

ALERT LEVEL 2: COVID-19 Guidance for Transport Operators

Last updated: 1745hrs, 14 September 2020

1. This guidance is applicable to operators for the provision of all transport services, including public transport, aviation, maritime and other land-based passenger services. To the extent that it is relevant, it may also be used by organisations transporting passengers without hire or reward.
2. It is intended to be read in conjunction with official information about COVID19 Alert Level 2 contained on, or linked from, the [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) webpage and on the [Ministry of Transport website](https://www.mot.govt.nz).

Executive summary

- With regards to workplace health and safety, operators should consider advice and guidance from Worksafe and the Ministry of Health.
- Individuals no longer need to maintain physical distancing on-board public transport services at Alert Level 2; but passengers are still encouraged to keep their distance from others where possible. Physical distancing measures still need to be observed at terminals, stations, and airports.
- Drivers, staff, and passengers are required to wear face coverings at Alert Level 2 (with some exceptions). Passengers of small passenger vehicle services will not need to wear masks, but drivers of these services will.
- Operators are required to support contact tracing. Most transport operators are required to display QR codes. Public transport services that require passengers to provide their name and a contact phone number (in order to use the service) do not need to display QR codes.
- Operators should continue to clean vehicles, vessels, aircraft and facilities (e.g terminals) in line with Ministry of Health guidance.
- Transport operators are not expected, or required, to enforce passenger compliance with the Order or Ministry of Health guidelines; but may provide advice to passengers for travelling safely for example by displaying public information posters. Passengers and staff should not be encouraged to call Police if someone is not complying with the requirements. As per normal procedures, if the situation is dangerous or a passenger is displaying threatening behaviour, for example, Police should be called.

ALERT LEVEL 2

3. All of New Zealand is at Alert Level 2, with some additional restrictions for Auckland.
4. Effective 1300hrs on 14 September, physical distancing no longer needs to be observed on public transport services at Alert Level 2; however passengers are still encouraged to physically distance where possible while on board and, physical distancing measures are still required at terminals, stations, and airports.
5. At Alert Level 2, there are no restrictions on travelling inter-regionally.

Advice for traveling safely under Alert Level 2

6. We all need to remain vigilant in the battle against COVID-19. We recommend travellers:
- Be kind and patient with each other and transport staff, especially your driver or crew.
 - Observe physical distancing measures at terminals, stations, and airports. Where it is possible to do so, keep your distance from other passengers on board public transport services.
 - Wear a face covering while on public transport.
 - Keep a record of where they go and their interactions on the NZ COVID Tracer App; including scanning QR codes (where available), or manually recording travel information in the NZ COVID Tracer App (where QR codes are not available); OR keep a manual record if you do not have a smartphone.
 - Practice good hygiene and follow Ministry of Health advice. This includes washing and drying their hands thoroughly with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if soap and water not available), coughing and sneezing into their elbow, and not touching their face.
 - Plan ahead, and allow extra time to ensure their journey is as comfortable as possible.
 - Stay home if they're unwell, or may have COVID-19. They should also not travel if they: have been requested to self-isolate/quarantine, have symptoms of COVID-19, or are awaiting COVID-19 test results.
7. We recommend operators encourage their passengers and users to follow the safe travel tips (list above) and by publically displaying COVID-19 educational posters on site, and through social media and public announcements (e.g. in terminals and on-board).

About this guidance

8. This guidance outlines key information for transport service operators under Alert Level 2. Specifically, the following matters are covered:

Section 1: Workplace health and safety

Section 2: Physical distancing

Section 3: Face coverings

Section 4: Supporting contact tracing efforts

Section 5: Cleaning practices

Section 6: Customer compliance

9. If you require further information or advice, please email the Ministry of Transport at: essentialtransport@transport.govt.nz.
10. If you would like access to collateral, including posters for your transport assets (e.g. buses, trains) or facility (e.g. terminals, platforms), please email the Ministry of Transport at: essentialtransport@transport.govt.nz.

Section 1: Workplace health and safety

11. When considering workplace health and safety arrangements, transport operators should consider:

- any advice or guidance issued by Worksafe <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/>
- advice or guidance issue by the Ministry of Health <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus> (where this may be relevant to their health and safety arrangements).

Section 2: Physical distancing

Public transport services

12. Effective 1300hrs on 14 September, physical distancing no longer needs to be observed on board public transport services at Alert Level 2; however, passengers are still encouraged to physically distance where possible.
13. Regional authorities (in the case of public transport) and transport operators should continue public messaging that discourages people who are unwell from using their services.
14. Additionally, it is recommended that some physical separation of the passengers from the driver compartment is maintained.

Airports and Cook Strait ferry terminals

15. For controlled areas within an airport or terminal: 1 metre distance between passengers is allowed (unless people know each other well, e.g. family members or work colleagues). This would include passenger only areas, such as check-in and bag drop zones, controlled lounges, and queuing and boarding areas (operators are asked to provide signage in these areas, and monitor activity where possible). If entry to the airport or terminal itself is limited to certain people (e.g. entry limited to passengers, crew and staff), the whole airport or terminal would be considered a controlled area.
16. For uncontrolled areas within an airport or terminal: 2 metre distance between people and passengers in public areas at the airport or terminal is required (unless people know each other well, e.g. family members or work colleagues).

