



MINISTRY OF HOUSING  
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

# COVID-19 Provider Guidance

Alert Level 2

---

Guidance up-to-date as at 12 August 2020



## Contents

<b>Purpose</b> .....	<b>3</b>
When is this guidance applicable from? .....	3
We will keep you updated as Alert Levels change.....	3
<b>COVID-19 and Alert Level 2</b> .....	<b>4</b>
What is COVID-19?.....	4
What is the COVID-19 Alert Level system.....	4
What does COVID-19 Alert Level 2 look like.....	4
Recommended levels of physical distancing .....	6
Where can I go for more information about my business?.....	6
<b>Keeping whānau and staff safe as you work</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Tikanga and supporting whānau Māori .....	8
Information that helps you support whānau Māori .....	8
Implement the health and safety practices you developed at Alert Level 3 and 4 .....	8
Work in Partnership with Government and the Wider Sector .....	9
Continue to workplace safety protocols at Alert Level 2.....	9
Physical distancing and safety in shared accommodation .....	9
Where a provider needs to transport whānau .....	10
Contact tracing.....	11
Residents in shared facilities under Alert Level 2 .....	11
If whānau or staff are unwell they must self-isolate .....	12
Planning to protect whānau and staff who are more likely to experience complications associated with COVID-19.....	12
Known high risk whānau .....	13
Some whānau may not have disclosed conditions .....	13
Staff members that are high risk .....	13
Financial support for high risk employees that cannot work during the COVID-19 pandemic .....	14
Family violence .....	14
Health and safety in the workplace .....	14
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).....	15
<b>Operating your service at Alert Level 2</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Moving whānau into accommodation safely.....	16
Tenanting vacant properties.....	16
Safe relocation .....	17
Ensure the property is clean before you tenant it.....	17
Furnishing properties.....	18
Property Maintenance.....	18
Construction and housing developments.....	18
<b>MSD Under Alert Level 2:</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Emergency housing.....	20

Transitional housing referrals .....	20
Public Housing Assessments .....	20
Public Housing Placements .....	20
Fast-tracked Income Related Rent reviews for decreased income .....	20
<b>Business continuity and working with HUD.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Recommended business continuity practices .....	21
Assurances from HUD .....	21
Community Housing Regulatory Authority.....	21
Contact us .....	21

## Purpose

This document provides guidance to housing and support service providers on how to operate safely during the COVID 19 Alert Level 2 REDUCE period. This includes guidance on:

- Keeping whānau and staff safe as you work
- Operating your service safely
- Business continuity
- Working with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

## When is this guidance applicable from?

This guidance is only applicable from the date that the government dictates that New Zealand – or individual regions within New Zealand – moves to COVID-19 Alert Level 2. Please note that this may not be the same date that the announcement itself was made.

To find out what Alert Level New Zealand is currently at, visit the [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) website; the current Alert Level will be clearly displayed on the landing page of the website.

## We will keep you updated as Alert Levels change

We are working closely with Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) and Te Matapihi to make sure you have the right information at the right time; all updates to provider guidance will also be distributed to you via these peak body organisations. Also, a change in Alert Level will be heavily reported across social media channels, radio, television and print media. If you remain unclear about what Alert Level New Zealand, or any region within New Zealand, is in at any given time; please reach out to your contact at HUD, CHA and or Te Matapihi.

## COVID-19 and Alert Level 2

### What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that can affect your lungs and airway. Visit the [covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz) website for more information on the disease and what you can do to stop the spread. You can find more information on people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and how to keep them safe [here](#).

### What is the COVID-19 Alert Level system

New Zealand has a 4 level COVID-19 alert system. Each Alert Level tells us what measures to take to keep ourselves and others safe. It also provides us with guidelines about how we need to work at each Alert Level including any changes we may need to make to our business model and the way we operate our business.

Visit <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/> to find out more about New Zealand's 4 Level COVID-19 Alert System.

### What does COVID-19 Alert Level 2 look like

Alert Level 2 is not life as normal. There are a range of restrictions and recommendations in place to maintain public safety and well-being and reduce the risk of community transmission. These restrictions do not enable us to operate at business as usual.

