



## **Guidance for the Seafood Industry at Alert Level 4:**

### **Background**

We are now at Alert Level 4 of the Government's response to COVID-19. Food and beverage businesses are considered essential services but must operate under criteria to prevent the spread of the virus.

Operators must be able to show they can implement sufficient protocols to prevent the transmission of the virus. Operators must make whatever changes necessary to keep their people safe from transmission. This is likely to require significant changes including the scaling back of operations to just that which is necessary to operate. This is not business as usual. In the words of the Minister, non-compliance will not be tolerated.

The following provides a guide to seafood industry businesses and operations to continue to operate and register as an essential business. However, it must be noted that this is a guide, you will need to consider your own operations, the number of staff you have on site, the procedures you already have in place and most importantly, the risk of virus spread within your operation.

The guide is based on information known to date, but this is a continually evolving situation and all operators are encouraged to keep up to date with the latest information provided by the government.

### **Registration Process**

The online registration has now closed. However, if you are an essential service to the primary industries, or a supplier to an essential service and haven't registered but need to, you can email us at [info@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:info@mpi.govt.nz).

#### Criteria considered for registration

- Do you have 5 or fewer people (including the owner) working at each business site?
- Can you achieve social distancing measures between staff in your workplace, including travelling to and from work?
  - If you answer YES to both of those questions, then you do not need to be registered.
  - If you answered NO to either of these questions, you should be registered.



## Recommended Protocols and Procedures

### Physical Distancing

To do this, social distancing is imperative to prevent the spread of the virus. A two-metre distance separation between staff is to be maintained. If that is impossible then you must maintain at least one-metre distance and put in place other risk mitigation such as providing staff with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It is to be noted that separation less than a metre apart is not permitted, except where workers might be briefly passing one another and appropriate PPE is used (based on MPI advice).

### **MPI have provided further guidance on physical distancing, it includes:**

*All establishments should strive for a minimum social distancing of 2 metres at all times.*

*In exceptional circumstances, work-stations spaced between 1 and 2 metres are permitted, commensurate with additional safety measures to minimise the possibility of airborne transmission.*

#### *Minimum requirements for work-stations between 1 and 2 metres*

- *Separation distance should maximise the available distance in front of the face (related to how far a sneeze can travel), with side-by-side distance of lower importance.*
- *Floor supervisors allocate specific run time to monitoring worker hygiene and recording results.*
- *Protective clothing must be provided.*
- *Use of gloves (for Covid-19 purposes) is not mandatory i.e. are only required if there is a level of common contact (food, surfaces, equipment) with neighbouring workers that is significantly above that for workers with greater than 2 metre separation*
- *Use of face masks is not mandatory but is recommended if practicable (see strengthening of general requirements)*
- *One-on-one instruction of workers on hygiene requirements, including putting on and taking off protective clothing, handwashing and coughing etiquette*

*Work-stations spaced less than a metre apart are not permitted.*

### **Business/site Requirements**

You need to consider what parts of the business/operation are essential and only continue with essential operations. Any part of the business that is non-essential should shut down.

Ban all non-essential staff from coming on-farm/on-board or on-site, that includes contractors unless required to complete essential or emergency repairs. Any staff that can work from home must do so. Only staff essential to the operations are allowed on-site.



### **Essential Staff**

You need to implement procedures to assess all essential staff for their risk to COVID-19, for example consider the following:

- are they in the high-risk group (age or have health conditions)?
- have they travelled in the last 14 days?
- have they had close-contact with or been exposed to someone who is a probable case or who has COVID-19?

Ensure you have contact information, including home contact for each staff and record the areas of work that each staff member works in.

Ensure that:

- All staff are instructed to stay at home if they are unwell or show any signs of fever, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath and to report to the Manager
- All staff instructed to report to the Manager if someone they live with is unwell or shows any signs of fever, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath
- All staff follow their normal health, hygiene and protective clothing requirements as well as these additional measures.
- You enforce strict, regular hand washing (wash with hand-soap and running water for a minimum of 20 seconds, dry thoroughly with disposable paper towels), and use hand-sanitiser, including:
  - After visiting the toilet
  - Before eating
  - After smoking/vaping
  - Before putting on protective clothing, including face mask and gloves, and after removing face mask and gloves
  - Before handling any product
  - Before and after cleaning, particularly after cleaning high hand-contact surfaces.
- You remind staff not to touch their face and eyes, if it occurs, wash hands as per the above.
- You enforce the use of cough/sneeze etiquette (cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues, place in rubbish or cough/sneeze into elbow and then wash hands, as above).

You provide verbal and written instructions to staff to make sure they fully understand their responsibilities.

