

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

**20 MARCH 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 Policy for COVID-19

At this time, in order to meet your obligations as a PCBU, members need to implement a Health and Safety policy for COVID-19 in consultation with your employees.

Some general guidance, is as follows:

In accordance with the above definition of “workers”, such obligation extends to persons falling within that definition, and would also potentially include customers to your business in the form of a notice in your workplace warning certain affected persons not to enter your workplace. Although we know that you may be reluctant to do so, this has become more common recently and would be a relevant consideration at this time.

Currently, such policy should include matters concerning, but not limited to (it needs to be tailored to your specific business requirements, identifiable risks, and steps you are taking to mitigate such risks):

- Hygiene in your workplace;
- That an employee is best not to attend work if they are unwell including the correct notification procedures to follow and who to contact;
- That if they are experiencing particular symptoms, in accordance with the Ministry of Health (MOH) guidelines, they should not attend work, contact you immediately if they suspect that this is the case, contact Healthline immediately, and take their direction from this Government agency including that you (the employer) will communicate with the employee throughout this process, and that the employee will do the same;
- That an employee can contact you confidentially with any concerns that they may have. Please provide both your mobile number and appropriate email address;
- In accordance with the MOH guidelines, self-isolation is only necessary at this stage, if an employee has been in direct personal contact with someone who is infected, or has recently travelled to China, Iran, Italy or the Republic of Korea; or if they have travelled to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore or Thailand and are feeling unwell. This list of countries may be reviewed or changed at any time; and
- That the situation may change at any time and that you will keep them updated as best you can.

**On 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 policy 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 as 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]

At [INSERT ENTITY] trading as [INSERT NAME] (the Company) we value the health and wellbeing of our workers, which includes our employees, and we are sure that you all have heard about Coronavirus, or more specifically, COVID-19 and the risks that it poses to all of us.

We don't want people to panic, and it is important to note that currently there are only several confirmed cases in New Zealand. However, with a constantly evolving risk, we suggest that we all keep an eye on the Ministry of Health public health updates:

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

The Company will always try to align with their recommendations and advice.

To summarise:

**People who have recently returned to New Zealand from anywhere in the world, or been in close contact with someone recently returned to New Zealand from overseas, or have been in contact with people diagnosed with the virus**

As of 15 March 2020, all travellers arriving in New Zealand from anywhere in the world\*, or have had contact with someone who has returned to New Zealand from anywhere in the world, or people who have had contact or exposure to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19, will be expected to **self-isolate**. (\*From 15-19 March 2020, this excluded certain countries in the Pacific.) Self-isolation is to be for a period of 14 days from the time they leave specified countries or were potentially exposed to novel coronavirus.

If any of these recommendations could apply to you, please contact **[INSERT BUSINESS OWNERS DETAILS]** immediately and do not return to work for a period of 14 days from either

- the time you returned to New Zealand from overseas, or
- were in contact with someone who travelled / returned to New Zealand from overseas, and/or
- came into contact with an infected person.

**And as always 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 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.
- Avoid close contact with people suffering respiratory infections.
- Wash your hands frequently with water and soap, or almost as good, use of hand sanitisers and alcohol wipes can reduce risks. Please use the hand sanitiser that is available to you / We have ordered extra hand sanitiser, and this should be arriving soon, as many of you are aware there is a shortage now. **[DELETE THE OPTION ABOVE THAT IS NOT APPLICABLE]**
- 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. **[Note, you may want to consider taking this point out, if it does not suit your business]**

**Please find attached our company policy for employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19.** For any concerns or questions please speak to **[INSERT CONTACT DETAILS OF BUSINESS OWNER]**. We will review the situation if there are further developments.

Signed...

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

## 2. Sample policy for employees regarding staff health and wellbeing policy for COVID-19

[INSERT COMPANY LOGO]

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

#### What is it?

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 currently outbreaks overseas of a new coronavirus disease called COVID-19.

**Current status:** There are several confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand, however the risk of a widespread community outbreak in New Zealand remains low. The Ministry of Health is monitoring the situation closely. Globally, COVID-19 has officially been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

---

Employees of the [ENTITY NAME] trading as [BUSINESS NAME] (the Company) who may be at high risk of exposure to the coronavirus must remain away from work for 14 days and follow Ministry of Health advice to self-isolate yourself from others.

#### A high-risk individual is someone who fits any of the following criteria;

- a. Has recently returned to New Zealand from anywhere in the world
- b. Has been in close contact with someone recently returned to New Zealand from overseas,
- c. Has been in close contact with someone confirmed with the virus;

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.

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

45 Normanby Rd  
Mt. Eden  
Auckland 1024  
  
PO Box 8287  
Symonds St  
Auckland 1150

info@restaurantnz.co.nz  
09 638 8403  
0800 737 827  
  
dinefind.co.nz  
restaurantnz.co.nz

- 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.

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]**.