You can find detailed information about what is and is not allowed at Alert Level 2 (and the differences between Alert Level 2 and 3) [here](#), but key things to note are:

#### Businesses and staff:

- All businesses can open under Alert Level 2 and must continue to take health measures to keep their workers and customers safe. Alternative ways of working are encouraged, such as remote working, shift-based working, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave where possible.
- Staff at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled, and older people) are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home.
- Staff may continue to work from business premises provided they can remain 1 metre apart and the business displays a QR code and has systems in place for contact tracing.
- Work activities that involve close personal contact are allowed, provided that robust contact tracing is possible. Apply common sense, judgement, and good hygiene practices, and minimise contact to the extent possible. Follow sector guidelines where these exist. The general rule is that staff should maintain 2 metres from customers, but to the extent that a business or service cannot operate without physical contact, or close proximity, people should try to maintain 1 metre, except when they actually need to be closer.
- Health and care services can operate normally as far as possible, providing physical distancing and infection control guidelines are followed and remote consultations are recommended where possible.

- If you and or your workers are sick, you/they should stay home. Don't go to work and don't socialise if you are unwell.
- Staff who are unwell with [symptoms of sickness consistent with COVID 19](#) must stay at home and call Healthline or their GP to organise a COVID-19 test. Staff can return to work once they have either:
  - returned a negative test result and health staff have advised it is OK to return to work or
  - if the result is positive, they must have completed the recommended period of quarantine and have been symptom free for at least 48 hours
- In a general workplace where contact tracing is possible, then look to maintain a one metre separation, unless other mitigating measures are in place. Follow the workplace guidelines that have been agreed for your sector with WorkSafe, where these exist.

#### **Movement and gatherings:**

- People can move to a new home. We encourage providers to ensure that prospective tenants are familiar with the health and safety guidelines so they can move safely.
- Friends and family can help but should follow guidance on physical distancing, personal hygiene, surface cleaning, and record-keeping.
- People can travel inter-regionally provided this is between regions also at Alert Level 2, including for moving house, but should do so in a safe way. People may not travel to an Alert Level 3 area.
- We continue to recommend matching applicants with vacant properties in the same region where this is practical. Where moving within the same region is not possible, we encourage providers to ensure that prospective tenants are familiar with the health and safety guidelines for their intended regional move, so they can move safely. This aligns with the approaches of both the Ministry for Social Development (MSD) and Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities.
- Individuals and whānau can be moved into accommodation with shared facilities, providing they are not displaying relevant symptoms of COVID 19, do not have a current positive test for COVID 19, and have not been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID 19.
- People should not use public transport if they are sick or required to self-isolate or quarantine. There may be limited capacity on public transport with physical distancing requirements in place and it is recommended you pre-plan your trip.
- Gathering requirements must be met in accordance with [Alert Level 2 guidance](#)
- Stringent quarantine or self-isolation remains in place at all levels for those who display relevant symptoms of COVID 19, test positive for COVID 19, or have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID 19.
- Mandatory quarantine (14 days) is in place at all levels for people returning from overseas.

#### **Services:**

- Removal companies can operate providing they are able to ensure workplace safety protocols are maintained (e.g. maintaining physical distancing between workers and customers, maintaining contact tracing records, limiting interaction between groups of workers, disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining high hygiene standards).

- Other in-home services like contracting tradespeople can enter premises to do any installation or repair work. Tradespeople need to ensure the public health measures are met.
- Cleaners can enter premises to clean the property. At Alert Level 3, this is only for commercial cleaners, however at Alert Level 2 this can include non-commercial cleaners. In either case public health measure need to be met.
- Retail outlets are permitted to operate normally for customers with appropriate health and safety protocols in place. This means furniture, whiteware and other household items can be purchased.
- Manufacturers and suppliers will be able to operate normally for trade customers with appropriate health and safety protocols in place.
- All freight can be distributed at Alert Level 2.

**Other:**

- Public venues are open but must comply with public health requirements
- Sport and recreation activities are allowed if conditions on gatherings are met, and physical distancing is followed where practical.
- Schools and Early Childhood Education centres are open, with distance learning available for those unable to attend school, such as people self-isolating.

These requirements impact on the services you can provide at Alert Level 2; further guidance on activities you can deliver safely during this period are included in this document.

### Recommended levels of physical distancing

**Two metres** – during uncontrolled situations in which most people are generally unknown to each other and record keeping for contact tracing purpose is not feasible e.g. supermarkets and other retail outlets that do not have contact tracing measures in place, shopping malls, parks, and playgrounds. Exceptions include public transport and seated and ticketed events (if permitted under gatherings guidance), however two-metre distancing should be maintained where possible, preferably with record keeping in place.