Information is to be provided to staff outlining the symptoms of COVID-19. If COVID-19 is suspected the staff member is to be instructed to stay at home and to contact Healthline for advice, and to follow their instructions. See Appendix 2 for guidance on what to do if a staff member is infected with COVID-19.

You must also make sure staff are aware of what they can and can't do when they are at home. Of how they are able to travel to work and the necessary procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Contractors and Deliveries**

You need to implement procedures to assess all contractors that may need to come on-site to conduct essential services or emergency repairs. This will include things like:



- Carrying out risk assessment, checking:
  - are they in the high-risk group (age or have health conditions)?
  - have they travelled in the last 14 days?
  - have they had close-contact with or been exposed to someone who is a probable case or who has COVID-19?
  - have they monitored their own personal health and can confirm they do not have temperature or any other flu like symptoms and have been observing the isolation requirements when not on essential services.
- Record contact details and the areas they have or will work in.
- Confirm they agree to follow the requirements including distancing, sneezing and cough etiquette (into elbow), hand washing, and all other workplace rules, protocols and measures, and especially those measures related to preventing the transmission of Covid-19.

You need to implement procedures for receiving deliveries – ensuring distancing between the delivery staff and receiving staff.

### **Workplace Procedures**

These need to be tailored to your type of operation but things to consider are:

- For land-based operations, minimise the time before and after shifts that staff can be on-site, for example staff to arrive no more than 10 minutes before start of shift and stay no longer than 10 minutes after.
- If possible, stagger shift start/finish times to minimise the number of staff able to congregate in any one area.
- Work is re-organised so that all staff keep a least two metres apart; or where impossible one metre apart and other risk mitigation, e.g. the wearing of PPE, including overall/coverall, and gloves and face masks (covering mouth and nose) or face shields, in line with the MPI guidance above
- Identify, isolate or group staff in small teams by activity or spatial area (e.g. by deck activity, process line, packing line, stores, etc). These staff keep to a group in terms of starting and finishing work and breaks
- Work activities separated as much as possible
- Communal and social spaces used for changing, toilets etc and breaks for eating (e.g. tables and chairs) have been rearranged so that staff can be 2 metres apart while using the space
- Implement a minimum 4 hourly cleaning and sanitation protocol (these are additional to normal food production related cleaning procedures), for all contact surfaces, particularly hand-contact surfaces in any social or amenity areas, including doors, door handles, handrails, switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets (for sites with larger staff numbers, implement 2 hourly). Ensure staff conducting cleaning of social spaces have suitable PPE.
- Implement wellness checks to be carried out of all staff before they start work. Any staff showing any signs of illness will be sent home and further instructions provided (depending on symptoms and situation). See Appendix 2 for guidance on what to do if a staff member is infected with COVID-19.
- Implement supervision and additional checks confirm the procedures are being followed. The frequency of these checks will depend on your operation, but it is important to make sure staff are following the procedures you have put in place, particularly distancing and handwashing after touching high-contact areas. It is suggested you do this 2-hourly or after every break.



The following table contains the specific questions that MPI asked as part of the registration process. Also provided are some examples of protocols that will mitigate risk and may form the basis of any registration process. We reiterate that these are examples only and each entity that seeks registration will need to independently consider how they can reduce risks and respond accordingly.

We would also advise formally documenting these processes and requirements in writing with your staff.

Risk Mitigation	Example Response
How do your production processes protect your workers and the public by reducing the potential spread of COVID-19?	The protocols as outlined in the bullet points on the previous page should address this question
How are you ensuring that workers and others at work are observing social distancing to and from work, during work and during rest breaks?	<p>Supervision and instructions (see example in Appendix 1) are provided on-site to ensure all staff are complying with the social distancing and/or PPE requirements and procedures, at all times while they are at work, including before work, during breaks and after work</p> <p>For long-trip vessels, vessel-based crew stay on-board during un-loading and restocking of supplies For day/short trip vessels, staff are instructed to travel to their home base as soon as landing/off-loading duties are complete and observe all social distancing and requirements while at home</p>
What personal hygiene steps have you put in place for workers to reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?	<p>All staff are required to follow normal health and hygiene requirements for their job role, plus the hand-washing, maintaining cough etiquette and illness reporting procedures as outlined above</p> <p>Work is re-organised so that all staff keep a least two metres apart; or where impossible one metre apart and the wearing of full PPE, including overall/coverall, face mask (covering mouth and nose), gloves</p>
What existing, or additional personal protective equipment could you introduce that would reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?	<p>Existing PPE for processing operations includes overalls/coveralls, hats, beard covers, gloves.</p> <p>Existing PPE for farm/harvest and deck/fishing related activities includes, waterproof coveralls/aprons, gloves.</p> <p>All staff to be provided with face masks and gloves (if not already provided as part of normal PPE)</p>



