

COVID-19

Contact tracing: guidance for businesses

26 January 2022

This fact sheet provides an overview of the Ministry of Health's latest operational guidance to support the response to COVID-19 exposures in general workplace settings. It will continue to be updated regularly, informed by experience, feedback and emerging evidence.

Scope

This document is for businesses and other organisations to guide the impact and management of situations where a worker or employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 has attended their workplace during their infectious period.

[Worksafe](#) (Mahi Haumarū Aotearoa) has comprehensive preparedness information available for businesses which outlines public health measures which will help limit the impact of COVID-19 on the business. All businesses are encouraged to refer to these resources as they are updated regularly. The [Unite against COVID-19](#) website also provides guidance for how to operate at the various traffic lights of the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

This document outlines the COVID-19 contact risk assessment for workplace settings including, but not limited to, offices, hospitality venues, retail premises, community pharmacies, supermarkets, warehouses and construction sites.

This guide is not for household contacts, social contacts, contacts on aircraft, contacts in schools, or contacts in healthcare and residential facilities including aged care, correctional centres or other settings where cases and contacts interact frequently with people at high risk of severe illness.

If you have a worker or employee who tests positive for COVID-19, and who was at work while infectious, public health officials will call you and support you through what this means and what actions you need to take.

Keep track of who has been at your workplace

Record keeping involves collecting the details of all workers, customers, and visitors who visit your workplace or location. If there is a case of COVID-19 in the community, public health officials and contact tracers will use this information to identify and contact people who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

When businesses and event organisers keep accurate records of who was at their workplace or location and when they were there, it makes contact tracing faster and more efficient.

It is important you maintain an accurate logbook or electronic record of workers, contractors, or visitors who have been at your business or workplace.

You will need to provide this to the National Investigation and Tracing Centre (NITC) in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet if you are asked for it. [Download a template here](#)

If you maintain complete and accurate records of who was at your business or workplace, it is less likely your workplace will be published as a Location of Interest, as we will know all the people who are at risk and be able to contact them without delay.

What is a contact?

If the worker with COVID-19 (the case) was at your business premises during their infectious period, then anyone who was there during the same timeframe **may** be considered a contact - if they were in the same space as the person with COVID-19. This includes other staff, contractors, visitors and customers.

The worker's infectious period:

A worker's infectious period is from 48 hours before the first symptoms appeared. If the worker does not have any symptoms, they should be considered infectious from 48 hours before they received their positive test result.

Types of contacts:

Close contact	Casual contact
<p>Close contacts are people who have had close range contact (within 1.5m) or were in an indoor space with a case for a sufficient period of time when they were infectious.</p> <p>Close contacts are at the highest risk of getting sick with COVID-19, especially if they are unvaccinated.</p>	<p>Casual Contacts are people who have been in the same place at the same time as someone infectious with COVID-19 but may not have been near the infectious person. Casual Contacts are at lowest risk of getting sick with COVID-19.</p>

Public health officials will conduct a risk assessment of the workplace and provide guidance around identification and categorisation of contacts. Where consistent mask use by the worker (the case) can be assured, this may lead to fewer people being classified as Close contacts.

Public health officials will tell you what you need to do about any specific cleaning required dependant on the risk. Information on cleaning and disinfection can also be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#) or you can contact the Infection Prevention and Control team at your local District Health Board for advice.

Contact management

Close contacts must self-isolate at home, away from other household members, as per standard close contact advice, including testing if applicable

- Current requirements are available at www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-contact

Casual contacts do not need to be reported to the NITC and they are not required to stay at home. These contacts should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and if any develop then they should immediately isolate and be tested.

Do all of my employees need to get tested?

Only those identified as Close contacts, or who have symptoms of COVID-19 need to be tested.

Routine testing and/or isolation of all staff in the workplace is not required or recommended (except where established surveillance programs are in place).

For further information on testing and management of contacts <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/contact-tracing-covid-19>