**One metre** – during controlled situations where people are in cohorts of some sort, for example, workplaces, schools, clubs, gyms, and sports teams, and retail and hospitality outlets that have contact tracing measures in place.

**Under one metre** – controlled situations where one to one contact is common, for example, hairdressers, massage therapists, chiropractors, physiotherapists and home help. Public health measures and record keeping will need to be in place for such situations.

You should wear face coverings in situations where recommended physical distancing is not possible, like on public transport or in shops.

### Where can I go for more information about my business?

For information on workplace preparedness, the Wage Subsidy Scheme, changes to an employee's work arrangements, and essential workers and businesses visit

<https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/>

For information on working safely, go to [www.worksafe.govt.nz](http://www.worksafe.govt.nz) or ring 0800 030 040, or talk to your local Chamber of Commerce, BusinessNZ, or your industry association.

## Keeping whānau and staff safe as you work

### Tikanga and supporting whānau Māori

Given the severe impact of the 1918-19 pandemic on Māori and the increased susceptibility of Māori to the influenza A (H1N1) 2009 pandemic, consideration of the specific needs of Māori, cultural sensitivity and the impact of a pandemic on traditional Māori protocols (tikanga) should be an integral aspect of pandemic preparedness planning at local and national levels.<sup>1</sup>

Many iwi, hapū, whānau and Marae have implemented changes to tikanga when meeting and greeting. The use of hongī, hariru and kihi have been discouraged and whānau have been asked to practice virtual or contactless greetings such as “the east coasts wave”<sup>2</sup> or the long-distance hongī “hā mamao”<sup>3</sup>. Iwi, hapū, whānau and Marae may change their tikanga when meeting and greeting as we transition down the Alert Levels and people meet. Whānau must be reminded that COVID 19 can be transmitted through physical contact so personal hygiene practices should be maintained at all times. Also encourage whānau to record who they have come into contact with, when and where to support contact tracing procedures if required.

All housing providers and housing support service providers are encouraged to work closely with whānau and connect them with MSD, HUD, and other essential support services to identify all support channels for the whānau. If you would like further support, please contact;

- Te Matapihi: [wayne@tematapihi.org.nz](mailto:wayne@tematapihi.org.nz)
- HUD: Te Kāhui Kāinga Ora: [tracey.tangihaere@hud.govt.nz](mailto:tracey.tangihaere@hud.govt.nz)
  - Telephone: (04) 832 2525
  - Mobile: (027) 679 1132

### Information that helps you support whānau Māori

There are a number of resources available to support you as you work with whānau Māori in the COVID-19 pandemic response:

- [Te Rōpū Whakakaupapa Urutā \(National Māori Pandemic Group\) have provided more guidelines for whānau and iwi.](#)
- [Visit Te Puni Kōkiri’s website to locate resources developed by iwi and Māori with the government that support us to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Māori communities.](#)

### Implement the health and safety practices you developed at Alert Level 3 and 4

The safety of whānau and your staff should not be compromised at any Alert Level. Many of the health and safety practices you put in place at Alert Levels 3 and 4 should be implemented. However, as you can open your premises and have face to face contact with customers, workplace safety protocols should be reinforced around physical distancing, personal hygiene and surface cleaning.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/influenza-pandemic-plan-framework-action-2nd-edn-aug17.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/major-steps-taken-protect-new-zealanders-covid-19>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/formerlydaniels/status/1240051706697666562>

A view of the health and safety practices that you follow should include (but not be limited to):

- For customer face-to-face interactions, ensuring you follow workplace safety protocols which include practicing physical distancing and washing or sanitising your hands before and after a visit.
- Where possible, before meeting people face to face, check whether people are well or unwell and have symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (e.g. one or more of; cough, fever 38 C, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, temporary loss of smell). You could do this by calling them by phone or by speaking with them from a distance before engaging further.
- Keep cleaning regimens in place, particularly in shared spaces like kitchens and laundries and other high touch surfaces.
- If you are transporting whānau to essential services or new accommodation continue to practice physical distancing and follow workplace safety protocols.

## Work in Partnership with Government and the Wider Sector

All housing providers and housing support service providers are encouraged to work closely together with MSD, HUD, each other and other essential support services to identify appropriate local solutions for people who don't have anywhere to self-isolate (i.e. rough sleepers).

We recommend that you develop links with your local Public Health teams and District Health Boards (DHB's), if these are not already in place.

[Click here for contact details for your local Civil Defence Groups](#)

## Continue to workplace safety protocols at Alert Level 2

At Alert Level 2, the risk of community transmission of COVID-19 is present. Maintaining workplace safety protocols around physical distancing, personal hygiene and surface cleaning as you work with each other, with customers and whānau remains essential to minimising the risk of transmission.

You can deliver community-based support work (e.g. Sustaining Tenancies, Housing Placement) remotely if this is preferred (i.e. over the telephone or online). This may be the preferred option for those people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Where face to face is preferred, you can enter the customer's home, or they can enter your workplace. Once again, check first whether people are unwell or displaying relevant symptoms before entering their home or before they enter your workplace.

Wherever the services are provided (in the home or in the workplace), no physical contact should occur, and workplace safety protocols should be followed at all times around physical distancing, personal hygiene and surface cleaning. Contact tracing records should also be maintained.

## Physical distancing and safety in shared accommodation

At [Alert Level 2 physical distancing](#) must be maintained.

If you run a facility with shared kitchen or laundry spaces, we encourage whānau to stagger the use of these spaces. It is still essential to maintain [good personal hygiene practices](#) like washing your hands for 20 seconds with soapy water, not touching your face, and coughing and sneezing into your

elbow where possible. We recommend that you also maintain an increased cleaning regimen; washing down hard surfaces frequently with soapy water or disinfecting agents.

To support safe hygiene practices in shared space we encourage you to supply liquid hand soap (or bar soap if liquid soap is not available), paper towels that can be disposed of in a rubbish bin, and hand sanitiser in shared space. Posters promoting safe hygiene practices and explaining physical distancing can also be downloaded and printed from [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz).

Where whānau are unwell they should be discouraged from using these spaces and supported to find alternate solutions. This could include food and supplies being taken directly to their room and where possible allocating a separate bathroom.

### Where a provider needs to transport whānau

We understand that there may be instances where you need to transport whānau to new accommodation, to the supermarket, or to medical or other appointments. In these instances, we recommend the following practice:

- For your safety, it is important that you ask whānau if they have been exposed to COVID-19, if they have been sick or are currently experiencing [symptoms of sickness consistent with COVID 19](#).
- If whānau report being unwell, or if you have concerns call Healthline (0800 358 5453) for advice before you travel.
- Where there are no concerns of COVID-19, transport is possible.
- If utilising a standard car, we recommend that you transport one individual at a time with the passenger in the back-passenger seat on the passenger side, to provide as much physical distance as possible. If the passenger does not agree to these recommendations; we recommend you do not transport them utilising a personal vehicle (this includes business vehicles).
- If you have access to a larger vehicle (such as a minivan or people carrier) for your business, then we recommend that you utilise this for transporting whānau to increase the ability to provide physical distancing.
- Alternatively, it is permitted to use taxi and ride share services where there are no concerns of COVID-19. Prior to using these services please wash your hands for 20 seconds with soapy water or use hand sanitiser. The physical distancing practices outlined above also apply for this mode of transport. If the taxi or rideshare service requests information for contact tracing, please comply.
- Public transport will still be available but be aware there may be limited capacity and passengers need to maintain physical distancing.
- Public transport should not be used by people who are:
  - required to self-isolate/quarantine;
  - experiencing symptoms of COVID-19;
  - awaiting a result from a COVID-19 test; suspected/probable/confirmed to have COVID-19; or
  - subject to an individual notice issued under section 70(1)(f) of the Health Act.

[For more detailed information about transport during the COVID-19 pandemic visit the Ministry of Transport's website.](#)

## Contact tracing

In line with the workplace safety protocol (e.g. physical distancing between workers, recording who is working together, limiting interaction between groups of workers, disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining high hygiene standards), businesses and services must display a copy of the QR code for the business or service in a prominent place at or near the main entrances to the workplace. In addition, we recommend that you:

- Maintain records of all people who you come into contact with throughout the course of your working day (e.g. all whānau you have visited – maintaining physical distancing protocols)
- Where it is not possible to record the individual's details (e.g. during a visit to the supermarket), keep a record of all facilities or services you have been in contact with.
- Have other systems and processes in place to support contact tracing of persons who enter the workplace or carry out work for the business or service (cf keep records to enable contact tracing of people who enter the workplace, use its services, or carry out work for the business or service)
- Find out more about getting a QR poster at: [qrform.tracing.covid19.govt.nz](https://qrform.tracing.covid19.govt.nz)

The Ministry of Health has developed the NZ COVID Tracer app to help you keep a record of your movements and assist with contact tracing. Find out more about the app at: [tracing.covid19.govt.nz](https://tracing.covid19.govt.nz)

This will assist the MoH with contact tracing should an individual or group or cluster contract COVID19 that you may have been in contact with.

