

# COVID-19 FAQs

8 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 **8.00pm, 8 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.

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## Northland Alert Level status

At 11.59pm tonight, Friday 8 October, Northland will move to Alert Level 3, after a case was identified in region. The case reported last night, who recently travelled to Northland from Auckland. They have been transferred to a quarantine facility in Auckland.

This person travelled through Northland, from the 2 October before returning to Auckland. Health officials are tracking down close contacts and locations of interest.

This will be strict Alert Level 3. As with Waikato, the easing steps that were announced for Auckland this week do not apply.

The Auckland boundary will stay in place.

The Level 3 restrictions for Northland will be reviewed on Monday, 11 October.

### **Q. What should Northland residents do?**

Level 3 requires people to stay home, including working and learning from home if they can. Stay local, wear a face covering when leaving home and keep 2 meters distance from people outside of your bubble.

If you develop symptoms, even if mild, get tested. A list of testing stations is available on the [Healthpoint website](#).

Get vaccinated. Vaccination is the best tool that we have to provide everyone with their individual armour against COVID-19 and reduce the need for prolonged lockdowns in the future. Vaccination centres are listed on the [Healthpoint website](#).

### **Q. Why is only Northland being placed into Alert Level 3 rather than putting the whole of the North Island in Alert Level 3?**

At the start of this outbreak vaccination numbers were still low, and so we acted hard and fast to put the whole country into lockdown. But with increasing numbers of people vaccinated, the public health advice is that we can extend the boundary safely and avoid putting the whole of the North Island into lockdown.

We need people to keep getting vaccinated and test when they have symptoms. Not just in the Alert Level 3 areas, including Auckland, Northland, and parts of the Waikato, but across the whole of New Zealand. It is the best way to avoid future lockdowns.

#### **Q. What travel restrictions will be place?**

Travel out and in of the area by road and air also restricted. People will only be able to travel for limited permitted reasons, and will need to carry evidence of they you are travelling. Police will be patrolling. People should stay home.

#### **Q. What are the locations of interest?**

The first locations of interest for Northland have been added to the [Ministry of Health website](#).

They are the BP Connect Wylies petrol station at 49 Maunu Road, Woodhill, Whangarei from 11.20pm on 2 October to 12.20am 3 October. And the Z Kensington service station, corner of Kamo Road and Nixon Street, Whangarei from 3.45pm-4.45pm on 4 October.

Locations of interest are added to the Ministry's website as quickly as possible. People to check these regularly, especially if you have visited, or live in Auckland, Waikato or Northland.

## Alert Level status for the rest of New Zealand

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

**Auckland remains in Alert level 3.** At 11.59pm, Tuesday 5 October Auckland moved to Alert Level 3, Step 1. The plan is to transition out of current restrictions over three steps, with regular check-ins to ensure the virus is actively controlled before further easing.

**North west Waikato area is in Alert Level 3** as health officials track the source of COVID-19 positive cases in and near to the area boundaries. North west Waikato moved into Alert Level 3 at 11.59pm, on Sunday 3 October. This will be reviewed on Monday, 11 October. That boundary has been extended cover the Waitomo District including Te Kuiti, as well as the Waipa and Ōtorohanga Districts.

The **remainder of New Zealand is at Alert Level 2.** This provides the greatest possible protection should the virus transmit across the boundary. At 11.59pm, Tuesday 5 October two changes were made to reduce restrictions in Alert Level 2.

1) The cap of 100 people gathering at hospitality and event venues has been removed, but the 'seated and separated' rule remains for hospitality. 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 or physical distancing, the limit of 100 will continue to apply for these.

2) Changes to the Health Order relating to public transport means that passengers are now able to stand when travelling on public transport

### **Why are we seeing so many cases?**

Many of the cases have been expected. On 29 September, the Director General of Health said cases are likely to arise amongst household and other close contacts who had already been identified.

Cases outside of the boundaries are also a stark reminder of the transmissibility of Delta.

