**Health & Safety Policy for your Workplace – COVID-19.**

**22 April 2020**

[PLEASE NOTE. Restaurant Association members are strongly advised to seek guidance from the employment team on 0800 737 827 if you have any questions. *The Restaurant Association has taken all reasonable care to ensure that the information materials contained on our website are true and correct at the time of publication. The information provided is general information only and is not intended to constitute legal advice. Therefore, the Restaurant Association accepts no responsibility for any loss, errors or omissions which may arise pertaining to such reliance.*]

**Numerous obligations are owed by a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), which includes an employer. This requires you to protect workers against health, safety and welfare from hazards and risks that arise in your workplace.**

**Obligations, include, but are not limited to, PCBUs owing a duty of care to eliminate risks to health and safety, so far as reasonably practicable, for their employees (while undertaking work for their employer), and also workers that undertake work for the PCBU where it is directed by the PCBU.**

A worker is therefore someone who does work, in any capacity, for a business. This includes someone who does work as:

* An employee
* A contractor or subcontractor, or someone employed by one
* Someone employed by a labour hire company who is assigned to work in the business
* An apprentice or trainee
* An outworker
* Someone getting work experience or doing a work trial
* A volunteer worker

You need to manage risks, to the extent you have, or would be expected to have, the ability to control what the risks relate to. *Duties cannot be transferred from one person and/or business to another.*

**Health and Safety during COVID-19**

Currently, one of your obligations as a PCBU, is to implement a **Health and Safety policy for COVID-19** in consultation with your employees and then confirmed in writing.

Before starting to operate at Alert Level 3, PCBUS need to consider what operating at Alert Level 3 looks like in terms of managing risks and protecting Employees as well as customers.

As per the guidelines released by WorkSafe, you must develop a **Safety Plan** that sets out how you will operate your business at Alert Level 3. This is a self-assessment process that takes place before you can operate again at Alert Level 3. You must discuss this safety plan after it has been developed with your Employees, Contractors and Suppliers. This must be communicated before any work starts at Alert Level 3.

While developing this plan, you must consider the following key elements:

* How your business is going to support people with flu-like symptoms to self-isolate/quarantine.
* How your business will ensure distances amongst staff and then between staff and customers.
* How you will carry out disinfecting surfaces.
* How you will continue maintaining good hygiene, particularly hand hygiene and good cough/sneeze etiquette.
* Most importantly, how you will keep records to facilitate contact tracing.

WorkSafe has provided templates for you to develop your Safety Plan. You can find this information by clicking [here.](https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/your-covid-19-safety-plan/)

[The safety plan will not need to be rev](https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/your-covid-19-safety-plan/)iewed or approved by WorkSafe. You may share the document with your Employees, and anyone else who may need to know about it. You do not need to share this with any other agency/company.

**Communication with your Employees**

It is important that you ensure your Employees have access to the right information about ways they can keep themselves well during the Pandemic. This means considering how you will ensure that your Employees can continue and maintain the hygiene practices that are in line with your safety plan.

You should consider the following points while discussing health and safety concerns with your Employees in your regular health and safety meetings;

* Travel arrangements (how the Employee gets to work and goes home from work).
* Discussing physical distancing as well as hygiene.
* Any ideas they may have for effective operation at Level 3.
* Any common concerns about the workplace and what steps will be taken to address these concerns.
* Continue to check in with your Employees to ensure they are well.
* You should encourage workers to engage in work health and safety matters. (Ask workers how they like to discuss these matters, and whether they would prefer a Health and Safety representative in their group).
* Some of your staff may want to use face masks. If that is the case, ensure that you discuss the appropriate way to remove them as per [MOH](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-non-health-essential-workers) guidelines.

**On the this page and the following pages we provide a sample template email, together with a template policy to be issued to your staff.**

1. **Sample email template** to send to employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19
2. **Sample policy** for employees regarding staff health and wellbeing for COVID-19

*Please note that this email template and the sample policy on the following pages are templates only, and that you need to consider the individual requirements of your business, risks that are specific to your workplace, and eliminate these risks so far is reasonably practical to do so. In the event that it is not reasonably practicable to do so, then the PCBU needs to* ***minimise*** *the risks so far as reasonably possible.*

1. **Sample email template to send to employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19**

**[INSERT SALUTATION]**

**Introduction**

At **[INSERT ENTITY]** trading as **[INSERT NAME]** (the Company) we value the health and wellbeing of our employees, and the impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing risks that it poses to us all.