## Residents in shared facilities under Alert Level 2

Individuals and whānau can be moved into accommodation with shared facilities, providing they:

- Are not displaying relevant symptoms of COVID 19,
- Do not have a current positive test for COVID 19, and
- Have not been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID 19.

It is important that you educate the individuals and whānau you are working with in accommodation with shared facilities, so that they fully understand the restrictions of physical distancing and maintaining good personal hygiene practices under Alert Level 2. We encourage whānau to stagger use of shared space and maintain [good personal hygiene practices](#) like washing your hands for 20 seconds with soapy water, not touching your face, and coughing and sneezing into your elbow where possible.

Where there are COVID 19 related concerns in relation to individuals or whānau who have applied for accommodation, providers will need follow their internal processes and protocols. This might include risk and needs assessments, infectious disease protocols and health and safety policies and procedures. These protocols can assist you to assess an individual or the whānau ability to safely house new applicants while maintaining the level 2 COVID 19 requirements. This may mean that you need to decline some referrals.

Should new or current residents be displaying COVID 19 symptoms, then self-isolation guidelines must be followed. Providers should contact Healthline (0800 358 5453) for further advice and assistance and to arrange a COVID 19 test.

At Alert Level 3, you are asked to keep two (2) metres away from people outside your bubble. At Level 2 physical distancing requirements change depending on the circumstance. For example, for those **people you know well**, friends, family and residents in your shared facilities, then physical separation may not be necessary. This will depend solely on people's judgement as to the closeness of their relationship with other people. At all times, people still need to be conscious that the virus is transmitted by physical contact so apply judgment and common sense when in the same place at the same time as other people.

### If whānau or staff are unwell they must self-isolate

If whānau or staff are unwell at Alert Level 2 the recommendations remain the same - stay home, self-isolate, and get well.

You don't have to move out of your home if you live with others to self-isolate, but you should limit contact with others (even in your household). You should maintain [good personal hygiene practices](#) like washing your hands for 20 seconds with soapy water, not touching your face, and coughing and sneezing into your elbow where possible.

You can ask for support to get essential items like groceries and medicines [from your local Civil Defence Group](#).

Those who are required to self-isolate and are unable to do so in their own homes or shared premises (such as because of their living situation) can get help through the Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS).

There is a cost for temporary accommodation. The Government will work with each individual or household who uses the service on how to meet this cost. If people cannot meet the costs for temporary accommodation themselves or through the support of other agencies, they will still be supported through TAS with suitable temporary accommodation. This helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the response to COVID-19. You can find out more [here](#). You can register your details by calling 0508 754 163.

If you are concerned about COVID-19, please call Healthline (0800 358 5453.)

[Visit covid19.govt.nz for information on self-isolating when you are unwell.](#)

### Planning to protect whānau and staff who are more likely to experience complications associated with COVID-19.

We know that some groups of people are at a higher risk of experiencing complications associated with contracting COVID-19. [Covid19.govt.nz](#) identifies the following groups as people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- people with underlying medical conditions such as:
  - serious respiratory disease such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - serious heart conditions
  - immunocompromised conditions

- severe obesity — a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher
- diabetes
- chronic kidney disease
- people undergoing dialysis
- liver disease
- people over 70
- residents of aged care facilities
- pregnant women

### Known high risk whānau

You may have already identified whānau who are at higher risk of experiencing severe illness because of COVID-19.

Connect with these individuals to make sure they understand the steps they can take to keep themselves safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include taking additional precautions when leaving home, avoiding contact with people who are unwell, and asking for support to get essential supplies like groceries and medicines.

[For more information on how whānau can keep themselves safe visit covid19.govt.nz.](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

### Some whānau may not have disclosed conditions

It is possible you may not be aware of the health conditions of some of the whānau you work with. As a precaution we recommend that you ask the whānau you are supporting about their health and any conditions they may not have told you about. If you identify a person who is at risk, please follow the guidance outlined for 'known high risk whānau'.