Vaccination is our best tool in the fight against COVID-19. Vaccines reduce the risk of getting COVID-19, they reduce the risk of getting really sick if you do, and they reduce the rate of transmission. Only 3 percent of the cases in our current outbreak have had a vaccine.

## **Auckland Alert Level 3, Step 1**

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

From 11.59pm, Tuesday 5 October, Alert Level 3 restrictions in Auckland started to ease. People are now able to:

Have outdoor gatherings between two households, up to a maximum of 10 people, for example a BBQ or a picnic in the park. Each household should maintain physical distancing from the other.

Undertake organised group activity with up to 10 people, for example outdoor yoga or group exercise classes. The activity organiser must ensure physical distancing is always maintained.

Enjoy recreation activities across the Auckland region such as fishing, diving, hiking and bowls. A maximum of 2 households can gather, with a limit of 10 people gathering. Everyone must maintain physical distancing.

Step 1 is still part of Alert Level 3 for Auckland, and 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 1 go to the COVID-19 [website](#).

### **Q. What are the golden rules in Auckland for Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

The golden rules in Auckland for Alert Level 3, Step 1 are:

- Continue to work or study from home if you can
- Wear a face covering and keep your distance from people while out and about
- Two households can meet up outdoors with a maximum of 10 people.
- More outdoor exercise such as yoga and group exercise classes. Up to 10 people can take part while maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres.
- Children can return to early childhood centres with 10 children in each bubble. Please keep all older children at home.
- Businesses that require close physical contact cannot operate. Gyms remain closed.
- Keep scanning QR codes and record keeping everywhere you go.
- Travel between regions is still restricted.

### **Q. What are the rules for outdoor social gatherings, outdoor recreation, and outdoor exercise classes?**

- Outdoor social gatherings: 10 people maximum, from two households. Social distancing should be maintained.
- Outdoor recreation: 10 people maximum, from two households. Social distancing between households should be maintained.
- Outdoor exercise classes: 10 people maximum, including the instructor. Physical distancing of 2m must be maintained.

## **Social gatherings at Alert Level 3, Step 1**

### **Q. Can we hug when we reunite with another household?**

People are strongly encouraged to remain physically distanced when meeting up with another household outdoors.

### **Q. Can we share food between the two household 10 people gathering?**

Yes, but you should maintain physical distance between two households when meeting up outdoors.

### **Q. How do you define a household?**

This is the people you live with.

### **Q. Can people have as many outdoor gatherings as they want within a day?**

Step 1 has been created to encourage people to reconnect with close friends and whānau. Please act responsibly as Auckland is still at Alert Level 3.

### **Q. Can we meet in our own backyard or does it have to be a public park?**

You can meet in your garden or in an outdoor public space. People outside your household cannot access your backyard by entering your house or use indoor facilities during their stay.

The golden rule is that your gathering of 10 people is outdoors to reduce the ability of the virus to transmit.

**Q. Do we have to wear a face covering when meeting a different household outside?**

No, face covering is recommended if you are around people you don't know but you do not need to wear masks when meeting another household outside with no more than 10 people present.

**Q. Can people have a different child over every day as long as they play outside? Can a visiting child use the toilet in the house?**

Children's play dates can happen, but the intention of Step 1 is to allow people to reconnect with close friends and whānau. People are asked to act responsibly by keeping their contacts to a minimum, keep track of who they are seeing and follow health guidelines.

Children visiting the house cannot enter the house to use the toilet or access the outdoor play area.

**Q. Can we have a beer when we meet another household in a public park?**

Alcohol has been banned from some public places in Auckland. You can check where alcohol bans are in place at the [Auckland City Council website](#).

**Q. Can the two households who are gathering, travel in the same vehicle?**

No, when gathering together two households of no more than 10 people everyone must maintain 2m physical distance from each other. Also travelling in an enclosed space negates the ventilation benefits of meeting outside and could allow the virus to transmit more easily.

