

COVID-19

Public Health guide

for temporary accommodation

Version 2.0

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Version 1	22 December 2021
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Foreword

This guidance is to prepare social service agencies, emergency, public and temporary housing, holiday accommodation, managers, and owners to support guests/clients, staff, and contractors in the event they have a case or cases requiring isolating at the property.

People with COVID-19 and their household contacts need to isolate as quickly as possible to reduce the spread of the disease. Safe and secure housing is one of the most important needs.

This guidance has been developed with the assistance of individuals within the Ministry of Health (Ministry) and other government entities. Particular acknowledgements go to Auckland Regional Public Health Service ([Home | ARPHS](#)), Northern Region Health Coordination Centre ([Home | NRHCC COVID-19 - Northern Region](#)) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/> for their continued support in developing this guide and keeping its contents relevant and updated as the pandemic evolves in New Zealand.

I am grateful for the support and advice of those who contributed to the development of this guidance through providing valuable knowledge, insights, and feedback.

Ngā mihi,

Robyn Shearer
Acting Director-General of Health

Definition

For the purposes of this guidance, the following provides clarity on references made to:

1. *Property/Temporary Accommodation/Housing* – Refers to all accommodation types that is not someone’s primary or permanent place of residence, such as boarding houses/schools, motels, hotels, campervan parks, camping or holiday parks, Air B&B, Backpackers, caravans, and other places that are not a person’s permanent place of residence, including the facilities within the property i.e., shared bathrooms, toilets, portaloos, kitchens, etc
2. *Manager* – Refers to a person who oversees the daily running of the property and which could be the owner or someone who manages the property on behalf of the owners.
3. *Guests* – Refers to all persons occupying a property.
4. *Case* – Refers to a person or individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
5. *Household contact* – Refers to a person or persons living in the same accommodation/household as the case and who have been exposed to the case and is at risk of developing COVID-19 as a result.
6. *People in Isolation* – Refers to people who have been exposed to COVID-19 but are not yet sick e.g., household contacts.
7. *People in Quarantine* – Refers to people who have been confirmed as a case or probable case of COVID-19 and need to complete 10 days until they are no longer infectious.
8. *RAT*- Refers to Rapid Antigen Tests, which can now be used by people who have symptoms or are a Household Contact.
9. *PCR* – Refers to Polymerase Chain Reaction test. PCR is a swab of the back of your nose.
10. *Care Coordination Hubs* – Refers to a group of local hubs responsible for working with PHUs, DHBs, primary care providers, nationally-funded telehealth services, and other health providers, local welfare providers, Māori and Pacific partners and community leaders to develop local methods and plans for triaging, contacting and notifying people who have tested positive for COVID-19. The Care Coordination Hubs are also responsible for ensuring that the case and contact are linked with appropriate care and services whilst they are in isolation.

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COVID-19 guidance for managers of temporary accommodations

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 requires all workplaces to implement and maintain infectious disease controls to protect the health and safety of workers, and this applies regardless of the setting that the region is under, according to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021. See COVID-19 Public Health Response Order – link to vaccination prohibition information for government funded housing: [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Protection Framework\) Order 2021 \(SL 2021/386\) \(as at 03 February 2022\) 10 Meaning of designated premises – New Zealand Legislation](#)

The current COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021 sets the public health requirements to help manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission. It identifies the controls managers of properties need to use to minimise the risk to their staff, guests and contractors. To access the information on the traffic light system for your region, see [COVID-19 Protection Framework \(traffic lights\) | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

Employers need to make sure workers (including volunteers, cleaning staff and other contractors) have access to the right information about keeping themselves well and maintaining good work and hygiene practices. WorkSafe recommends all organisations develop a COVID-19 safety plan to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission (a template is available on its website): [Operating safely – what you need to think about | WorkSafe](#)

COVID-19 cases in a temporary accommodation

If a case or a household contact of the case is identified at a property, the manager can expect the following steps to occur:

1. If a person tests positive for COVID-19, that person will be notified of the result by text message from the official 2328 number. This text will include a link to a data free online form that will need to be filled out. This form will provide information to the health team about any health needs they may have, such as if you are pregnant or have diabetes.
2. The message from 2328 will provide them with links to information on self-isolation, how to tell others you have COVID-19, how to look after themselves and what support is available to them.
3. The link also requests information that will support contact tracing by asking them to self-identify household contacts online and to identify high risk exposure events.
4. If the person cannot isolate safely at their residence, then they will need to contact the Care Coordination Hub to request for temporary accommodation via the on-line self-service tool.

