

Alert system overview

New Zealand's 4-level Alert System lists the measures to be taken against COVID-19 at each level.

Next announcement of the Alert Levels

The Government reviewed Auckland's Alert Level on Monday 5 October. It decided to move Auckland down to Alert Level 1 at 11:59pm on Wednesday 7 October.

There are no more announcements planned for New Zealand's Alert Levels.

COVID-19 timeline
21 March 2020
23 March 2020
25 March 2020
23 April 2020
14 May 2020
9 June 2020
11 August 2020
31 August 2020
21 September 2020
7 October 2020

COVID-19 Alert System

The Alert System was introduced in March 2020 to manage and minimise the risk of COVID-19 in New Zealand. The system helps people understand the current level of risk and the restrictions that legally must be followed.

The measures may be updated on the basis of:

- new scientific knowledge about COVID-19, and
- information about the effectiveness of intervention measures in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The Alert Levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.

[Summary table of the COVID-19 Alert Levels — updated 28 August 2020 \[PDF, 1.4 MB\]](#)

[Detailed table of the COVID-19 Alert Levels — updated 28 August 2020 \[PDF, 1.6 MB\]](#)

What all Alert Levels have in common

At all levels, essential services including health services, emergency services, utilities and goods transport will remain up and running. Employers in those sectors legally must continue to meet their health and safety obligations.

At all levels, if there is another emergency, follow normal emergency procedures. Emergency evacuation orders will override COVID-19 Alert System requirements to stay at home.

Dates when different Alert Levels came into force

- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 came into force on Saturday 21 March 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 3 came into force at 1:30pm Monday 23 March 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 4 came into force at 11:59pm Wednesday 25 March 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 3 came into force at 11:59pm Monday 27 April 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 came into force at 11:59pm Wednesday 13 May 2020.

COVID-19 Alert Level 1 came into force at 11:59pm Monday 8 June 2020.

COVID-19 Alert Level 3 came into force for Auckland region at 12 noon Wednesday 12 August 2020.

COVID-19 Alert Level 2 came into force for all regions except Auckland at 12 noon Wednesday 12 August 2020.

- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 came into force for all regions except Auckland at 12 noon Wednesday 12 August 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 (with extra restrictions) came into force for Auckland region at 11:59pm Sunday 30 August 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 1 came into force for all regions except Auckland at 11:59pm Monday 21 September 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 2 (with no extra restrictions) came into force for Auckland region at 11:59pm Wednesday 23 September 2020.
- COVID-19 Alert Level 1 came into force for Auckland region at 11:59pm Wednesday 7 October 2020.

State of National Emergency

A State of National Emergency was declared due to COVID-19. It was in force between 12:21pm on 25 March 2020 and 12:21pm on Wednesday 13 May 2020.

It covered all of New Zealand including the Chatham Islands, Stewart Island and other offshore islands.

The declaration was made by the Minister of Civil Defence Hon Peeni Henare in consultation with the Prime Minister Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern following advice from the Director of CDEM.

Extensions to state of emergency

Under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, a state of emergency expires 7 days after it's declared unless it is terminated or extended.

The State of National Emergency was extended at:

- 9:27am on 31 March 2020
- 9:25am on 2 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 8 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 15 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 22 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 29 April 2020
- 12:21pm on 5 May 2020.

Alert Level 4 – Lockdown

Likely the disease is not contained.

Risk assessment

- Sustained and intensive community transmission is occurring.
- Widespread outbreaks.

Range of measures that can be applied locally or nationally

- People instructed to stay at home in their bubble other than for essential personal movement.
- Safe recreational activity is allowed in local area.
- Travel is severely limited.
- All gatherings cancelled and all public venues closed.
- Businesses closed except for essential services. For example, supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics, petrol stations and lifeline utilities.
- Educational facilities closed.
- Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities possible.
- Reprioritisation of healthcare services.

Alert Level 3 – Restrict

High risk the disease is not contained.

Risk assessment

- Multiple cases of community transmission occurring.
- Multiple active clusters in multiple regions.

Range of measures that can be applied locally or nationally

- People instructed to stay home in their bubble other than for essential personal movement — including to go to work, school if they have to, or for local recreation.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres outside home, or 1 metre in controlled environments like schools and workplaces.
- People must stay within their immediate household bubble, but can expand this to connect with close family/whānau, or bring in caregivers, or support isolated people. This extended bubble should remain exclusive.
- Schools (years 1 to 10) and Early Childhood Education centres can safely open, but will have limited capacity. Children should learn at home if possible.
- People must work from home unless that is not possible.
- Businesses cannot offer services that involve close personal contact, unless it is a supermarket, pharmacy, petrol station or hardware store providing goods to trade customers, or it is an emergency or critical situation.
- Other businesses can open premises, but cannot physically interact with customers.
- Low risk local recreation activities are allowed.
- Public venues are closed. For example, libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, playgrounds, markets.
- Gatherings of up to 10 people are allowed but only for wedding services, funerals and tangihanga. Physical distancing and public health measures legally must be maintained.
- Healthcare services use virtual, non-contact consultations where possible.
- Inter-regional travel is highly limited. For example, for critical workers, with limited exemptions for others.
- People at high risk of severe illness, such as older people and those with existing medical conditions, are encouraged to stay at home where possible, and take additional precautions when leaving home. They may choose to work.

[Detailed information about Alert Level 3](#)

Alert Level 2 — Reduce

The disease is contained, but the risk of community transmission remains.

Risk assessment

- Limited community transmission could be occurring.
- Active clusters in more than 1 region.

Range of measures that can be applied locally or nationally

- People can connect with friends and family, and socialise in groups of up to 100, go shopping, or travel domestically, if following public health guidance.
- Keep physical distancing of 2 metres from people you do not know when out in public or in retail stores. Keep 1 metre physical distancing in controlled environments like workplaces, where practicable.
- No more than 100 people at gatherings, including weddings, birthdays and funerals and tangihanga.
- Businesses can open to the public if following public health guidance including physical distancing and record keeping. Alternative ways of working encouraged where possible.
- Hospitality businesses legally must keep groups of customers separated, seated, and served by a single person. Maximum of 100 people at a time.
- Sport and recreation activities are allowed, subject to conditions on gatherings, record keeping, and physical distancing where practical.
- Public venues such as museums, libraries and pools can open if they comply with public health measures and ensure 1 metre physical distancing and record keeping.
- Event facilities, including cinemas, stadiums, concert venues and casinos can have more than 100 people at a time, provided that there are no more than 100 in a defined space, and the groups do not mix.
- Health and disability care services operate as normally as possible.
- It is safe to send your children to schools, early learning services and tertiary education. There will be appropriate measures in place.
- People at higher-risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as those with underlying medical conditions, especially if not well-controlled, and seniors, are encouraged to take additional precautions when leaving home. They may work, if they agree with their employer that they can do so safely.
- Face coverings required on public transport and aircraft, but not inter-island ferries. School buses and children under 12 are exempt along with passengers in taxis or rideshare services and people with disabilities or mental health conditions.

[Detailed information about Alert Level 2](#)

Alert Level 1 — Prepare

The disease is contained in New Zealand.

Risk assessment

- COVID-19 is uncontrolled overseas.
- Sporadic imported cases.
- Isolated local transmission could be occurring in New Zealand.

Range of measures that can be applied locally or nationally

- Border entry measures to minimise risk of importing COVID-19 cases.
- Intensive testing for COVID-19.
- Rapid contact tracing of any positive case.
- Self-isolation and quarantine required.
- Schools and workplaces open, and legally must operate safely.
- No restrictions on personal movement but people are encouraged to maintain a record of where they have been.
- No restrictions on gatherings but organisers encouraged to maintain records to enable contact tracing.
- Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms.
- Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, do not touch your face.
- No restrictions on domestic transport — avoid public transport or travel if sick.
- No restrictions on workplaces or services but they are encouraged to maintain records to enable contact tracing.
- QR codes issued by the NZ Government legally must be displayed in workplaces and on public transport to enable use of the NZ COVID Tracer app for contact tracing.

[Detailed information about Alert Level 1](#)