<p>What steps are you taking to limit access to your plants apart from essential workers?</p>	<p>All non-essential staff have been banned from coming on-site. This includes contractors, unless they are required for repair relating to providing essential services, and all other staff are working from home</p> <p>Access is monitored and only staff essential to the operations are allowed on-site</p>
<p>How are you isolating staff, or parts of your processing plants, so that virus spread would be contained should it occur?</p>	<p>Identified/isolated/grouped staff in small teams by activity or spatial area (e.g. by deck activity, process line, packing line, stores, etc)</p> <p>Harvest/fishing activity/production levels have been reduced so that the number of staff in each group has been limited to allow for them to work 2 metres apart, or alternatively if space/activity does not allow, 1 metre apart and wearing full PPE (overall/coverall, face mask (covering mouth and nose), gloves)</p> <p>Work activities separated as much as possible</p> <p>Shifts and breaks are staggered so that only these groups/teams are in one social space at any one time, with a clean down of contact surfaces in the social area in between each group</p> <p>Social spaces (tables and chairs) used for eating have been rearranged so that staff can sit 2 metres apart while using the space</p>
<p>What arrangements have you put in place for staff to report any illness and remove themselves from work?</p>	<p>All staff have been instructed to stay at home if they are unwell or show any signs of symptoms relating to fever, sore throat, cough or shortness of breath. They must ring the Manager and inform them.</p> <p>Further instructions are provided to the staff member depending on the illness symptoms. If COVID-19 is suspected the staff member will be required to contact Healthline for advice, and to follow their instructions</p>
<p>What arrangement have you put in place for staff to report any suspected exposure to COVID-19?</p>	<p>If any staff suspects they have been exposed to COVID-19 they have been informed to stay at home and report it to the Manager who will provide further instructions. This will include contacting Healthline for advice, and to follow their instructions.</p>
<p>What actions would you take should a staff member be suspected of or confirmed as having COVID-19?</p>	<p>Should a staff member be suspected of COVID-19, they will be asked to remain at home and to contact Healthline for advice, and to follow their instructions. A full clean down of all areas, but particularly contact areas and social spaces will be performed.</p>



	<p>Should a staff member be tested positive for COVID-19, the staff member will be instructed to follow Ministry of Health requirements and site will be temporarily closed to allow a full clean-down of all areas with particular focus on high-contact areas, and time to ensure the viability of any remaining virus has been eliminated. This will depend on the type of operation, the frequency of cleaning, types of chemicals used, their application and their effectiveness against COVID-19. See Appendix 2 for guidance on what to do if a staff member is infected with COVID-19.</p>
<p>How do you ensure that staff at particular risk of COVID-19 identify themselves and are isolated from work?</p>	<p>All staff have been informed of the risks of transmission of the virus, of the symptoms and have been informed that if they suspect they have COVID-19 or have been in contact with a person who has COVID-19 or think they are at risk in any way, then they must stay at home, report it to the Manager and wait for further instructions.</p>
<p>How will you ensure that your workers observe 'stay at home' rules at the conclusion of each working day?</p>	<p>All staff are provided with information, outlining their responsibility to observe all social distancing requirements and procedures while at home and away from work.</p> <p>All staff are required to sign a declaration confirming they will observe both the 'at work' rules and the 'stay at home' rules once they finish work. Any staff that does not sign the declaration, will not be allow on site.</p>

If you have any queries or need any further information please don't hesitate to contact:  
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### **Appendix 1 Instructions for Staff (Example)**

Food production including harvesting, fishing, processing, storage and transport are currently essential services, as a business we are in a privileged position to be able to keep operating, but you must follow all instructions and company procedures. These are designed to protect you, your families and other staff members from being infected with the virus.

There will be company checks and MPI checks to make sure these procedures are being followed.

**Non-Compliance will not be tolerated.**

If you have any concerns or questions, please talk to one of the following people:

- Manager, contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_
- Supervisor, contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_

### **Some information on the virus and how it spreads:**

The Ministry of Health website provides details about COVID-19.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu.

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

You may get infected by the virus if you touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes. If you:

- feel unwell or have any symptoms; or
- you suspect, you or someone who lives with you may have COVID-19, or
- you or someone who lives with you may have been exposed to COVID-19

Then you must not go to work, you must stay home. You must ring your Manager to let them know. They will tell you what you need to do.

You can ring them by contacting: \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_

If COVID-19 is suspected, you must ring the dedicated Healthline 0800 358 5453. It is free and available 24 hours per day for every day of the week. They will give you advice on what to do and you must follow that advice. They have access to interpreters if you need one.



### **Procedures while you are at work**

We are required to ensure that a distance of at least 2 metres is maintained between staff at all times. If that is not possible, staff must maintain a minimum of 1 metre and have other risk mitigation such as wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It is to be noted that separation less than a metre apart is not permitted, except where workers might be briefly passing one another and appropriate PPE is used (based on MPI advice).

This includes when you are working and when you are in any of the social areas, including the café/smoko/break room and changing rooms and amenities – you must spread out so you are at least 2 metres apart.

We have changed the way we operate so that you can continue to work and meet this requirement. You must follow these instructions.

1. Arrive to work no earlier than 10 minutes before your shift starts.
2. All personnel use normal health and hygiene procedures, as well as the following:
  - Wash your hands regularly with hand-soap and running water for at least 20 seconds, then dry them properly with disposable paper towels, do this each time:
    - After visiting the toilet
    - Before eating
    - After smoking/vaping
    - Before putting on your protective clothing, including face mask and gloves and after removing your face mask and gloves
    - Before handling any product
    - Before and after cleaning, particularly after cleaning high hand-contact surfaces.
  - Use hand-sanitiser after washing your hands
  - Change or sanitise your gloves regularly
  - Please try not to touch your face or eyes, if it occurs, wash hands as per the above
  - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with a disposable tissue, and place it in the rubbish or cough/sneeze into your elbow and then wash your hands
  - If you are issued with a face mask – where it at all times, only removing it to eat/drink. Remove the face mask by only touching the straps/ loops (not the front)
  - Don't share your PPE
3. Do not stay at work any longer than 10 minutes once your shift ends
4. Follow any other instructions given by the supervisor/manager

### **Procedures for while you are at home**

While New Zealand is at Alert Level 4

- We are all instructed to stay at home and only see those that live in our house, we are not to visit other people or have them visit us, and if we are out of our house, to stay at least 2 metres away from people (other than those who live in the same house)



- We are all instructed to limit travel to only that which is considered essential. This includes:
  - Travelling to and from work in a business providing essential services (that is us) – when travelling to work travel alone or only with others from your house
  - Going to the supermarket or pharmacy to buy essential supplies
- Do not go anywhere or do anything that is non-essential

When you leave work, you are expected to go straight home, unless you are stopping for essential supplies only.

**Staff Declaration:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have had these procedures fully explained to me and I understand what my responsibilities are and the procedures I must follow both at work and outside of work and while I am at home.

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to comply with all of these requirements.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix 2: Guidance for Dealing with a COVID-19 Positive**

The following is guidance should a staff member, particularly in processing premises, be infected with COVID-19. In this situation, the Ministry of Health will take the lead and each situation is acted on a case by case basis.

Cases are handled by the local MOH representative. These will be put in place for any person who tests positive for COVID-19.

### **Dealing with the affected staff member and close work contacts**

- If anyone starts to feel ill with COVID-19 (or cold/flu like) symptoms at home before they come to work – they must stay home, if they start to feel unwell at work, they need to go home
- They need to ring Healthline or their GP, they will give instructions on what to do and/or if they need a test for COVID-19
- If it is determined they need a test for COVID-19, they need to stay at home in isolation until they receive the results of the test
- They also need to inform the employer that they are being tested for COVID-19
- At that point the employer should identify that person's team/ close work contacts and consult with Ministry of Health or a medical professional to determine if it is necessary to also isolate these close contacts
- The employer should give the site, including any high contact areas (e.g. door handles etc in communal spaces) a thorough clean (see below)
- If the results come back negative, see note below regarding the person who returned the negative test
- If the results come back positive – the person with COVID-19 will be required to isolate and follow Ministry of Health instructions, and that person's team/ close work contacts will also be required to isolate for 14 days (if not already)
- Advise your local MPI verifier
- If any of the close work contacts develop symptoms, they need to ring Healthline or their GP and follow their advice
- Once staff have been at home for 14 days and show no symptoms or signs of the illness they can return to work.

### **Notes:**

If there is any doubt about someone who feels ill in anyway, they should stay home until they have been symptom free for 48 hours.

The advice to people who have negative results is:

- they still need to complete the full 14-day quarantine period if they have returned from overseas or have had close contact with someone with the virus
- if they are still sick with the same illness at the end of the 14-day isolation period, they will need to stay in isolation until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours
- if they are well, have been symptom free for 48 hours, they can return to normal activity.