It is important to note that this is a constantly evolving risk, and we suggest that you monitor the Ministry of Health (MOH) public health updates:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

New Zealand is currently at Alert Level 4 and moving to Alert Level 3 from 11.59pm 27 April 2020 until at least 11 May 2020.

We refer you to the following link containing more information on the four alert levels: <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/>

**General Preventative Measures**

**The Company will always align our recommendations and advice in line with what is currently set out by MOH.**

**You should maintain good hygiene practices:**

* If you are unwell; in particular, with symptoms including (but not limited to) cough, high temperature, shortness of breath – please note that you must stay home. Your primary goal should be to get well. People who do not yet have sick leave entitlement, or have used up their sick leave entitlement, can discuss what other leave options are available. Please also ensure that you follow the Company’s absence notification procedure for sickness.
* Avoid contact with anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or is considered a Vulnerable person (this is defined in the attached policy)
* Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
* Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
* Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
* Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
* Don’t touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
* Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
* Call Healthline on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) immediately if you have any symptoms of COVID-19.
* Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
* Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately for disposal
* Wash your hands with soap and water regularly (for at least 20 seconds).
* Use hand sanitizer often and as needed.
* Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
* Do not touch your face
* Avoid personal and physical contact with people outside of your bubble
* Clean and disinfect high touch points such as doorknobs and kitchen counters
* All site toilets, lunchrooms, offices, door handles, light switches etc. to be cleaned DAILY and as regularly as possible between services
* Everyone is to keep 2m distance from each other while outdoors and 1m distance while inside the premises.
* Limit use of lunchrooms and smoke areas. We encourage people to separate into small groups, preferably in open air while keeping their physical distance as recommended by MOH of 2 meters apart
* Limit the use of shared objects such as pens; if you do use pens, use your own or if you share with someone, please make sure this is disinfected. This applies to any objects used frequently, and shared by others
* Domestic travel is restricted for essential purposes only. No international travel is recommended.
* No social events of gatherings of any kind until further notice
* Everyone on the premise must maintain a high awareness of people who are unwell, and ensure people are complying with the rules
* If you are feeling unwell you do not come to work.
* It is currently unclear how effective protective masks are in preventing the spread of any virus. However, if you would like to wear a protective mask at work as a precaution, we support you in making this decision. If you choose to wear a mask, please let us know, as we must discuss the most appropriate way of removing the mask as per [MOH](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-non-health-essential-workers) guidelines.

**Company Operations**

We are currently undertaking a thorough review of our operations to incorporate the Alert Level 3 requirements into our operations model to ensure operational health and safety at Alert Level 3. We will ensure to keep you updated with any further details including any consultation and feedback required from you.

**Please find attached our company** **policy for employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19. This is in addition to any policy previously issued to you.**

Please read and review the attached Policy and for any concerns or questions please speak to **[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS OF BUSINESS OWNER]**.

We will review the situation as there will be further developments and accordingly this Policy may be amended at any time.

Signed…

**Please note, you will need to cut and paste this policy onto your own Company letterhead.**

1. **Sample policy for employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19**

[INSERT COMPANY LOGO]

**Health and Wellbeing Policy: COVID-19 [INSERT DATE]**

**What is it?**

The Coronaviruses are a large and diverse family of viruses which includes the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome – better known as SARS - and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). There are still outbreaks overseas of COVID-19.

**Symptoms of COVID-19 (In line with** [**Ministry of Health**](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public#symptoms) **advice)**

The following are symptoms of COVID-19, advised by the Ministry of Health. If you have these symptoms, please telephone Healthline (for free) on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) or your doctor immediately. The symptoms are:

* a cough
* a high temperature (at least 38°C)
* shortness of breath.
* sore throat
* sneezing and runny nose
* temporary loss of smell

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19, but please stay at home, and contact your GP in the first instance as soon as you notice any of the symptoms above. This is to ensure the safety of others as well as you.

Please note that symptoms could take up to 14 days to show after someone has been infected. A person who has COVID-19 and is symptom free, can still pass this onto others before they know they have it – from up to 2 days before symptoms develop.

