

Guidance for COVID-19 safe practice protocols on farms

As at 31 March 2020

The following information has been developed to provide guidance on how to meet COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL essential business safe protocols.

It addresses the key points on the Essential Services Safe Practice form. Practicing these protocols will help to keep you, your staff and your families safe, and support New Zealand's efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19.

This information will not cover all situations on all farms, so please consider how best you can adapt these guidelines to farm 'safely' at this time.

1. Ensuring that workers and others at work are observing social distancing while travelling to and from work, during work and during rest breaks.

- During work hours, farm operations will be designed to ensure staff adhere to distancing rules. All staff will be obliged to record how they maintain distancing rules outside of work hours (See Employee Memorandum of Understanding Template).
- All staff are required to report to the owner/manager at the start of their shift. This may be by telephone, text etc.
- There is a daily discussion with each staff member to
 - identify what needs to be done
 - identify how these tasks will be conducted while observing social distancing and hygiene requirements.
 - Confirm what if any outside services / contractors are expected to come onto the property and how these will be managed.
- Staff attendance, start and stop times will be recorded should this be required for case tracking.
- No socialising or congregating by employees. When clocking out, move quickly offsite or into their separate accommodation area.
- Rest breaks are staggered (to reduce number of workers in any one place), and workers are encouraged to take breaks outside, while observing distancing rules wherever they are. For large operators, separate areas or tables will need to be designated for separate teams.
- Smoko room table/chair surfaces are cleaned before and after each break. Cleaning times must be documented and audited.



2. Personal hygiene steps to reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work.

General measures

Farm owner or manager to be responsible for COVID-19 spread prevention.

- Records kept for each person working on the farm, including living arrangements.
- There is a daily conversation with each staff member to check that they have not met anyone outside of working hours that they shouldn't have.
- Where workers share accommodation, shared transport may be appropriate, so long as those workers do not come into contact with anyone else.

Specific measures

Management will continue to reinforce the importance of safe practice compliance, and note that ignoring safe practice rules may result in disciplinary procedures.

- Each day should begin with an outdoor briefing emphasising:
 - The critical importance of personal hygiene (2m-rule; cover cough/sneezes; frequent handwashing and equipment sanitising; not touching your mouth, nose or eyes).
 - The critical importance of safe workplace practices in protecting worker and community health.
 - That “essential business” operation is a privilege, and can be removed.
 - That any non-compliance will be treated seriously. Staff in breach may be suspended and sent home immediately to self-isolate.
- We regularly disinfect all surfaces in commonly used areas (smoko rooms/tables /benchtops /toilet/ door handles/ screens).
- Where fire safety rules allow, internal doors will be wedged open to minimise touching in common areas.
- Any meals provided to staff will be prepared and served under MoH guidelines.
 - Effective cleaning protocols are in place for cutlery and crockery
 - Microwavable, sealed prepared meals may be used if available
- Meetings will be conducted digitally where possible.
 - Group meetings will be pre-arranged teams and where possible, conducted outside under cover and number of attendees are kept small.
- Workers are provided with spray bottles containing sanitiser solution and/or soap and water and must use them regularly.
- Sharing of tools is avoided wherever possible; where not possible shared tools are required to be sanitised between use, using a sanitiser spray, methylated spirits, anti-viral wipes, a fresh 0.5% hydrogen peroxide/water solution, or a bleach solution.
- Equipment, and machinery (e.g. bins; trays; vehicle cabs, steering wheels and door handles) are regularly disinfected (frequency depends on use rate, but always when a different worker uses it) using a sanitizer spray, methylated spirits, anti-viral wipes or a bleach solution.
- Vehicles used by more than one driver will be sanitised between drivers.



3. Personal protective equipment could you introduce that would reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work.

- Ensure workers have their own protective gear for relevant tasks and do not share.

4. Limiting access to your farm business / property.

- Non-essential staff and visitors are forbidden from entering the site (signage on all entrances) without express permission of the designated COVID-19 manager.
- A register is kept of all visitors, including their name; date and time of entry and exit.
- Permission only given if the presence of the person on site is considered essential, and a health questionnaire has been completed for that person.
- Where possible, the timing of visit must be arranged to occur at a time of least risk of exposure to others.
- If any unauthorised person enters the property, staff will keep their distance and immediately call the owner/manager or police (if necessary) to get them to leave.

5. Isolating staff, or parts of your farm / property, so that virus spread would be contained should it occur.

- Non-essential personnel have been required to stay home.
- Staff use separate vehicles where possible, have breaks and lunch at different times from other staff, and in different places.
- Equipment is assigned to be used by specific staff only and all surfaces sanitised between staff usage.
- Where possible team allocations take into account any shared living arrangements. Preferably, shared accommodation arrangements should match team isolation and eliminate staff from different shifts/teams living together.

6. Procedures for staff to report any illness and remove themselves from work.

- All workers have been advised that if they feel at all unwell, they should stay home and report to the owner/manager by phone to a specified number.
- Workers are encouraged to pay careful attention to their wellbeing and that of their work colleagues; any worker member feeling unwell while at work must leave the site immediately and inform the owner/manager by phone.
 - The owner/ manager is responsible for follow-up and ensuring that ongoing support is being provided to the worker.

7. Procedures for staff to report any suspected exposure to COVID-19.

Any staff member who suspects they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should:

- Stay home



- Or if at work, leave immediately
- And, immediately report to the owner/manager by phone to a specified number
- And contact Healthline 0800 611 116.

8. If a staff member is suspected of or confirmed as having COVID-19.

- See responses to Q6 and Q7.
- Notify all staff who have been in contact with that worker and advise them to self-isolate for 14 days (or until suspected worker has been tested and cleared).

9. Identification and isolation of staff at particular risk of COVID-19.

- Workers over 70 required to stay home.
- Workers required to disclose any underlying health conditions that make them higher risk and asked to stay home (confidentiality maintained).
- Workers living with vulnerable relatives/family may also need to stay home.

10. Ensuring that your workers observe 'stay at home' rules at the conclusion of each working day?

- Signed Employer/employee MoU.
- Check at the start of each shift that team members all obeyed the rules.