### Staff members that are high risk

You may have staff or volunteers that are at high risk of experiencing complications associated with contracting COVID-19. You may also have staff or volunteers that have partners or whānau that are classified as people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

We encourage you to take the time to talk to your staff and or volunteers and understand their risks and needs.

Care should be taken to reduce or eliminate their exposure to COVID-19 in all instances where a staff member or volunteer self identifies as at risk, or in close proximity to an at risk individual. What this looks like will depend on their age and the severity of their condition.

[WorkSafe](#) has developed comprehensive health and safety guidance that support businesses and employees to:

- manage workplace risks together,
- create safe working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Financial support for high risk employees that cannot work during the COVID-19 pandemic

Financial support is available for people working in essential services who may be in situations where they need to stay away from work and cannot work from home.

[Visit Employment New Zealand to find out more about this support package.](#)

## Family violence

Services to support whānau subjected to violence and sexual abuse are essential services and will remain available, even if services need to be delivered in different ways.

The Government and the Police take family violence and sexual abuse or violence very seriously. Whānau who are subject to violence or sexual abuse or violence continue to be at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. Violence is a crime at any time.

Remain aware of this risk as you go about your work. Where you are concerned family violence may be occurring ensure that you follow your organisations policies and protocols for working with this level of risk. If these processes are not in place within your organisation, we strongly recommend that these are developed. CHA or Te Mataphi can assist you to access sample documents from other similar providers.

[Visit covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) to find out more about [Family Violence prevention during the COVID-19 pandemic response.](#)

## Health and safety in the workplace

The health and safety of your staff and volunteer workers should not be compromised. Remind staff about personal hygiene and the steps they can take to keep themselves safe.

With businesses being able to open for customer service and the ability to undertake home visits; staff, volunteer workers and whānau should be reminded of your workplace safety protocols. This includes maintaining good personal hygiene practices like washing your hands for 20 seconds with soapy water, not touching your face, and coughing and sneezing into your elbow where possible. Regular surface cleaning on high touch surfaces and areas where people regularly congregate should also be maintained.

To meet physical distancing requirements in your workplace, you may need to consider a staggered approach to your services including shift-based work, staggered breaks and for people to continue to work from home if they can. You may also want to consider aspects around staff security at this time due to peoples heightened anxiety and stress.

[WorkSafe](#) has developed comprehensive health and safety guidance that support businesses and employees to:

- manage workplace risks together,
- create safe working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Workplaces should have their own PPE protocols in place and training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to use effectively and how to properly dispose of PPE.

The government has developed a series of videos and posters you can share with your staff to help them understand when and how to use PPE in your workplace:

- [Hand washing and PPE videos](#)
- [PPE requirements for essential non-health workers.](#)

Further guidance on when and how to use PPE in your workplace can be found at [WorkSafe](#).

## Operating your service at Alert Level 2

There are some key differences between Alert Level 3 (restrict) and Alert Level 2 (reduce) that enable housing providers and housing support service providers to operate differently at Alert Level 2. We have contextualised this information for you below, to support you to reactivate or continue key provider activities safely when we are at Alert Level 2:

- Professional movers can assist whānau to move. Physical distancing, personal hygiene and surface cleaning must be adhered to. Contact tracing must also be recorded.
- Friends and family can also assist whānau to move. If they are well known to the whānau, physical distancing procedures are not required. However, we recommend that personal hygiene and surface cleaning is still adhered to.
- If a property is vacated, landlords and property managers can undertake end-of-tenancy inspections.
- Property inspections can occur (under workplace safety protocols) and in line with the Residential Tenancies Act requirements.
- Whānau can be placed in public housing and transitional housing routinely.
- Retailers can open and people can attend in person to purchase goods to furnish their homes.
- Vacant homes can be cleaned by commercial or non-commercial cleaners between tenancies so long public health recommendations are adhered to and contact tracing records are maintained.
- Tradespeople can work on and in whānau homes so long as physical distancing and public health recommendations are adhered to. Contact tracing records must also be maintained.

### Moving whānau into accommodation safely

At Alert Level 2 you can tenant vacant properties. You must always maintain workplace safety protocols that include maintaining physical distancing and personal hygiene practices. Please also note that:

- Travel between regions with differing alert levels is generally restricted to returning to your principal home/residence.
- HUD recommends applicants should only be matched with vacant properties in the same region. This aligns with the approaches of both the Ministry for Social Development and Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities.