Please do not come to work, if you are at all unwell, or have been in contact with someone who is unwell.

**Current status**

There are ongoing cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand. The Ministry of Health is monitoring the situation closely. Globally, COVID-19 has officially been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

**Who is at most risk?**

There are individuals who are considered, to be more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus than others. The key determinant as outlined by MOH for COVID-19 becoming a severe illness is the existence of underlying medical conditions. Therefore, Employees of the [ENTITY NAME] trading as [BUSINESS NAME] (the Company) who may be at high risk of exposure (Vulnerable Persons) to the coronavirus must remain away from work.

Below, is a list of all individuals who are considered, to be more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus and therefore are at a higher risk of contracting this virus. This list is subject to change, as further developments are made, and announced by the Ministry of Health.

**At High-risk individuals (Travel specific):**

1. Has recently returned to New Zealand from anywhere in the world (Check MOH website for the latest information on locations that are at risk. This information is subject to change),
2. Has been in close contact with someone recently returned to New Zealand from overseas,
3. Has been in close contact with someone confirmed with the virus;

**At high-risk individuals – In general (In line with** [**MOH**](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public#risk) **advisory)**

* serious respiratory disease such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma;
* serious heart conditions;
* immunocompromised conditions  
  + many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking related illness, bone marrow or organ transplantation, haematologic neoplasms, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications (such as disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs);
* severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
* diabetes;
* chronic kidney disease, people undergoing dialysis; and
* liver disease.
* **Those over 70:** Older people, in particular those who have underlying health issues, including respiratory issues that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.
* **Residents of aged care facilities:** Aged care facilities are susceptible to the rapid transmission of viruses like this. Residents are more susceptible to illnesses due to their age and they are also more likely to have underlying health conditions.
* **Pregnant women:** Health experts do not yet know if pregnant women are impacted by COVID-19 in the same way as other people. However, pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk from some infections.

If you are a vulnerable person who is at high risk of contracting COVID-19, please let us know immediately.

If you have concerns, please contact Healthline (0800 358 5453) or your GP for medical advice. Following this, please contact **[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS OF BUSINESS OWNER**] from the Company and communicate the outcome of any medical advice relating to COVID-19. This request is made in order to protect the health and safety of the workplace, including those that visit it.

Please note that all Employees, have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, where they must take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and wellbeing, by ensuring that their own actions do not adversely affect the health and wellbeing of others around them.

**Prevention measures to protect yourself and others:**

* Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
* Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately for disposal
* Wash your hands with soap and water regularly (for at least 20 seconds).
* Use hand sanitizer often and as needed.
* Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
* Do not touch your face
* Avoid personal and physical contact with people outside of your bubble
* Clean and disinfect high touch points such as doorknobs and kitchen counters
* All site toilets, lunchrooms, offices, door handles, light switches etc. to be cleaned DAILY and as regularly as possible between services
* Everyone is to keep 2m distance from each other while outdoors and 1m distance while inside the premises.
* Limit use of lunchrooms and smoke areas. We encourage people to separate into small groups, preferably in open air while keeping their physical distance as recommended by MOH of 2 meters apart
* Limit the use of shared objects such as pens; if you do use pens, use your own or if you share with someone, please make sure this is disinfected. This applies to any objects used frequently, and shared by others
* Domestic travel is restricted for essential purposes only. No international travel is recommended.
* No social events of gatherings of any kind until further notice
* Everyone on the premise must maintain a high awareness of people who are unwell, and ensure people are complying with the rules
* If you are feeling unwell you do not come to work.

We have a strong commitment to health and safety and want to ensure the safety of all people in our premises. However, our success also depends on the personal responsibility of staff.

Employees are required to advise their manager of any potential health or safety problems.

As always, anyone who is unwell (e.g. temperature, cough, fever and/or breathing difficulties), should not be at work, regardless of their circumstances. People who do not yet have sick leave entitlement, or have used up their sick leave entitlement, can discuss what other leave options are available. This can be discussed with **[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS OF BUSINESS OWNER].**

Please note that this Policy is subject to change based on MOH advisory.

**Declaration:**

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have read this Policy and I understand what my responsibilities are and the procedures I must follow to ensure the health and safety requirements are met.

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

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

Company Representative:

Signed: