treat operators with courtesy and respect.