The property managers should follow the following recommendations:

It is important the manager does not name or share the details of the case at the property with other guests. This is confidential information.

5. Keep a record of the staff, guests and contractors associated with the property using the checklist provided in *Appendix 1* of this guidance.
6. The manager may alert all staff and guests to the fact that COVID-19 has been identified at the property. This is due to the potential exposure of the staff and guests to the virus, as they may be at risk of getting COVID-19.

Welfare assistance

7. In some circumstances, welfare support (such as the supply of food and other essentials) can be provided to guests at the property e.g., if people are being asked to isolate due to being household contacts of someone with COVID-19. For more information, go to [care-in-the-community-support-if-you-get-COVID-19.pdf \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#).
8. If someone is isolating and needs welfare support, they can call the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on the COVID-19 Welfare Phone Line on 0800 512 337.
9. More information about welfare support available through MSD can be found here: <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/help-while-self-isolating.html>

COVID-19 information for staff, guests and contractors associated with the property

Omicron response moving into new phase

As the number of Omicron cases rises, the Ministry is adjusting its response to slow the spread of the virus and keep our health services and communities protected. The Omicron response is now focusing on reducing transmission of the disease so communities and workplaces can continue to function.

1. For information on the Omicron Response Plan and how cases and household contacts will be notified from Phase 1 to Phase 3 refer to [Omicron in the community: what this means for you | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
2. Find testing sites closest to you here: [Healthpoint • Find up-to-date information about providers, referral expectations, services offered and common treatments](#)
3. Guidance for people who have tested positive for COVID-19 (cases) - [Guidance for people who have tested positive for COVID-19 \(cases\) \(health.govt.nz\)](#)
4. COVID-19: Mental health and wellbeing resources [COVID-19: Mental health and wellbeing resources | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
5. Guidance for people who test positive for COVID-19 while travelling away from home - [If you test positive for COVID-19 while travelling away from home | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
6. COVID-19: Resources and tools -[COVID-19: Resources and tools | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
7. Food Support -[COVID-19 - Where to go for services and support - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](#)
8. General welfare support: [COVID-19: Welfare and social sector support for family, whānau, and āiga carers - Ministry of Social Development \(msd.govt.nz\)](#)
9. [How to safely clean your home after a COVID-19 diagnosis | Ministry of Health NZ](#)
10. [Find contact and support services](#)
11. [Help and support if you test positive for COVID-19](#)
12. [If you test positive for COVID-19](#)

How to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading at the property

COVID-19 is highly infectious and has the potential to spread quickly within different parts of a property, especially where there are shared facilities.

Reduce the risk at your properties by:

1. Supporting guests, visitors, staff and contractors at the property to get vaccinated. Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and in preventing its spread:
 - a. Putting up signage [Posters | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#) around the property so guests and visitors know how they can protect themselves i.e., getting vaccinated, wearing face coverings, washing and sanitising hands, social distancing, etc.
 - b. Managers can access useful information here: [Get the facts about COVID-19 vaccination | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#).
 - c. Printing off a list of the local vaccination sites in the area, laminating it and putting it in each room and/or shared areas for easy reference. Managers can find the locations at [Book My Vaccine | Ministry of Health NZ \(covid19.health.nz\)](#)
2. Managers of properties will need to ask to see guests' 'Vaccine Passes or proof of a negative COVID-19 test' at check-in. This is so the managers can allocate suitable rooms for those vaccinated and unvaccinated at the property to reduce the spread of COVID-19, should the manager choose to allow those unvaccinated to stay at the property (which is at the discretion of the manager as the accommodation is a private property).