### Tenancing vacant properties

Placements for public and transitional housing can occur if they can be done safely and efficiently by following the MOH Guidelines for physical distancing and personal hygiene.

- People can move to a new home. We encourage providers to ensure that prospective tenants are familiar with the health and safety guidelines so they can move safely.
- Friends and family can help but should follow guidance on physical distancing, personal hygiene, and surface cleaning.
- Individuals and whānau can be moved into accommodation with shared facilities, providing they are not displaying relevant symptoms of COVID 19, do not have a current positive test

for COVID 19, and have not been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID 19.

- People should not use public transport if required to self-isolate or quarantine. There may be limited capacity on public transport with physical distancing requirements in place.
- We continue to recommend matching applicants with vacant properties in the same region, where this is practical. Where moving within the same region is not possible, we encourage providers to ensure that prospective tenants are familiar with the health and safety guidelines so they can move safely. This aligns with the approaches of both the Ministry for Social Development (MSD) and Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities.

## Safe relocation

At Alert Level 2, whānau can get groups of friends and or their extended whānau to support them to move, but should follow guidance on physical distancing, personal hygiene and surface cleaning. Details of those who helped the whānau to move should be maintained by the whānau to support contact tracing requirements.

For the safety of whānau, your staff and if the whānau are using a removal company, the removal company must ensure workplace safety protocols are followed around physical distancing and personal hygiene. The removal company will also be required to maintain contact tracing information.

We know at times moving into or out of a property can be challenging; where space is tight. You may want to consider innovative ways for whānau and the movers to keep physical distancing. For example:

- Whānau limit their movement in the house to one room while removal support is working in other parts of the house
- On a nice day, whānau be outside
- Whānau could split across old and new accommodation to reduce density and continue to limit their movement in the house to one room while support is working in other parts of the house.

Before relocation occurs, check in with whānau to ensure nobody is unwell. If you are concerned about COVID-19 please phone Healthline (0800 358 5453) for advice before you travel.

If you are transporting whānau as they relocate the prior recommendations “Where a provider needs to transport whānau” should be applied here.

## Ensure the property is clean before you tenant it

Even though the property may have been empty for several weeks, we recommend ensuring the property is cleaned prior to tenancing. This is particularly important if you have undertaken maintenance on that property within the three days of that property being tenanted. This is because evidence suggests that COVID-19 can live on hard surfaces for up to three days meaning contamination remains a risk.

## Furnishing properties

At Alert Level 2 retailers can open their premises. In doing so, they must meet health and safety obligations. Goods can be purchased and paid for over the counter with goods removed from the premises when paid for. If goods are to be delivered to the property physical distancing requirements must still be maintained.

The retailer must operate safely and to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This includes:

- Ensuring all people who enter the premises remain two metres apart from each other and from the workers (to the greatest extent practicable), except—
- Ensuring that all workers remain one metre away from each other (to the greatest extent practicable)
- Maintain records to enable contact tracing of all workers who enter the workplace or carry out work for the business or service; and
- Limiting the number of people in their premises / site so that distancing can be maintained
- Providing appropriate handwashing facilities if food or drink is being consumed
- Limiting, and regularly disinfecting, shared surfaces (like doors, tables, EFTPOS).
- Ensuring none of their workers have cold or flu like symptoms.
- Asking contractors and customers with cold and flu symptoms to come back when they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

This means that customers have to be two metres apart (while workers can be one metre) and contact tracing is only for workers, not customers.

## Property Maintenance

Tradespeople are permitted work at Alert Level 2 provided they maintain workplace safety protocols that include physical distancing, personal hygiene practices and surface cleaning requirements. This is to protect both the whānau and the tradespeople.

At Alert Level 2 businesses will be able to operate out of normal premises with appropriate physical distancing protocols in place. Work that can only be achieved by having two or more workers within one metre of another person must be undertaken with sufficient controls to minimise the likelihood of virus transmission. For example needed to lift and move a heavy piece of furniture. The names and contact details of people who are working in close proximity to others, and risk mitigations used, should be recorded.

Work on-site will be able to take place under appropriate protocols for both workers and (where relevant) occupants.

## Construction and housing developments

During Alert Level 2 work can be carried out in the building and constructions sector so long as the appropriate health and safety measures are in place and workplace safety protocols are maintained.

CHASNZ (Construction Health and Safety NZ), in conjunction with the joint government/industry Construction Sector Accord, have developed and published detailed construction health and safety

standards and protocols for the residential, civil and vertical sectors. These protocols give the construction sector guidance on how to work in Alert level 2 and above.

