

COVID-19 Infection Prevention Control at the Air Border Interim Guidance Document

29.12.20

1.1 Purpose

We've been monitoring overseas developments very closely, and, like many other countries, have heightened concerns about the new variants of the virus and their potential to spread more rapidly.

The following additional Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures are an extra precautionary step that provides another layer of protection for those workers conducting secondary health screening for returnees that have presented with symptoms consistent with COVID-19. This aligns with the guidance issued in the IPC Standard Operating Procedure document for managed isolation and quarantine facilities for workers who come into contact with a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case.

1.2 Background

All passengers who enter New Zealand undergo a health screen at the border for COVID-19 related symptoms before they can depart to a managed isolation or quarantine facility (MIQF).

The National Border Solution (NBS) is an electronic register that assists in the management of returnee/guest who are required to be isolated or quarantined in MIQF. This creates a health identity record to link each returnee/guest to a National Health Index number, and then enables a range of matters to be accurately recorded and managed, in a timely manner, during the returnees/guest's MIQF stay. This includes health screening.

A two-stage health screening system is in place at airports for all international arrivals. All newly arrived passengers undergo temperature checks and are asked if they have COVID-19 symptoms (stage 1).

- Those that have a temperature greater than 38°C and/or report COVID-19 symptoms then undergo a second, more comprehensive assessment by the border health team (stage 2).
- All non-symptomatic returnees should follow standard processes for transfer to a MIQF. MIQF allocation will be pre-planned from the appropriate RIQCC.

1.3 What is happening

In addition to existing IPC measures at the border, the use of N95/P2 particulate respirators will be introduced for health staff conducting stage 2 health screening at the border under specific circumstances.

1.4 Operational requirements

Stage One: COVID-19 symptom check and a temperature check.

Stage 1 border health team should adhere to Droplet Precautions and wear medical masks, eye protection and perform regular hand hygiene. In line with existing PPE guidance for border workers, they are not required to wear an N95/P2 particulate respirator given the brief and comparatively lower-risk interactions they have with recent international arrivals.

Stage Two: Returnees that require medical follow up

Currently, stage 2 border health teams adhere to Contact and Droplet Precautions; they wear a medical mask, and gloves.

As an extra precautionary step, Airborne Precautions should be adhered to. This includes the wearing of a N95/P2 particulate respirator, eye protection, a long sleeve gown and gloves.

Border health workers who are required to wear an N95/P2 particulate respirator must undergo the requisite fit testing and be trained in fit checking.

For further information on the use of PPE please refer to: www.health.govt.nz/ppe-health