

COVID-19 Protocols
for NZ Forestry Industry Operations under Level 3

Recommended Practices for COVID-19: Processing

This guidance would also apply if any forestry-related operation was given permission to operate at Level 4.

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Document developed by:



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Recommended Practices for COVID-19: **Everyone**

1. **Stay at home if you are unwell**

- Everyone must self-assess their health prior to attending work. Anyone who feels unwell should not come to work and should phone Healthline on 0800 358 5453 to seek advice.
- Anyone who has been in another country or has had close contact with a probable or confirmed case, should self-quarantine and not come to work for 14 days.
- Assess worker fitness before work starts each day by asking them:
 - ▶ Are you feeling unwell, fatigued or not in a fit state to work?
 - ▶ Have you been in contact with anyone who is unwell or who has COVID-19?
- For more information see Appendix 3: Assessing wellness.

2. **Minimise numbers on site**

- Only workers necessary to carry out work should be on site. Any worker who can work from home should.
- Visitors to site should be minimised to essential work only.

3. **General hygiene**

Practise good hygiene at **ALL TIMES** including:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Put used tissues straight into the bin
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- Use hand-sanitiser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Clean and disinfect frequently used hard surfaces at regular intervals
- Clean and disinfect frequently used objects such as mobile phones, keys, wallets and work passes.
- Use PPE options as appropriate to the circumstances, which should include providing instruction on correct use
- Form workplace teams (bubbles) and minimise mixing e.g. staggered breaks, defined walkways, separate entry and exit times.

4. Have hygiene and cleaning products available on site

All works sites must have the following available:

- Soap and water
- Hand-sanitiser
- Cleaning products for wiping down areas
- Disposable paper towels to wipe down surfaces
- Tissues
- Gloves
- Bins / bags / waste areas to dispose of used cleaning items.

5. Physical distancing

Maintain physical distancing between people:

- **Level 3:** 1 metre in a controlled work environment, 2 metres outside home or on public transport
- **Level 4:** 2 metres, unless 1 to 2 metres unavoidable e.g. in processing

Separation can be assisted through staggering start / finish / and meal break times. As far as is possible, people should remain in their work 'bubble'.

General safety provisions need to be in place at all times and it is important that all businesses adapt safety measures to their specific circumstances.

Workers are only allowed to work with physical distancing of less than 1 metre in extraordinary operational circumstances. Additional safety measures such as screens must be applied, and these are described in guidance from Ministry for Primary Industries¹.

The following requirements for distancing should be discussed and agreed with teams:

- Stagger breaks so that there are no communal lunches, smoko or other gatherings
- Maintain the required minimum distancing
- Handheld two-ways are to be used to reduce close contact between crew and visitors.

6. Site register

Ensure you have a register for all workers, including those travelling in work vehicles, visitors and service providers with contact details recorded to ensure contact tracing can be done by Ministry of Health if there is a COVID-19 case at your workplace.

7. Case management

Every workplace must maintain and implement processes for managing a positive COVID-19 detection in the workplace. See Appendix 4 for details.

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 at work or at home contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

¹ Note that requests for evaluation of options other than screens that provide an equivalent level of protection can be put to NZ Food Safety.

8. Travel to and from work site

- Wherever possible employees are to travel individually to and from a work site. Where this is not possible please see Appendix 5 for further details.
- At home maintain good hygiene and follow the latest Ministry of Health guidance on physical distancing, including what social and recreational activities are allowed.

9. Shared vehicle (split shifts, different users on different days etc)

Where a vehicle or machine is shared between different drivers / operators, each user must wipe down at the beginning and end of each use:

- Interior (including high touch areas such as steering wheel, gear shift, seat belt and buckle, radio, window controls etc)
- Any handheld devices left in the vehicle (where possible individuals to retain their own handheld devices)
- Two-way radio
- Exterior high touch areas including door handles
- Keys and or remote sensor.

10. Returning home

- Clean your hands: Avoid touching anything until you wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly
- Remove shoes. Don't walk through the house with your shoes on. Take them off at the door
- Wash clothes: Put your clothes and bags into a separate container from your family's clothes and wash them in a hot washing machine cycle (over 60 degrees)
- Shower: Have a shower and make sure to wash your hands, wrists, neck and anywhere else that has been exposed.

11. Fuel purchases

- Use hand-sanitiser or wash hands with soap and water both before and after refuelling vehicles.

12. 'At-Risk' employees

- Employees who are most at risk (see Appendix 2) should discuss options with their employer. Where appropriate, an employer may recommend such employees are relocated or assigned alternate duties for added protection.

13. All meetings to be conducted remotely or to use physical distancing

- All meetings should be conducted using either phone conference, video conference or other technologies which can be set up to be accessed by laptop, tablet or smartphone

- All communications for onsite meetings such as tailgate meetings should now take place in a way that maintains physical distancing or via phone or radio with participants.

14. Training

- Any non-essential face to face training should be suspended. If training must be provided, then COVID-19 protocols must be met.

15. Work from home where possible

- While this will not be an option for many employees, businesses must identify work from home options.

16. Worker engagement

- Ensure your workers are involved in implementing these protocols and have a way to provide feedback on how things are working and when / if things need to change.

17. Working alone procedures

- Review your working alone procedures and ensure they are fit for working in these circumstances.

18. Review and monitoring

- Ensure you have processes in place to review and monitor the protocols you have implemented.

19. Emergencies

- In an emergency the usual procedures apply but take extra diligence to minimise your risk to COVID-19.

KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE

- **Maintain physical distancing: LEVEL 3: Stay 1–2 metres apart; LEVEL 4: 2 metres apart**
- **Wash hands for 20 seconds regularly with soap and dry thoroughly, or use sanitiser**
- **Clean and disinfect common contact surfaces frequently and keep other surfaces clean.**



Recommended Practices for COVID-19: **Processing**

1. **Bubbles**

- Businesses must ensure, as much as possible, that people are able to remain within their designated 'bubble'
- Staff that are able to work remotely should continue to do so wherever possible
- Anyone who has been in another country or has been identified as a close contact of a probable or confirmed case, should self-quarantine and not come to work for 14 days.

2. **Coming to work**

- Any staff who are sick must not come to work
- Anyone who has been in another country or has been identified as a close contact of a probable or confirmed case, should self-quarantine and not come to work for 14 days.

3. **Washing hands and general hygiene**

- Ensure that staff have facilities to be able to wash their hands properly
- Ensure reminders that hands need to be washed regularly and well with soap and water for 20 seconds and properly dried, especially upon arrival at work, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose, sneezing, coughing and before eating
- Continue to reinforce messages around respiratory and hand hygiene – remind staff to cover coughs and sneezes with their elbow or tissues (dispose of any tissues promptly)
- Remind staff that they should avoid touching their face unless they have washed their hands.
- Signage should be in place to reinforce safety messages.

4. **Sanitising work areas**

- Clean work areas frequently using a sanitiser / disinfectant, including common rooms and break rooms, especially high touch areas
- It may be useful to have a board display of when the room was last cleaned.

5. **Physical distancing of staff**

- Keep as much distance as you can between staff. Where possible, position staff to stand side-by-side and avoid close, face-to-face positioning.
- Use staggered breaks for different work teams to reduce contact in common areas

- Create 'walkways' so that staff are separated when moving through and around the work area
- Create separate entrance and exit zones and staggered change-over times so that teams do not mix in changing rooms
- Some businesses allowed to work at Level 4 might only be able to maintain a 1 to 2 metre distance between staff. In such cases, general hygiene requirements may need to be strengthened on a case by case basis e.g. use of PPE
- Where it is unavoidable that staff have less than 1 metre separation, additional mitigation measures must be put in place such as screens, PPE (see physical distancing requirements for everyone above).

6. Work bubbles

- Establish 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. This includes, wherever possible, strict departmentalisation of the processing operation so that mixing between departments is kept to an absolute minimum
- Maintain back-up work teams to use as replacements if a team needs to be quarantined.

7. Visitors

- Visitors to the site are to be kept to an absolute minimum and are to only occur when the visit is essential to the ongoing operation of the business
- All visitors to site are to sign a register including details of name, address, phone number and a declaration that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms
- An induction is to take place for each visit and is to include reminders on strict physical distancing from staff on site and the need to keep visit length to an absolute minimum
- Limit all non-essential external visits and minimise contact with essential visitors using facilities such as pay-wave, internet banking and drop shipments
- Enable physical distancing measures between staff and visitors as much as possible
- Where feasible and practicable, businesses can install plastic barriers to separate workers from each other or from visitors if physical distancing cannot be achieved by other measures
- Visitors should be advised they are required to wipe down any machinery and surfaces they may touch in the course of their visit with appropriate sanitiser
- Visitors entry point to be equipped with handwashing facilities and any visitor to site is to wash hands using the best practice guidelines upon entry and exit of the site.

8. Staff communication

- Use the information that is available on the COVID-19 website and print off the COVID-19 posters for staff
- Ensure that staff are regularly briefed on measures to minimise the risk of infection and routinely monitor compliance.

9. COVID PPE

- PPE may be chosen for routine use in some situations e.g. masks where physical spacing of more than 1 metre cannot be achieved, gloves in situations where workers have a number of common surface contacts
- Where PPE is chosen, workers must be instructed on its safe use and disposal
- Information about face masks is on the Ministry of Health website under COVID-19
- Disposal facilities for PPE must be provided and maintained (emptying).

10. Daily routine

- An onsite Toolbox meeting is to be held with each department of the business prior to entry to the workplace. As a minimum this will include a discussion about the necessity for physical distancing and maintaining the protocols put in place
- Staff are to be actively encouraged to suggest any improvements to the set protocols. Any changes to the protocols are to be agreed by site management prior to implementation to allow consideration of downstream effects to be taken place
- Any changes to the protocols to be circulated in writing and the implementation to be discussed at appropriate Toolbox meetings.

11. Business continuity

- Ensure your business continuity plans are up to date.

12. Site-specific plans

- Each site is to develop a site-specific plan for controlling the spread of COVID-19. The plan is to include, as a minimum, the following:
 - How communication will occur?
 - What the risks are
 - How the spread will be controlled
 - Health risk screening
 - Physical distancing
 - Closure of non-essential site services
 - Daily briefings / procedures
 - PPE (optional use and disposal)
 - Working environment
 - Unwell staff / visitors

- ▶ Entry to / exit from site procedures
- ▶ Visitor requirements
- ▶ Physical distancing requirements
- ▶ Site plan showing internally segregated areas and safe walking paths and locations of hygiene stations
- ▶ Break and lunch procedures
- ▶ Cleaning procedures and requirements for individuals i.e. wipe down procedures for forklift drivers / machine operators / IT Equipment
- ▶ Handling of inwards goods (Quarantine / Disinfect / Handle with PPE)
- ▶ Monitoring by supervisors and internal verification of compliance
- ▶ Working from home guidelines
- ▶ Staff travel to and from site
- ▶ Privacy.

Template examples for a site-specific plan may be available from industry organisations.

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