## **Recreational activities at Alert Level 3, Step 1**

**Q. Can we use outdoor playgrounds in Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

Yes. When Auckland is in Alert Level 3, Step 1 public playgrounds will be open and able to be used by the public.

**Q. Can we go on a regional holiday (within the Level 3 boundary) in our two household gathering, visit our bach, Airbnb or go camping or hire a campervan?**

No. Auckland is still in Alert Level 3. You cannot take holidays or overnight stays within the region. Recreational excursions are for day trips only.

**Q. Are outdoor exercise classes including boot camps and yoga available?**

Yes, outdoor only exercise classes can take place up to a maximum of 10 people. Participants do not have to be from one or two households only, but they do always need to maintain



2m physical distancing and remain outdoors (i.e. they cannot use gym indoor bathroom or changing facilities).

The instructor is included in the 10 people able to gather outdoors.

**Q. Can we go out on a boat?**

All types of recreational boating can occur (motorised or sailing), only people in one household should take part.

**Q. Can commercial tour or recreational businesses operate?**

No businesses such as Kayak hire or boat tours should not operate in Alert Level 3, Step 1.

**Q. Are all recreational water sports included in Step 1?**

Yes, cruising, fishing, diving, collecting seafood, and water sports are all allowed under the new Alert Level 3 settings for recreation in Auckland.

**Q. Can mainland Aucklanders travel to Waiheke or Great Barrier Island for a recreational day out?**

No, you cannot travel to Waiheke Island or Great Barrier Island (Aotea Island) if you do not already live there.

**Q. Can I go flying as my recreational activity?**

Yes, recreational flyers in Alert Level 3, Step 1 can go flying.

**Additional information**

**Q. What additional support is available for Auckland's Sport and Recreation Organisations?**

The Government is providing \$5.3 million to assist sport and recreation organisations in the Auckland region financially affected by the latest lockdown.

The new recovery investment is being made via existing Sport NZ partners and comprises:

Up to \$3 million for Aktive Auckland Sport and Recreation to support local and regional sport and recreation organisations across the Auckland Region

Up to \$1.5 million for Recreation Aotearoa to support outdoor education providers experiencing reductions in revenue due to the cancellation of school-group activities at Alert Levels 3 and 4

An additional \$800,000 for Variety NZ to support tamariki and rangatahi in financial need through the existing Active Me – Kia Tū initiative.

**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. When will gyms be able to reopen?**

Auckland remains at Alert Level 3, and gyms and indoor recreation facilities cannot open. Gyms are not currently included within the 3-Step plan for easing restrictions in Auckland, due to the high risk of transmission created by gym-going activity within confined indoor spaces.

### **Q. Where are the suburbs of interest in the Auckland area?**

The current suburbs of interest include: Clover Park, Māngere, Favona, Manurewa, Mount Wellington/Sylvia Park, Henderson, Papakura and Red Beach.

Red Beach is a new addition to the list. A pop-up community testing centre in Orewa at Victor Eaves Park, enter via West Hoe Road will be open today from 2pm to 6pm and tomorrow from 8.30am to 5pm.

## **Early Learning Centres at Alert 3, Step 1**

### **Q. What are the key guidelines for Early Learning Centre opening under Alert Level 3, Step 1?**

The Government has announced that with the right precautions, early childhood services in Auckland can now reopen to more tamariki from today, Wednesday 6 October.

Early childhood services are expected to organise children in bubbles of no more than 10 children.

Teachers can only work with a single bubble while these restrictions are in place and it is expected that bubbles of children will not mingle with other bubbles.

Early childhood services will contact parents to advise of the number of children that they can safely manage on-site under these restrictions.

Parents, caregivers and staff will need to wear face coverings during pick-ups and drop-offs.

Educators are encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test and parents and staff need to wear masks at pick-up and drop-offs

Staff are not required to wear face coverings in the classroom.

## Next steps

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

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

In 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. In step 2, when retail and public facilities open will food courts in shopping malls be able to open?**

No, hospitality inside retail areas cannot open until Step 3. Food courts will stay closed in Step 2.