Point to note – Vaccine Pass or proof of a negative COVID-19 test is not required if the property is identified as one that is being used solely for COVID-19 case isolation.

3. Advising staff and contractors on the symptoms to watch for when doing visits or inspections, and the advice to give guests. Common symptoms to look for, which could include one or more from the list below:

[new or worsening cough](#) | [sneezing and runny nose](#) | [fever](#) | [temporary loss of smell or altered sense of taste](#) | [sore throat](#) | [shortness of breath](#) | [diarrhoea](#) | [headache](#) | [muscle pain or body aches](#) | [nausea](#) | [vomiting](#) | [malaise \(a general feeling of discomfort, illness or un-easiness](#) | [chest pain](#) | [abdominal pain](#) | [joint pain](#) | [confusion or irritability](#)

Face Coverings

In general, staff, contractors and guests at the property should:

- a. Wear face coverings such as a disposable or washable mask whenever they leave unit. This will decrease their risk of being infected with COVID-19. Face coverings can protect against the spread of infectious droplets and particles when an infected person speaks, laughs, coughs, sneezes or breathes (read more on [how COVID-19 spreads](#)). The COVID-19 Protection Framework sets out expectations for wearing masks, particularly at orange and red levels of the Framework.
- b. Stay inside the unit of the property if they feel unwell, getting tested for COVID-19 and keeping away from others until they get their test results.
- c. Clean and or sanitise hands often, sneezing and coughing into your elbow, and keeping track of where they've been and who they've been in contact with.

For guidance on using a suitable reusable or disposable mask or face covering see [Types of masks and face coverings](#). For guidance on how to safely wear a mask see [How to use a face mask safely and the Unite Against COVID-19](#) website.

For some people wearing a face covering is unsuitable due to a disability or health condition. See [Face coverings exemption advice](#).

For further guidance on face coverings visit the [Unite Against COVID-19](#) website. Read more about other ways of [Protecting yourself and others from COVID-19](#).

Property's exit and entry points

Physical barriers and dedicated one-way entry and exit pathways can be used to reduce or eliminate exposure of others in the property, including those isolating with COVID-19.

Foyer and waiting areas

Social distancing of at least 1 metre should be encouraged for entry foyers and waiting areas, and consider removing seats from lobbies or waiting areas to discourage people from congregating there.

Lifts and stairwells

Guests should be encouraged to maintain a minimum of 1 metre physical distance from others while waiting for a lift, and to limit the use of the lift to one person at a time. Guests from the same bubble may use the lift or

stairwells together at the same time. Consider using floor markings at lift entrances to prompt users to maintain physical distancing while waiting for the lift, and encourage one-way flow to avoid bottlenecks occurring near lift entrance points.

General waste areas

Rubbish disposal

A case must follow the following:

- a. A case must not leave their room or unit to dispose of rubbish.
- b. Rubbish collection and disposal can be conducted by the property manager or staff.
- c. The case will need to double bag their rubbish and place it outside their door when there is no one present.
- d. Only when they are back inside with the door closed should someone collect it and take it directly to the property's shared waste disposal area.
- e. The person collecting the rubbish should wear single use gloves and a mask when removing the rubbish and thoroughly wash and dry their hands afterwards.
- f. The same process may be followed for laundry collection.

Gardens and courtyards

- a. Communal gardens and courtyards within or associate to the property can remain open as a place for guests to exercise and get fresh air. All those using these areas must maintain social distancing of 1 metre and use face coverings. *These areas are not accessible at any time by a case.*

Shared Facilities (i.e., kitchen, toilet, bathroom, laundry)

- a. Managers will need to consider how they manage shared facilities at their properties. Increase the ventilation in these areas by opening windows or leaving doors open (where safe to do so).
- b. Reducing the number of people using the facilities at any one time and ensuring face coverings are used by those using the shared facilities will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- c. Guests should be encouraged to maintain a minimum of 1 metre physical distancing from anyone outside their bubble.
- d. The property should have a site safety plan which will aid both the manager and the case/s isolating in how best to use these shared facilities safely i.e., managers setting aside dedicated facilities that are for

the use of cases and household contacts only at the property or taking food and other supplies to the case/s room or unit.