If you have a housing development that has been on pause, or is scheduled to start shortly, we recommend connecting with your developer and tradespeople to put measures in place that meet the health and safety guidelines and workplace safety protocols required to work at Alert Level 2.

## MSD Under Alert Level 2:

In locations at Alert Level Two, MSD offices remain open for people with appointments. If clients need to see us, they will need to phone first to book an appointment. During this time regular payments will continue, and we'll help people over the phone and through MyMSD in most cases.

You can find out more on the [Work and Income website](#).

### Emergency housing

MSD will continue to provide emergency housing support to people who have nowhere else to live and no other housing options.

- People with an immediate housing need should test their eligibility for emergency housing assistance on-line before contacting Work and Income.
- See here for more information: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/extra-help/special-needs-grant/eligibility-criteria-for-emergency-housing.html>

### Transitional housing referrals

- MSD will continue to refer clients to transitional housing providers.
- Staff, providers and clients will need to comply with Ministry of Health Level 2 guidelines for social distancing and hygiene. We encourage as much phone-based interaction as possible.

### Public Housing Assessments

- MSD will continue phone-based public housing assessments at Level 2. People may need to wait a bit longer for their appointment as we support the immediate needs of people in the most-affected areas.

### Public Housing Placements

- MSD will continue to support placements into public housing as long as those can be done safely and efficiently.
- Staff, providers, tenants and contractors will need to comply with Ministry of Health guidelines for social distancing and hygiene at Alert Level 2.

### Fast-tracked Income Related Rent reviews for decreased income

- Where a public housing tenant has suffered a decrease in their income, we want to ensure their rent reflects their new circumstances.
- Please email MSD directly if a tenant's income has reduced so we can adjust their Income Related Rent. Community housing providers should email these details to [GNL.Provider.Support@msd.govt.nz](mailto:GNL.Provider.Support@msd.govt.nz) with the subject line COVID 19 Reduced Income.

## Business continuity and working with HUD

### Recommended business continuity practices

As part of your own Business Continuity Plan measures, we recommend as a minimum that you:

- Have an up to date list of staff, key contacts and healthcare facilities and you are making regular contact with these people and places to check in and work through any matters.
- Have contingency plans in place for the potential reduction in staffing due to illness (self or family members) or child-care responsibilities. For example, cross training current employees, extending part-time workers hours or hiring temporary employees.
- Develop a way to trace contacts and interactions with whānau and other essential service providers in case you or whānau come in contact with COVID-19.

### Assurances from HUD

Below is a list of assurances provided by HUD:

- HUD will ensure that contracted funding will continue to be paid uninterrupted including the payment of Income Related Rent Subsidies (IRRS) to Community Housing Providers (CHPs)
- HUD recognises that there may be occasions where contractual breaches occur and there is no intention to penalise providers in instances where this is a result of COVID-19 circumstances. Where a breach is significant please ensure that you contact your HUD Relationship Manager as soon as possible to discuss.

### Community Housing Regulatory Authority

During heightened alert levels the Community Housing Regulatory Authority (CHRA) advises it will take a flexible approach to monitoring of registered CHPs.

This may will involve extending timeframes for annual monitoring returns and the provision of any additional information previously requested by CHRA and deferring work on certain issues to allow you to focus on the provision of housing services to your tenants.

The Authority will be guided by individual provider's workloads and ability to comply with regulatory requirements.

Please contact the Authority to discuss any information requests that have been made to date, if these are an issue for you.

### Contact us

We have been working closely with Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) and Te Matapihi as sector peak bodies to both gather and disseminate information and quickly and efficiently as possible. Please continue to contact these bodies if you have any questions or concerns.

If you would like further support, please contact;

- Te Matapihi: [wayne@tematapihi.org.nz](mailto:wayne@tematapihi.org.nz)
- Community Housing Aotearoa: [DavidZ@communityhousing.org.nz](mailto:DavidZ@communityhousing.org.nz) or [projects@communityhousing.org.nz](mailto:projects@communityhousing.org.nz)

- HUD: Te Kāhui Kāinga Ora: [tracey.tangihaere@hud.govt.nz](mailto:tracey.tangihaere@hud.govt.nz)
  - Telephone: (04) 832 2525
  - Mobile: (027) 679 1132

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of both Te Matapihi and CHA in the development of this document.