### **Q. When will schools reopen?**

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

# Changes to Alert Level 2 restrictions

## General information

### **Q. Have the rules changed regarding people standing on public transport in Alert Level 2?**

Yes, this rule has been removed and passengers are now able to stand when travelling on public transport in Alert Level 2.

### **Q. What are the event facility capacity changes allowed for businesses in Alert Level 2?**

For event facilities, such as cinemas, theatres, stadiums, concert venues and casinos, the event facility capacity limit of 100 has been removed. Instead, capacity will be constrained by a 1m physical distancing rule.

This means that larger venues can now have more than 100 people, if the 1m physical distancing rule can be maintained.

This will apply for both ticketed and non-ticketed events, and for indoor and outdoor event facilities.

The 'seated and separated' rule remains for hospitality. 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 or physical distancing, the limit of 100 will continue to apply.

**Q. What defines a private social gathering? For example, can people host a cocktail function for a business for workplace without any social distancing?**

If it is held at an event or hospitality facility then the 1 metre rule applies. If, for example, someone hired a "defined space" then social gathering rules apply – a 100 people limit, with no restrictions on physical distancing. A defined space is an indoor or outdoor space which has no shared airflow with other spaces and has separate entrance, bathrooms, and point of sale to any other areas.

For more information see the [Unite Against Covid website](#).

**Q. Are attendees at events required to wear face coverings?**

At events, attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering unless eating and drinking.

For hospitality settings, people are encouraged to wear a face covering unless eating or drinking.

For social gatherings, attendees are encouraged to wear a face covering.

**Q. Under current Alert level 2 restrictions, is there a cap on numbers allowed at outdoor events e.g. Christmas parades?**

At Alert Level 2 if an event were taking place outdoors but not within an event facility, it would be considered a gathering under the Health Order, and the 100-person limit would apply.

The change in capacity limits that came into force on Tuesday 5 October relates to defined event facilities, such as theatres, conference venues, casinos, and stadiums.

## Venues – stadiums at Alert Level 2

**Q. How do the restrictions apply to event facilities with seating? Can people be standing at appropriate event facilities as long as they are 1m apart?**

Event facilities are able to operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, as long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained. If a hospitality venue is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

**Q. Can we now host rugby at our stadium with the only restriction of being physically distanced (1m apart) across all areas?**

Yes. Under the new requirements, event facilities can operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, so long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained.

If a hospitality venue (e.g. a café or bar) is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

**Q. Do we need to ensure guests are seated 1m apart?**

Yes. Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

**Q. Can guests within bubbles be seated together?**

Yes, people can sit with those they live with.

**Q. Do venues need to shut off every second toilet cubicle and urinal?**

Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

## Venues – Dining, restaurants, cafes at Alert Level 2

**Q. If the event is a 200-person seated dinner, can people within their bubble sit at a table of 10 without being 1m apart?**

Yes, but event organisers should have systems in place to maintain physical distancing.

**Q. Do tables need to be at least 1m apart?**

Yes. Event organisers should have systems and processes in place to maintain physical distancing.

## Venues – General admission at Alert Level 2

**Q. Do the guidelines only apply to fully seated events? What about concerts with a standing area or an even with roaming patrons?**

Event facilities are able to operate with attendees seated or standing without a capacity limit, as long as physical distancing of 1m can be maintained.

Event organisers should have systems in place to maintain physical distancing. This could mean only providing seating.

If a hospitality venue is attached to the events facility and attendees consume food or drink in that area, they must be seated and appropriately distanced.

# Alert Level 3 in Waikato

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

As cases were found in Kāwhia and Karapiro, outside the initial Waikato Alert Level 3 boundary, the boundary was extended from 11.59pm, Thursday 7 October to cover the Waitomo District including Te Kuiti, as well as the Waipa and Ōtorohanga Districts.

**Q. Why are you extending the boundary rather than putting the whole of the North Island in Alert Level 3?**

At the start of this outbreak vaccination numbers were still low, so the Government moved quickly to put country into lockdown. With increasing numbers of people vaccinated, the public health advice is that the boundary can be extended safely without putting the whole of the North Island into lockdown.