Other common areas

- a. Where common areas such as gyms, indoor pools or saunas are kept open, guests' safety can be supported by clearly signposting capacity limits and requiring guests to scan in using the NZ COVID Tracer app <https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/nz-covid-tracer-app>
- b. The requirements of the *COVID-19 Protection Framework must be adhered to* - [COVID-19 Protection Framework \(traffic lights\) | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)
- c. Regularly cleaning frequently touched surfaces - such as intercoms and lift buttons, hand railings and common area door handles - with disinfectant can reduce the spread of germs between guests.
- d. Closure of facilities may need to be considered if capacity numbers are not able to be managed, or adequate cleaning between use is not possible.

These areas must not be accessed at any time by a case.

Cleaning and Maintenance

Cleaning

Deep cleaning of the property is required only when a case has been isolating, or the manager is aware of a case frequenting the communal spaces within of the property. The Public Health Service will advise the manager if deep cleaning of the property is required.

Effective cleaning and decontamination procedures are necessary to ensure removal of pathogens from the environment. There should be processes in place to ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly. Cleaning chemicals should be effective against COVID-19.

For further information refer to: [COVID-19: General cleaning and disinfection advice | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Maintenance

The manager of the property will need to ensure tradespeople wear the appropriate PPE, scan using the NZ COVID-Tracer app <https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/nz-covid-tracer-app> and maintain good hygiene [COVID-19: General cleaning and disinfection advice | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

In a unit of a case isolating, only emergency work is to be carried out. Use of PPE by tradespeople is mandatory when carrying out the work in the unit of a case isolating. The case isolating in the unit must use a face covering and maintain their physical distance from the tradesperson whilst they are in the unit.

Ventilation

If a case is isolating in their room or unit, ventilation is important as this will prevent the build-up of the virus in the air by exchanging stale inside air for fresh outside air.

In accordance with the guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/heating-ventilation-air-conditioning-systems-covid-19>), in an average sized unit or room, opening a window for 15 minutes will be sufficient to ventilate the unit and introduce fresh, outside air and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Leaving windows open will provide continuous ventilation. If it is not possible to leave windows open in the unit over a period, it may require to be ventilated two or three times a day depending on the size of the unit and the level of occupancy.

1. Making sure staff and contractors know how to keep themselves safe. This includes:
 - a. Getting vaccinated.
 - b. Wearing a face covering when outside of the room or unit of the property.
 - c. Physically distancing during their interactions with other staff, contractors and guests
 - d. Engaging with guests outdoors whenever possible.
 - e. Thorough handwashing (or use of hand sanitiser where soap and water is unavailable).

Emergencies

In an emergency, normal emergency evacuation protocols should be followed. All guests, staff and contractors should be wearing a face mask if they need to evacuate the property. Consider keeping a supply of face masks near the property's emergency assembly point in case guests have not been able to evacuate with their own.

Further Information

1. [COVID-19: About the Omicron variant | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

2. [Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)
3. [Ministry of Health NZ](https://www.health.govt.nz)
4. [Tenancy Services](https://www.tenancy.govt.nz)
5. [COVID-19: Information for the housing and urban sectors | Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development \(hud.govt.nz\)](https://www.hud.govt.nz)
6. [Home | WorkSafe](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)
7. [COVID-19 - Work and Income](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)
8. [Protecting yourself and others from COVID-19.](https://www.health.govt.nz)
9. Healthline: **0800 358 5453** (a 24/7 service with interpreters available).

