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Waihothonu Hut
Image: [Janette Asche](#) | ©

People need to be fully vaccinated to use DOC accommodation

Archived content: This media release was accurate on the date of publication.

Introduction

DOC is introducing a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for all accommodation facilities.

Date: 02 December 2021

“This means from 15 December 2021, eligible people, aged 12 years three months and over, must be fully vaccinated to stay in a DOC hut or campsite,” says Department of Conservation (DOC) Heritage and Visitors Director Steve Taylor.

“We are also consulting this week on a health and safety requirement that all DOC staff, contractors and volunteers must be vaccinated to work in or visit DOC workplaces including Visitor Centres. We will be finalising a vaccination policy for staff in the next fortnight.

“DOC’s accommodation is often remote, off the grid and brings people together from all locations. Vaccination provides a higher level of protection and significantly reduces the risk of infection spreading and people suffering serious illness.

“Our visitor survey data and visitor feedback show a strong public desire for confidence that others sharing DOC accommodation are also vaccinated.

“All DOC campgrounds and huts will only be open to those who are fully vaccinated. When booking, visitors will be required to confirm they and all others in their group are fully vaccinated. Hut wardens and camp hosts are regularly on site and will be checking for vaccination status.

“For more remote huts and smaller campsites that are not bookable, there will be spot checks. Visitors will need to make a judgment on whether they are comfortable with that.

“Where issues arise for higher-risk sites – such as popular unbookable huts and campsites – some facilities may need to be closed at Red or Orange and people should prepare for this possibility when planning a trip.

“We are asking all members of the public to respect the health and safety of others. When requested you must show your COVID-19 vaccine verification. We will be monitoring peoples’ compliance and regularly reviewing our policy. If there are problems with non-compliance, DOC will assess whether facilities need to be closed.

“People who are not fully vaccinated can still use tracks and most DOC toilets but cannot use DOC hut facilities or DOC campgrounds.

“We will be contacting people ahead of their bookings advising them they need to be fully vaccinated otherwise their booking will need to be cancelled.

“Cancellations are easy and DOC will provide a full refund to those who are unwell, subject to travel restrictions, concerned about COVID risks or who are not fully vaccinated.

“DOC staff will be undertaking health and safety spot checks for confirmation of vaccination status. Where practical, we will be turning those without a COVID-19 vaccine verification away and where appropriate, taking safety measures to isolate them from other hut and campsite users.

“These health and safety measures are being implemented to help keep visitors and staff safe and ensure New Zealanders can have a fantastic summer enjoying nature,” says Mr Taylor.

Contact

For media enquiries contact:

Email: media@doc.govt.nz

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