Bus and train stations, and public transport ferry terminals

17. 2 metre distance between passengers at the bus/train stations, bus stops or interchanges or ferry terminals is required (unless people know each other well, e.g. family members or work colleagues).

Section 3: Face coverings

Who needs to wear a face covering?

18. Drivers, staff, and passengers on public transport services are required to wear face coverings. However, there are some exemptions, these include:
- persons on Cook Strait ferry services

- passengers of small passenger services (but drivers of small passenger services are required to wear face coverings),
- the following specific services:
 - school buses (meaning dedicated school services contracted by: the Ministry of Education, or Local Authority, or School Board, or Auckland Transport), or
 - charter services and tours.

What kind of face covering can be used?

19. Any face covering that adequately covers the mouth and nostrils can be used, these include: single use disposable masks, washable reusable masks (whether purchased or homemade), or other types of face coverings (e.g. a scarf wrapped around the face).

Is anybody exempt from wearing a mask?

20. Yes. Transport operators should be aware that the following persons are not required to wear face coverings:

- persons under the age of 12, and
- persons who have a medical condition or disability that make it unsuitable to wear a face covering (*please note it might not always be clear why someone may need to be exempt from wearing a face covering*); and
- drivers or staff, if:
 - they are in a space completely separated from passengers (e.g. pilots in a cockpit, or train drivers in a train cab), or
 - wearing a face covering could make it unsafe to operate the vehicle (e.g. wearing a face covering means drivers or staff are unable to properly communicate, or causes the eyeglasses of the driver to fog).

21. In addition, transport operators should note that the use of face coverings are not required in the following situations:

- if it is unsafe to wear a face covering (e.g. if the person's only face covering is wet, or wearing a face covering means a driver cannot safely operate the vehicle),
- if there is an emergency that requires the face covering to be removed (e.g. to perform CPR),
- if removal of the face covering is required to prove identity,
- if visibility of the mouth is required for communication (e.g. when communicating with someone who is deaf),
- if there is a legal requirement to remove, or not to wear, the face covering,
- if there is a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering.

22. Information from the Ministry of Health, regarding the use of face coverings in the community, is available [here](#).

What about enforcement?

23. The obligation to wear a face covering on public transport is the responsibility of the individual.

24. Operators, drivers and staff are not expected to assume the role of enforcement officer; but they still have their usual customer relations role to remind people about face coverings. The role is to educate and encourage passengers to do the right thing, but not be the enforcer.

25. Staff are not expected to refuse boarding to people who do not have a face covering. This kind of issue should be dealt with as you would normally manage a difficult passenger situation.

26. Passengers and staff should not be encouraged to call Police if someone is not wearing a face covering. As per normal procedures, if the situation is dangerous or a passenger is displaying threatening behaviour, for example, Police should be called.

Should operators be encouraging and educating passengers about wearing face coverings?

27. Yes, the support of operators and staff in encouraging and educating passengers about the wearing of face coverings is appreciated. A range of collateral is provided with this guidance including posters which operators are asked to display across their fleets, terminals, stations and other facilities. A script to support social media messaging and PA announcements is attached at Appendix 1 to this guidance.

28. The government will continue to remind people to follow the instructions of the public transport workforce regarding face coverings.

29. These messages will be reinforced through a major All of Government public communications campaign, including COVID-19 TV advertising.

Section 4: Supporting contact tracing

What is contact tracing and why is it important?

30. The purpose of contact tracing is to prevent potential onward transmission, raise awareness about the disease and its symptoms and support early detection of suspected cases.

31. It is important that everyone undertakes practicable actions to support a quick and robust contact tracing process. Contact tracing (coupled with testing and quarantine/isolation measures) is a critical pillar in supporting New Zealand's goal to eliminate COVID-19.

Who undertakes contact tracing?

32. Contact tracing is undertaken by Public Health Units (in the DHB where the confirmed, or probable case was diagnosed), or by the Ministry of Health's National Close Contact Service.

33. When there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, a contact tracing process will occur to:

- identify all 'close contacts' of the confirmed or probable case – so that these people can be quarantined/isolated (and tested if required); and

- identify 'casual contacts', of the confirmed or probable case, and ask them to get tested if they have (or develop) symptoms of COVID-19.

What's the difference between a close contact and a casual contact?

34. Generally, a 'close contact' is someone who has been within 2 metres for more than 15 minutes of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. The full definition of 'close contact' is available on page 11 of this factsheet:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/updated-advice-for-health-professionals-covid-19-16-aprilv3.pdf>

35. A 'casual contact' is someone who may have been in contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, but more than 2m apart or for less 15 minutes.

What should regional authorities and transport operators do to support contact tracing?

