

(MBIE, n.d.)

nz



COVID-19

The whole of New Zealand is in the Red traffic light setting:

[See more information on operating guidelines at Red](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/)

[\(https://web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/\)](https://web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/)

See details of the Close Contact Exemption Scheme and Bubble of One initiative:

[Testing and returning to work during Omicron](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/)

[\(https://web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/\)](https://web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/)

Testing and returning to work during Omicron

At each of the three phases to the Omicron response, there are different requirements for businesses, including testing and how long cases need to isolate for. This is to better enable critical workforces to continue operating through a widespread community outbreak of the Omicron variant.

- [Businesses can continue to operate under Red](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29177)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29177](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29177))
- [Managing workers who are COVID-19 cases, contacts or have symptoms](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29081)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29081](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29081))
- [Bubble of One](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100))
- [Close Contact Exemption Scheme](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078))
- [Mask wearing](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29288)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29288](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29288))

Businesses can continue to operate under Red

New Zealand is currently at Red. At Red, all businesses can have staff onsite, provided those staff and the business meet the operating guidelines for their sector at Red. However, staff must isolate if they have COVID-19, show COVID-19 symptoms or are a close contact of a case.

[See more information on operating guidelines at Red](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/covid-19-protection-framework/))

Managing workers who are COVID-19 cases, contacts or have symptoms

At each phase of the Omicron response, there are different isolation and quarantine requirements for cases and contacts.

At Phase One

- anyone with symptoms should isolate and get a test
- cases must isolate for 14 days (release by health officials)
- close contacts must isolate for 10 days (with tests at days five and eight, although if symptomatic then must test immediately).

At Phase Two

- anyone with symptoms must isolate and get a test
- cases need to isolate for 10 days (self-release after day 10 if asymptomatic for 72 hours)
- close contacts need to isolate for seven days (with a test on day five).

If a close contact is vaccinated and asymptomatic, they may be able to continue to work:

- as a [Bubble of One](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100)), if they are not customer facing and follow strict health protocols
- through the [Close Contact Exemption Scheme](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078)), if they work for a critical service.

At Phase Three

- anyone with symptoms must isolate and get a test
- cases need to isolate for 10 days (self-release after day 10 if asymptomatic for 72 hours)
- close contacts need to isolate for seven days (and get a test if symptomatic).

If a close contact is vaccinated and asymptomatic, they may be able to continue to work:

- as a [Bubble of One](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29100)), if they are not customer facing and follow strict health protocols
- through the [Close Contact Exemption Scheme](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/close-contact-exemption-scheme/#e-29078)), if they work for a critical service.

[Phases for response to Omicron](#) — Ministry of Health

[Managing the impact of COVID-19 cases at your business](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/managing-the-impact-of-covid-19-cases-at-your-business/)
([/web/20220210021949/https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/managing-the-impact-of-covid-19-cases-at-your-business/](https://www.business.govt.nz/covid-19/managing-the-impact-of-covid-19-cases-at-your-business/))

Bubble of One for workers who are close contacts

- At Phase Two and Phase Three of the Omicron response, any business or sole trader may have a worker who is a close contact on-site if this worker is not customer facing, and can maintain a 'bubble of one' while at work (including travel to and from work)
- The requirements are that the worker:
 - is vaccinated
 - does not have any symptoms (asymptomatic)
 - is able to maintain an individual 'bubble of one' while at work (whether indoors or outdoors).
- They are not required to use rapid antigen testing as part of this, nor are businesses required to register for bubble of one.

At work, the worker must do the following to maintain a bubble of one:

- use a medical mask at all times (including wearing a medical mask before entry to the workplace, and changing as needed during the day)
- comply with any infection prevention and control protocols at work
- work in an indoor or outdoor space with no others present in that space (defined as an indoor space that has direct airflow with other spaces, or an outdoor space that is separated by at least two metres from other outdoor spaces)
- travel solo, to, from and around work or between jobs (the worker cannot use public transport)
- eat alone in a well-ventilated space, outdoors where possible
- use a dedicated bathroom (if this is not possible, no others should be present in the bathroom while the worker is using it)
- ensure that if symptoms develop at any stage, follow the public advice for close contacts with symptoms at www.health.govt.nz/COVID-19-contact
- continue participating in regular workplace surveillance testing if this is already in place.

At home, the worker must self-isolate as per standard for close contacts, including testing if applicable

Further information about the current requirements is available from the Ministry of Health.

[Contact tracing for COVID-19](#) — Ministry of Health

Close Contact Exemption Scheme

Because critical services are important for people's basic needs, provide key infrastructure, and/or are part of critical supply chains, their workers can access the Close Contact Exemption Scheme to ensure critical services continue to function.

During Phases Two and Three of the Omicron response, workers at registered critical services who are vaccinated and asymptomatic close contacts of a COVID-19 case will be able to continue to work, as long as they return a negative rapid antigen test prior to each day/shift they are at work during the isolation period, and follow specific health protocols. They will only be allowed to go to work – not anywhere else.

Workers who are participating in the scheme will be able to collect free Rapid Antigen Test kits from a collection site. Refer to the guidance on the Ministry of Health website for the process for collecting and undertaking a Rapid Antigen Test, as part of the Close Contact Exemption Scheme.

[Rapid antigen testing](#) — Ministry of Health

How do I register as a Critical Service?

Businesses and organisations can self-assess if they meet the criteria for being critical. Please use the tool below to see if you qualify and then you can make a declaration by registering on the Close Contact Exemption Scheme Critical Services Register.

Step One. Critical sector – Basic human needs

Is your business or organisation involved in one of the following basic needs areas?

- Food production
- Distribution and sale of basic food
- Principal accommodation
- Health services, including services provided for deceased persons

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Close Contact Exemption Scheme registration portal](#) — Business Connect

What should a worker at a critical service do once they are notified that they are a close contact?

When a worker at a critical service is notified that they are a close contact of a COVID-19 case, they will need to contact the business they work at to let them know.

For the worker to access Rapid Antigen Tests, the business must send the worker two documents:

- A copy of the letter the business received from the Critical Services Register, which records that they have declared themselves as a critical service and contains a unique identifier for that business
- A critical worker authorisation letter, which must include:
 - a declaration that the business and worker are critical, with a rationale (businesses may include the output of the self-assessment tool)
 - an outline of the protocols the worker will need to follow to mitigate transmission risks
 - the business's unique identifier from the Critical Services Register letter
 - the worker's workplace identification (if they have one).

The worker will then need to collect a Rapid Antigen Test kit from a Ministry of Health distribution hub. If a business has a private supply of Rapid Antigen Tests, they can opt to supply a critical worker with these instead. The business should still write and send the worker the critical worker authorisation letter, as this is evidence that the worker has an exemption from their self-isolation requirements for the purposes of working.

More information can be found on the Ministry of Health website on collecting and undertaking a Rapid Antigen test, how they should record the results, and other health protocols the worker must follow at work.

[Rapid antigen testing](#) — Ministry of Health

Mask wearing

At all phases of the Omicron response, critical workers should wear certified well-fitting medical masks. At Phases Two and Three, the Ministry of Health has further guidance on mask wearing for general health workers and higher risk health workers or border staff.

[COVID-19: Use of masks and face coverings in the community](#) — Ministry of Health