### **Identifying close-work contacts**

The Ministry of Health define a 'Close Contact' as any person with the following exposure to a suspect, confirmed or probable case during the case's infectious period, without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE):

In terms of a workplace the following are examples of what might be considered close contacts:

- anyone living in the same household or household-like setting
- face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more (e.g. people working opposite each other, sitting opposite each other in the smoko room)
- having been in a closed environment (e.g. a processing area, smoko/break room or communal space, amenity areas, travelled in the same vehicle, etc) within 2 metres of a case for 15 minutes or more

The more you can isolate people or groups people in the work environment, the easier it will be to identify close work contacts.

### Dealing with the site

As this virus is new, there is limited research to date but some work has been undertaken, either on this virus or other coronaviruses. The current information indicates:

- the length of time that SARS-COV-2 (the cause of COVID-19) survives on surfaces will vary depending on factors such as the number of contaminated droplets present and environmental temperature and humidity.
- coronaviruses can survive on inanimate surfaces for many hours and possibly days but are readily inactivated by cleaning and sanitation (disinfection).
- Chlorine-based and Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QAC) based sanisiters have been shown to 'kill' viruses.

It is highly likely that the site, especially a processing premise, will have been cleaned and sanitised a number of times since the affected staff member had been on-site, assuming they remained at home at the on-set of symptoms.

However, a full and thorough clean and sanitise of all areas that the affected person and their close work-place contacts have been, is to be undertaken. This should occur when no other processing/product staff (except for the cleaning crew) are on-site. The company is to follow the advice of MOH representative dealing with the positive case, with regards to site closure time-frames –this is likely to be between 2 and 4 days.

The cleaning-crew should ensure they are wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable gloves, facemasks and eye protection or a face shield. They need to wash and sanitise their hands before putting on and after taking off, their PPE.

Areas to focus on during the cleaning and sanitation. All the normal contact and non-contact surface in any work area, as well as amenities, smoko rooms and other communal areas including:

- Doors and door handles
- Break/communal areas, benches, tables and chairs (including seats and legs)
- Any appliances such as microwave, fridges, kettles/jugs, vending machines
- All hand-basins, towel dispensers
- Toilet doors, door handles/locks
- Lockers
- Handrails in stairwells
- Hallway and corridor walls
- Outside smoking areas



- Offices (reception areas, desk fronts, keyboards, door handles, etc)
- Any items handled by the affected person and their close-work contacts (e.g, utensils, pens, control panels or equipment)



## The Ministry for Primary Industries Register for Safe Practice

Essential businesses and services will continue to provide the necessities of life for everyone in New Zealand. This ensures food, medicine, healthcare, energy, fuel, waste-removal, internet and financial support will continue to be available.

### What are essential businesses and services as it relates to the primary industries?

For the primary industries, if your business falls under one or more of these categories, you are considered an "essential business" or "essential service":

- Any entity involved in the production and processing of food and beverage products, whether for domestic consumption or export.
- Any entity involved in relevant support services, such as food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services and biosecurity functions.
- Any entity providing veterinary services.
- Any entity whose closure would jeopardise the maintenance of animal health or welfare standards.

### Why do I have to register as an essential business/service?

MPI requires assurances from industries and businesses that processes protect workers and the public by reducing the potential spread of COVID-19. These assurances are a matter of public health. The transmission risk rises with the number of staff onsite.

### Who needs to register?

There are a couple of simple questions operators can ask themselves before registering:

1. Do you have five or fewer people (including the owner) working at each business site?
  2. Can you achieve social distancing measures between staff in your workplace, including travelling, to and from work? Production chains must achieve these limits of separation.
- If you answer YES to both of those questions, then you do not need to fill in the form.
  - If you answered NO to either of these questions, you MUST fill in the form.
  - If in doubt, fill in the form.

### How long will this register remain in place?

The register will remain in place until the National Alert Level has been lowered.

### How much will this cost?

There is no cost associated with this process. You simply need to fill out the form and submit back to MPI's online form.

### Can I continue to operate my business?

We are asking businesses to be registered by 5:00pm on Friday 27 March 2020. They should keep operating and are expected to already have health procedures in place.

### What does "safe practice" mean?

Businesses must provide assurances that they are following government guidelines for maintaining social distancing between staff, which will protect workers and the public by limiting interactions and reducing the potential spread of COVID-19. Businesses must now also show additional measures such as providing appropriate PPE and following extra hygiene standards, to protect their staff as best they can against COVID-19 in the workplace.

### Who can I contact if I need more information?

Primary sector businesses can contact MPI at 0800 00 83 33 or [info@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:info@mpi.govt.nz) for further information on the register or registration process.

Find out more at  
[Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)