36. Under Alert Level 2, transport operators are required to support contact tracing.

37. Regional authorities, and transport operators, are required to display QR codes that are compatible with the NZ COVID Tracer App for their transport assets. Those QR codes need to be displayed in an easily accessible prominent place.

38. Public transport services are not required to obtain and display QR codes if they require all passengers to provide their name and a contact telephone number (in order to use the service); these may include services, such as:

- air passenger services,
- interregional bus services,
- interregional passenger train services.

39. In addition the following services do not need to obtain and display QR codes:

- school buses (meaning dedicated school services contracted by: the Ministry of Education, or Local Authority, or School Board, or Auckland Transport), or
- car sharing services and carpooling services.

40. Regional authorities (in the case of public transport) and transport operators should also take steps to promote and enable users and passengers to keep records for contact tracing purposes. We recommend transport operators issue public messaging (e.g. through posters, announcements, social media) to encourage users and passengers to:

- use the NZ COVID Tracer App by scanning the QR code (where display of the QR code is available), or recording the trip manually in the NZ COVID Tracer App (if the QR code is not available); OR keep a manual record if you do not have a smartphone.
- use public electronic ticketing cards where these are available (e.g. AT HOP, Snapper, Metrocard or Bee Card) and make sure those cards are registered with the passenger's contact information.

What can regional authorities and operators expect if there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 on their transport service?

41. If there is a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 on a transport service, a health official will notify the regional authority (in the case of public transport) and/or operator and request your support with identifying the contacts of that person. The health official will be particularly interested in details you might have of any people who were in 'close contact' with the COVID-19 case on the bus/train/ferry they are investigating.
42. For example, you may be asked to review CCTV footage, or online passenger registers (e.g. public transport electronic ticketing card registration details).
43. The health official may also ask you to provide any contact information you might have for people who were in 'casual contact' with the COVID-19 case on the bus/train/ferry/aircraft they are investigating. This is so they can ask these 'casual contacts' to get tested if they have (or develop) symptoms of COVID-19.
44. If you do not have this information (but are not certain that there were no 'close contacts') the health official will discuss with you what action should be taken. For example, they may request that you undertake public messaging asking people that travelled on the service to contact the COVID-19 Healthline.
45. If you are certain that there were no 'close contacts' (e.g. CCTV footage shows no 'close contacts' were established), then you should advise the health official of this and ask if there is anything more that you should do.

Section 5: Cleaning

46. Transport operators should apply cleaning practices consistent with Ministry of Health guidance.
 - Ministry of Health general guidance on cleaning can be found [here](#)
 - Ministry of Health cleaning FAQs can be found [here](#)
47. Cleaning regimes should include:
 - cleaning the vehicle/vessel/aircraft regularly with particular attention to high-touch surfaces (where possible, at the end of each shift/sailing/flight, but at least at the end of each day).
 - as far as practicable, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces throughout the day.

Section 6: Customer compliance

48. Transport operators are not expected, or required, to enforce passenger compliance with:
 - the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Alert Level Requirements) Order 2020, or
 - Ministry of Health guidelines.
49. Transport operators, however, may choose to stop passengers boarding, where it is lawful to do so on health and safety grounds as per their standard operating procedures.
50. Transport operators may also provide advice to passengers for travelling safely for example by displaying public information posters.

Appendix 1: Public Announcement Scripts

Public Transport Operators – Bus / Train

Face coverings help us protect ourselves and others from the spread of COVID-19.

You are required to wear a face covering on public transport during alert level 2.

Everyone should wear a face covering while on the bus / train, unless you are under 12 years old, or have a health reason for not wearing one.

Your driver may not be wearing a face covering because of safety/medical reasons. Please be respectful.

We also encourage you to track your journey using the QR codes provided, or record it manually.

Please keep your face covering on until you exit the bus / train, and if you need to dispose of it, please do so safely.

If you are sick, please don't use public transport.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Ferry Operators (excluding the Cook Strait ferries)

Face coverings help us protect ourselves and others from the spread of COVID-19.

You are required to wear a face covering on public transport during alert level 2.

Everyone should wear a face covering while on the ferry, unless you are under 12 years old, or have a health reason for not wearing one.

Your captain or crew may not be wearing a face covering because of safety/medical reasons. Please be respectful.

We also encourage you to track your journey using the QR codes provided, or record it manually.

Please keep your face covering on until you exit the ferry, and if you need to dispose of it, please do so safely.

If you are sick, please don't use public transport.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Airlines / Airports

Face coverings help us protect ourselves and others from the spread of COVID-19.

You are required to wear a face covering while on board the aircraft and until you enter the terminal during alert level 2.

Everyone should wear a face covering while on the aircraft, unless you are under 12 years old, or have a health reason for not wearing one.

Your pilot or members of the cabin crew may not be wearing a face covering for safety reasons. Please be respectful.

Please keep your face covering on until you enter the terminal, and if you need to dispose of it, please do so safely.

If you are sick, please don't fly.

Thanks for your cooperation.