Appendix 1 – Checklist to prepare for a COVID-19 case

Information to prepare	Answers
Total number of guests (short-term & long-term) and staff at your property?	
Do you have the contact details for guests and staff in a form that you could pass on to Public Health Service if needed? (date of birth is helpful)	
Do you have up-to-date contact details for visitors regularly at your properties, such as volunteers, support people, agency staff, contractors?	
Do you know the vaccination status of staff and contractors?	
Do you have QR codes in place for staff, contractors, resident's visitors etc. to scan in?	
How are you currently recording visits to your property?	
Do guests socialise together?	
Or do they keep to themselves?	
How many units are self-contained?	
Are there shared or communal facilities? E.g., kitchens, bathrooms, TV rooms	
How many floors does the block have?	
How many blocks are there? (Is it a single block or is it a large site with multiple blocks?)	
Do you have Infection, Prevention and Control measures ready to scale up in the event of a COVID-19 case onsite? <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning products <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning processes Personal Protection Equipment (PPE): <input type="checkbox"/> Masks <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitiser <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Wipes	
Do you have adequate supplies of PPE?	

Appendix 2 – Frequently Asked Questions

1. All or some of our guests are already fully vaccinated. Do they still need to follow your advice?

Yes. The vaccine is a good protective measure, but no vaccine is 100% effective. Vaccinated people may still get ill or pass the virus to others even if they don't have symptoms. It's important all your guests follow the Public Health advice we give them.

2. What welfare support will be available for guests who need to isolate?

Health agencies and other providers will make sure those isolating are safe and have groceries and other essential items they need. In some circumstances, welfare support will be provided to guests at your facility e.g., if people are being asked to isolate due to being household contacts of someone with COVID-19.

3. Are any of our guests likely to be at higher risk of illness?

Some people, such as the unvaccinated, pregnant women or those with weakened immune systems, may be at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. If people are concerned, they should seek the advice of their health professional or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453. People experiencing symptoms such as difficulty breathing should **DIAL 111 IMMEDIATELY** for an ambulance.

4. Do we have to stop people with COVID-19 or household contacts from leaving the property?

You do not need to stop people from leaving the property. If you have concerns about people leaving the property, you can call 0800 687 647.

5. Do we need to undertake a deep clean of the property?

You are not required to do any additional cleaning beyond the usual requirements outlined on the Ministry of Health Website - [How to safely clean your home after a COVID-19 diagnosis | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

6. What if there are more cases at the property?

The Care Coordination Hub may complete additional risk assessments and advise you on further action required. There is a possibility of continuing infection, especially if there are shared facilities or continued mixing of guests.

7. Where can we find more COVID-19 information and resources?

Call Healthline on 0800 358 5453 - a 24/7 service with interpreters available. Or visit: www.covid19.govt.nz

8. If a member of staff is a contact and has been advised to get tested, how long do test results take, and can they keep working while they wait for the result?

All results are now being sent by text. RAT results take 20 minutes. Some workers who meet the critical worked exemption scheme may be able to continue working if they are asymptomatic and have a negative RAT.

9. What happens if a resident is confirmed with COVID-19 and needs to be transferred to a managed isolation facility (MIQ)?

The care coordination hub will liaise with you about this process, and will prioritise pick-up for people in residential facilities who can't isolate safely and place them in alternative accommodation. This won't always be MIQ.

10. What happens if a resident is confirmed with COVID-19, but the accommodation is not suitable for someone to isolate in?

Same answer as question 9.

11. Who should we contact if we have questions or concerns?

- a. For queries relating to Transitional or Emergency Housing properties, please contact the government agency you are contracted to.
- b. For other queries about people with COVID-19 or household contacts at the property, speak with the Public Health Service that advised you of the case or select from the options in the 'Further information' section of this guide.
- c. For information on what the COVID-19 restrictions mean for landlords and tenants please refer to the Tenancy Services website. This information is updated regularly as the COVID-19 Public Health Response Order changes. [COVID-19 information for landlords and tenants » Tenancy Services](#)