

History of the COVID-19 Alert System

A timeline of Alert Level changes, dates of key events and the duration of the State of National Emergency.

Timeline of key events

28 February 2020

First COVID-19 case reported in New Zealand.

(New Zealand Government, 2021b)

14 March 2020

The Government announces anyone entering New Zealand must self-isolate for 14 days, except those arriving from the Pacific.

19 March 2020

All indoor gatherings of more than 100 people are to be cancelled.

Borders close to all but New Zealand citizens and permanent residents.

21 March 2020

The Government introduces the 4-tiered Alert Level system to help combat COVID-19. The Prime Minister announces that New Zealand is at Alert Level 2.

23 March 2020

At 1:30pm the Prime Minister announces New Zealand has moved to Alert Level 3, effective immediately. In 48 hours, New Zealand will move to Alert Level 4.

25 March 2020

At 11:59pm, New Zealand moves to Alert Level 4, and the entire nation goes into self-isolation. A State of National Emergency is declared at 12:21pm.

29 March 2020

New Zealand reports its first COVID-19-related death.

31 March 2020

The State of National Emergency is extended at 9:27am. Further extensions are made at:

- 9:25am on 2 April 2020
 - 12:21pm on 8 April 2020
 - 12:21pm on 15 April 2020
 - 12:21pm on 22 April 2020
 - 12:21pm on 29 April 2020
 - 12:21pm on 5 May 2020.
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20 April 2020

The Prime Minister announces New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 4 for an additional 5 days. New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 3 for 2 weeks, before the status is reviewed.

27 April 2020

New Zealand moves to Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm.

4 May 2020

No new cases of COVID-19 are reported in New Zealand.

11 May 2020

The Prime Minister outlines the plan to move to Alert Level 2.

13 May 2020

New Zealand moves to Alert Level 2 at 11:59pm. The State of National Emergency expires at 12:21pm.

8 June 2020

The Ministry of Health reports that there are no more active cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand. At 11:59pm, New Zealand moves to Alert Level 1.

11 August 2020

4 new cases of COVID-19 are recorded in the community.

12 August 2020

At 12 noon, Auckland region moves to Alert Level 3. The rest of New Zealand moves to Alert Level 2.

14 August 2020

The Prime Minister announces that Auckland will remain at Alert Level 3 and the rest of New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 2 for 12 more days.

30 August 2020

Auckland moves to Alert Level 2 at 11:59pm, with extra restrictions on travel and gatherings. The rest of New Zealand remains at Alert Level 2.

21 September 2020

All regions except Auckland move to Alert Level 1 at 11:59pm.

23 September 2020

Auckland moves to Alert Level 2 without extra restrictions on travel and gatherings at 11:59pm.

7 October 2020

Auckland moves to Alert Level 1 at 11:59pm. All of New Zealand is now at Alert Level 1.

14 February 2021

3 new cases of COVID-19 are recorded in the community.

Auckland moves to Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm. The rest of New Zealand moves to Alert Level 2.

17 February 2021

Auckland moves to Alert Level 2 at 11:59pm. The rest of New Zealand moves to Alert Level 1.

22 February 2021

Auckland moves to Alert Level 1 at 11:59pm. All of New Zealand is now at Alert Level 1.

28 February 2021

Auckland moves to Alert Level 3 at 6am. The rest of New Zealand move to Alert Level 2.

State of National Emergency

A State of National Emergency was declared due to COVID-19. It was in force between 12:21pm on 25 March 2020 and 12:21pm on Wednesday 13 May 2020.

It covered all of New Zealand including the Chatham Islands, Stewart Island and other offshore islands.

The declaration was made by the Minister of Civil Defence Hon Peeni Henare in consultation with the Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern following advice from the Director of Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

The State of National Emergency was distinct from the COVID-19 Alert System.

Extensions to state of emergency

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, a state of emergency expires 7 days after it's declared unless it is terminated or extended.

The State of National Emergency was extended at:

- 9:27am on 31 March 2020
- 9:25am on 2 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 8 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 15 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 22 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 29 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 5 May 2020.