**Q. What should Waikato residents do?**

Level 3 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.

With new cases in Karapiro and Kāwhia local residents are asked to check if they have visited locations of interest and get tested.

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

To find out where vaccinations are available in the Waikato check here.

To find out more about testing stations in the area go to the Waikato District Health Board website.

**Q. How is COVID-19 testing and containing the outbreak progressing?**

There are five pop up testing sites operating in Hamilton, Raglan, Huntly and Tokoroa, with all five being open for extended hours to cater to any lift in demand.

An existing site at Founders Theatre car park in Hamilton remains open.

An existing testing provider in Kāwhia has been expanded. More details on exact locations and hours are available on the Healthpoint and Waikato DHB sites.

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

The Alert Level 3 boundary has been extended and now covers the Waitomo District including Te Kuiti, as well as the Waipa and Ōtorohanga Districts.

Raglan, Te Kauwhata, Huntly, Ngāruawāhia, and Hamilton City (based on the Hamilton city boundary) were already inside the alert level boundary.

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

**Q. Hamilton Airport is inside the extended boundary. What does this mean for air travel?**

Restrictions on travel by air will be in place. People will only be able to travel for limited permitted reasons.

**Q. What happens if I have a flight booked to Hamilton?**

People outside the boundary who have travel booked through Hamilton airport will not be able to enter into the Alert Level 3 and will need to make alternative arrangements.

**Q. How are spot checks at the Waikato Level 3 boundaries working?**

Police are conducting spot checks and high visibility mobile reassurance patrols throughout the Waikato Alert Level 3 area. There is no hard boundary to the south and east of the area and Police will be conducting random spots checks and patrols to ensure compliance.

Anyone unable to provide evidence of permitted movement may be turned around and may face prosecution for breaching COVID-19 regulations.

Police, supported by Aviation Security, will also be conducting checks at Hamilton Airport.

Police urge the public to respect the restrictions and expect the vast majority of people will do the right thing to help limit the spread of COVID-19.

A hard boundary between Auckland and Waikato remains in place with the pre-existing checkpoints at five locations.

**Q. How does travel across the Waikato 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](#).

**Q. Can Waikato residents go to Auckland (and vice versa) now we are both in Alert Level 3?**

No, the Auckland boundaries remain in place with checkpoints to ensure only permitted travellers cross.

Placing the north west Waikato into Alert Level 3 is intended as a temporary measure to allow health officials to trace and contain the small outbreak quickly before it spreads further.

## Information about testing

**Q. What is the rapid antigen test pilot?**

Rapid antigen tests will be used in Auckland and Christchurch as a point-of-arrival test in the self-isolation pilots taking place in Auckland and Christchurch from the end of this month and into December.

**Q. Does this mean New Zealand will introduce wide use of rapid antigen testing?**

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Businesses Innovation and Employment (MBIE) are working with businesses that are keen to accelerate additional levels of testing for their workforce.

## Vaccination information

**Q: Is the Pfizer vaccine expiry date on Medsafe website the reason behind the National Vaccine day?**

The provisional approval of the Pfizer vaccine expires on 3 November, 2021. Medsafe will consider, prior to expiry, how the provisional consent will proceed beyond its current period. This may include a renewal or a move to full consent. It is not possible to indicate a timeline for the granting of full consent, because this will depend on the submission of an application by the sponsor company Pfizer and the outcome of Medsafe's assessment of any additional supporting data.

Medsafe will provide an update on renewal or moving to full consent well before the expiry.

This has no connection to the National Day of action for Vaccine on 16 October. This day is a collective effort to make New Zealand one of the most highly vaccinated countries in the world.

### **Q. Will it soon be mandatory that all healthcare workers be vaccinated?**

The Ministry of Health is starting to consult some key stakeholders on a proposal that requires the majority of healthcare workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. This is in line with current requirements for MIQ and port workers, and reflects practices in other countries, including Australia, UK and Canada.

While vaccination uptake is high in some parts of the sector, New Zealand needs vaccination rates to be higher right across this workforce to protect healthcare workers and the wider community better from COVID-19.

Consultation on mandatory vaccinations will include health unions, professional associations, the Office for Disabilities Issues, the Privacy Commissioner, Māori representatives and Aged Care employers.

The proposal will apply to staff working in roles within a COVID-19 pathway, including emergency departments, primary health care, settings with vulnerable patients, people working in aged residential care facilities, critical support services (medical laboratories, catering) and workers providing Home and Community Care Services.

## **Vaccination rates in different groups?**

### **Q. What has been done to improve vaccination rates in healthcare workers?**

District Health Board frontline health care workers were offered early vaccinations as part of Group 2 in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and at last count, at least 75% of DHBs' total workforce of around 80,000 is fully vaccinated, with higher numbers for those who have had one vaccination.

### **Q. What support is available to assist people with disabilities to be vaccinated?**

DHBs provide a range of services that are designed to meet their communities' needs and have a range of support and accommodations in place. These include mobile vaccination services, residential disability services, and in some instances home visits.

To speak with a support specialist, people can call the COVID Vaccination Healthline on 0800 28 29 26 for free 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 'push 2' to speak to one of the team.

A toolkit is available for people supporting disabled people with key messages, digital assets for social media channels, newsletters and website, frequently asked questions, and links to further information and resources. The toolkit can be found [here](#).

If anyone or someone they support, might need a home vaccination it is best to call the COVID-19 vaccination helpline – 0800 28 29 26 – to discuss options available. They will also be able to connect you with someone at the local DHB to confirm that it is suitable to have a home visit and organise logistics.

### **Q. Is it possible to organise a home visit for people with disabilities wanting vaccination?**

Yes, home visits may require more organisation which sometimes takes time to work through.

Under Alert Level 3 and 4, some mobile services, including home visits may not always be possible in some regions to ensure people can remain safely in their bubble and to manage workforce constraints.

### **Q. What are the vaccination rates for people with disabilities in New Zealand?**

As at 19 September, 69% of the more than 29,600 people who are being supported by Disability Supports and Services nationwide have had their first dose, and 39% have been fully vaccinated.

Of the more than 6,700 people who have been supported by ACC for more than 6 months, 66% have had their first dose and 44% are fully vaccinated.

### **Q. How are plans to vaccinate 12- to-15-year-olds going?**

More than 60 percent of the 12- to 15-year-old group has already received at least one dose. Uptake in this group has been faster than in any other age group.

### **Q. What are the plans to vaccinate children under 12?**

In order for Medsafe to consider whether to grant provisional approval for the Pfizer vaccine for people under the age of 12, Pfizer must submit an application to Medsafe. They have not yet received an application from Pfizer to vary the approval of their COVID-19 vaccine for people under the age of 12 years. It has provisional approval for use in people aged 12 and over.

When Pfizer does submit an application, Medsafe will prioritise the assessment of the data for this age group. If Medsafe provisionally approves the Pfizer vaccine for people under 12, further clinical and scientific advice will be sought from the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) and that will inform the "decision to use" advice considered by Cabinet.

## **Vaccination supply and expiry dates**

### **Q. How do we store and ensure the Pfizer vaccine we have is safe and working?**

All the vials currently in central storage (stored at -70c), have an expiry date of either 31 December or 31 January. The MoH is working with Medsafe and Pfizer to apply the new storage requirements, which further increase the stock life in freezers.

### **Q. Is there a risk the vaccines we have in storage will expire before they are used?**

The Ministry of Health is proactively managing stock at every vaccination site. Vaccine stocks are checked each day for doses near expiry. Stock management processes include "first to expire, first out" Any expired vaccines that expire are destroyed.

### **Q. Is there a regular supply of Pfizer vaccine coming to New Zealand?**

Aotearoa will continue to receive regular scheduled deliveries from Pfizer for the remainder of 2021. With 4.38 million doses scheduled for delivery by the end of the year.

### **Q. Is there much wastage of the vaccine?**

No, wastage is kept to a minimum currently tracking at around 0.22 per cent week to week, well below New Zealand's own target of less than 2 per cent. This translates to around 155 vials. We know an effective immunisation programme recognises that some wastage is inevitable.

Information on this is updated and published this every week on the Ministry of Health's website.

### **Q. What is the Government doing to encourage people to be vaccinated?**

A national day for action for vaccination is planned for Saturday 16 October.

The event will have vaccine clinics open throughout Aotearoa all day and into the evening. Political and civic leaders, communities and businesses are being asked to contribute to a big collective effort to get people to the event and vaccinated.

## **Introducing My COVID Record**

From the end of November, everyone in New Zealand will be able to access a scannable QR code as proof of vaccination and COVID-19 test results.

This will help reduce the risk of the virus spreading at large gatherings and events over the summer and into next year.

The first phase of this project launches next week with the website My COVID Record, where people will be able to view their vaccination records.

This is the same platform that will later allow you to download digital vaccination and COVID-19 test certificates for use in New Zealand and overseas.

Users will be able to either print or save the QR codes on their smartphone in an Apple or Google Wallet.

There will be separate codes for domestic and international verification of vaccination records and COVID-19 test results.

### **Q. What if I had my vaccinations overseas?**

My COVID Record draws upon information in the national COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR).

In time if you have received a suitable COVID-19 vaccination(s) overseas and this is registered in the New Zealand COVID-19 Immunisation Register, it will be displayed in My COVID Record.

## **Q. How can I access My COVID Record?**

Details will be published on the Ministry of Health website next week. It will be compatible on a smartphone or computer.

## **Q. From when will I be required to show the QR Code at events?**

The exact timing for when proof of vaccination will be required is still being discussed. Government is also consulting with business, hospitality and events sector on the finer details of how it can work.

## **Q. Can essential workers use the website as proof when it launches the week of 12 October?**

If people need official proof of vaccination prior to November, they can request a certificate from the Ministry of Health. The My Covid Record can achieve the same result, but it isn't yet designed for that purpose.

## **Q. What are the options for people who can't be vaccinated due to medical reasons?**

The Ministry of Health is looking at options for how non vaccination for health reasons can record this in the COVID Immunisation Record (CIR) and how this would work in practice.

## **Q. How do people access My COVID Record if they don't have a smartphone or access to a computer?**

Many local libraries have facilities where people can access the internet and printing. The MoH is also investigating how we make this available via a phone call.

## **Q. Can I use the purple card I received at my vaccine appointment instead?**

The purple appointment cards don't provide proof of vaccination status as they could be easily forged or altered. They are appointment reminder cards – so people know when their second vaccination appointment is.

## **Q. What if I need proof of vaccination today?**

In the interim, before the certificates are launched, if people need formal proof of their COVID-19 vaccination, they can request a vaccination confirmation letter from the Ministry of Health.

## **Q. Can you build it sooner?**

The MoH is working with several technical partners to enable the App to be launched as soon as possible while ensuring it is robust and secure. It will be delivered in stages with the final parts coming at the end of November to launch for the general public.

## **Q. Why is it taking so long?**



The underlying service took a number of countries (UK, Australia) many years to develop, when New Zealand began earlier this year, the MoH were able to take advantage of what they learned.

There have also been a number of on-going projects at the Ministry. Many of the people working on this project have also been involved in building systems for the Covid response including the COVID Tracer App and Book My Vaccine.

The MoH have been working with the industry to ensure our approach to the verifier process will help them, too.

It's not just about the technology, the programme needs a process to support people who don't have access to digital tools, who don't have access to ID, for people who aren't vaccinated, and for people vaccinated overseas.

**Q. What if I am fully vaccinated, but there's an error with scanning the code?**

The MoH is working to ensure people can easily access support options if they find their certificate isn't working. The design being used is available offline and the focus is on making it as simple as possible.

**Q. Can people access other vaccination information on My COVID Record such as Flu or Measles?**

No, it is currently only for COVID-19 proof of vaccination and test results. In the New Year the MoH could look at options to extend its use based on lessons learned.

**Q. How will we check the QR Codes?**

A verifier app is currently being developed to read the QR codes. The MoH are aiming to develop something that will fit with common tools such as smartphones or tablets. They are also planning to publish a standard in coming weeks for those that want to build their own solution. It's important that the scanning too doesn't retain any personal health information.

**Q. What if our event doesn't have internet access?**

The system is designed to be operated without constant internet access.

**Q. Will records be required at all restaurants and events?**

The MoH is still working through the settings where proof of vaccination will be compulsory.

**Q. Will it cost me any money to use the app?**

The app will be free.

**Q. Who can access the app? And what happens to people without digital access to the technology (eg don't have a smartphone)**

The app will be accessible by anyone with a smartphone with access to the Apple or Google Play Stores.

Those who do not have access to digital technology will be able to use paper certificates. Or could ask friends and whānau for help.

**Q. Is My COVID Record the same App as the NZ COVID Tracer App?**

No, but there will be a link to My COVID Record within the COVID Tracer App.

**Q. Will it be mandatory to use My COVID Record when going to events and businesses?**

Government are working within the events and hospitality industry to determine when proof of vaccinations might be required for entry to events and venues, and to ensure the technology is fit for purpose.

Equally important is clarifying areas where it should not be required, for example people accessing essential services.

**Q. Why haven't you asked for ID for people getting vaccinated and how do we know it was the right person?**

A conscious decision was made earlier on in the vaccination programme rollout to support as many people to be vaccinated as possible which meant trusting New Zealanders to do the right thing. While it is possible to get vaccinated in someone else's name we are asking New Zealanders to act in a trustworthy way. It is worth noting that this is an offence under the COVID Act, and there are health risks to receiving treatment intended for another person.

**Q. Will the certificates will be accepted overseas?**

The international certificates are separate to the domestic certificates. These will meet EU standards for proof of vaccination to enable international travel. The government is currently talking with EU officials to make sure it is accepted there, and officials have begun the same conversation with other international jurisdictions.

At this point, it is the closest thing that exists to a universal way to prove a person's vaccination status for international travel.

**Q. If I am planning to attend large scale events in the summer is it too late for me to get vaccinated in time to be immunised at the events.**

With 8 weeks until summer people still have time to be vaccinated in time for summer. Unvaccinated people will need to have their first dose within the next two weeks.

## International travel and cargo

**Q. Why aren't New Zealand citizens required to be vaccinated before returning to New Zealand?**

Legally we can not preclude New Zealand citizens from returning to their home by placing conditions, such as a vaccination order, on their right to enter.

## **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. Are forestry and logging trucks one of the permitted industries to travel across boundaries?**

Yes, from 5 October necessary forestry and wood processing is a permitted reason for travel across Alert Level boundaries to reduce possible implications to the supply chain.

More information about the testing and documentation that workers will require is available on the Unite Against Covid-19 [website](#).

### **Q. Is there any Alert Level 3 Step 1 advice available for Auckland businesses?**

Yes, more information can be found on the COVID-19 [website](#).

### **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](#).

## Support for sports and recreation

### **What support is available for sports and recreation organisations in Auckland?**

The Government has announced a \$5.3 million package to help sports and recreation organisation in Auckland that that be finally impacted by COVID-19 Delta outbreak.

The funding will be provided through Sport Recovery package and will to three funds.

- 
- The Tāmaki Makaurau Sector Support Fund aimed at supporting clubs and regional bodies in Auckland
  - Active Me – Kia Tū, for whānau in the region impacted by financial hardship, and
  - Outdoor Education Support Fund, to assist outdoor education providers (in Auckland and elsewhere) that are experiencing short term financial hardship due to the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown arising from the Delta outbreak.