



Protocol to Manage Risk of COVID-19 for Continuation of Meat Processing – Alert Level 3

Version 3 - 24/04

Essential Service

The Government has put in place strict controls on movements to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The key element of the Alert Level 3 is to control movement of people to limit potential spread and ensure rapid tracing and control of the disease. Depending on the spread of Covid-19, the Alert Level may change; either increasing to 4 where stricter controls are required or dropping to Level 2 or 1, where restrictions are eased.

The basic features of Alert Level 3 workplace controls are:

- Staying at home if unwell
- Keeping at least 1-metre between workers
- Recording who is working together
- Forming fixed teams or “bubbles” and limiting interaction between them
- Disinfecting surfaces
- Maintaining high hygiene standards
- Using PPE (clothing, masks, gloves) as an optional measure appropriate to the circumstances

This protocol is consistent with MPI and WHO guidance (noting that WHO advice has primarily been developed for health care settings):

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/coronavirus/safe-work-practices-for-businesses-and-workers/safe-work-practices-during-alert-level-3/>

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/covid-19-and-food-safety-guidance-for-food-businesses>

Meat processing companies must register with MPI who will asking questions in order to be satisfied that the necessary steps have been taken. Registration will be done online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COVID19Registration>

All sites should have in place a registered Covid-19 safety plan.

Sites not meeting safety plan requirements will receive a formal notification, and if not rectified, MPI can ask the relevant health authorities to enforce appropriate action, including having the site closed. Each company should perform internal verification and confirm to MPI that they are adhering to following the protocol.

While a purpose of this protocol is to provide a measure of certainty and consistency for meat processors and associated services, the Covid-19 response is highly challenging and policies and procedures are developed in a highly uncertain environment. MIA members are asked to feedback to MIA how this protocol is working in practice, so the protocol can be reviewed and updated as may be necessary.

Transition from Alert Level 4

Most requirements under the Alert Level 3 Protocol are unchanged. The major change is a reduction in the physical distancing from 2 metres to 1 metre. This is in accordance with MPI

updated guidance and is in place across all primary industries. However, efforts should continue to be made to maximise physical distancing between workers. Any changes should be done in a way which facilitates worker compliance. Companies should engage with workers on any changes.

Who the protocol applies to

- Truck drivers (livestock trucks and trucks carrying saleable product) coming onto plant
- Processing staff (including livestock yards, slaughter floor, boning room, coldstores, rendering, hides and skins, and load-out)
- Laboratory staff
- Essential maintenance staff (engineers, services, cleaners, etc)
- Verification and meat inspection staff.
- 3rd party support (laundry, packaging suppliers, refrigeration contractors, chemical suppliers, KiwiRail etc.)

Office staff and other personnel should work at home as much as possible.

Processors must ensure returning workers in all cases are not subject to victimisation under any circumstance.

Recording of workers and establishment of teams

Workers on site, contact details, and which team (or “bubble”) they are working in is to be recorded on a daily basis at check in of workers.

Form teams or bubbles to enhance operating functionality and business continuity.	Workplace teams or bubbles are formed to better maintain business functionality in the case of a team member found to be infected or a team member who has had close contact with an infected person (https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-workplaces); only that bubble needs to be removed from the workplace
Teams must be segregated from each other	Different work teams or bubbles must be kept segregated and must not be mixed or mingle.
Monitoring	Observance of bubble rules through physical distancing and other mechanisms should be monitored by supervisory staff

Limit access to non-essential personnel

Sites must be secured and access to plant is recorded.	Implement access control at all entrance points to control and record people and vehicle movement.
Secure coldstores, storage rooms and warehouses	Ensure coldstores, storage rooms and warehouses are secured and regularly checked.
People coming onto sites (i.e. livestock drivers, contractors, engineering and technical services and transport operators)	Contractors, drivers, etc will also be issued with contractor access policy and told requirements for Covid-19 safety at site they are expected to follow. Livestock transport companies must have procedures for managing the Covid-19 risk when loading livestock at farms.
Processing staff (including livestock yards, slaughter floor, boning room, coldstores, rendering, hides and skins,	Daily access to plant is controlled and to be recorded. Workers returning to work from absence will not be allowed in their place of work without return to work procedure which includes a Health Checklist.

laboratory, engineering and container load-out),	
Verification and meat inspection staff (MPI & AssureQuality)	To complete Health Checklist prior to first time entry, and if anything changes with their contacts or health status they will also be issued with a Contractor Access Policy
Screen for health status	Workers must declare if they have had any Covid-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat), or whether they have been in close contact with a person who is confirmed infected, before entering site If workers have those symptoms or been in contact with an infected person they must stay at home.

Raised awareness of personal hygiene and physical distancing

Processors must maintain general awareness for all workers on the need to:

Wash hands frequently, with soap or sanitiser and for 20 seconds, and dry	Wash hands regularly, especially at the following times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After blowing nose, coughing or sneezing • After visiting a public space, including break rooms and change rooms • When entering and leaving work areas • After touching surfaces used by others • After using the toilet • Before and after eating • After handling rubbish • After donning and doffing PPE • When hands are visibly dirty. Increase monitoring of handwashing and personal hygiene in processing departments and record on process controls.
Avoid touching face	Stress importance of avoiding touching face (eyes, nose and/or mouth) unless hands have just been washed
Sneezing or coughing	Cover face with tissue or use crook of elbow. Anyone coughing or sneezing should be assessed and sent home.
Maintain physical distance from others (social distancing) of at least 1 metre in the workplace, and at least 2 metres in public	1 metre is the minimum spacing in workplaces, and 2 metres in public spaces. Distance is measures face-to-face This needs to be adhered to during donning and doffing, rest breaks, meal breaks and use of ablution facilities.
Stay home if feeling sick	Workers must declare if they have had any Covid-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat) before entering site. Stay home if coughing, sneezing, or running a temperature, and contact appropriate manager or Supervisor to notify absence.
Cleaning/disinfection of non-processing high risk areas All high traffic areas in non-processing areas must be regularly cleaned and disinfected.	Use antibacterial sanitisers to wipe or spray clean contact surfaces or high traffic touch points. Clean surfaces such as office amenities, ante/washing rooms, lockers and change rooms in between shift change overs. Clean and disinfect rest break and meal break communal areas after each break.

Cleaning/disinfection of high risk processing areas (see below for guidance/definitions on high and medium risk areas)	Practice as per the Company and Site risk management plan (RMP) per existing MPI requirements.
Cleaning/disinfection of medium risk non-processing areas	Medium risk areas must be spray/wiped down daily - this includes dry stores, exterior of plant pedestrian gates / hand rails, engineering workshop benches (particularly kiosks and contractor spaces) and maintenance tools.

The principles for personal hygiene and physical distancing applies at home as much as work. All workers must adhere to this.

Transport to/from work

Must be:

in a car alone or in car with people from your own household	Wash hands before and after every journey
in approved car pool	Car pool group must be recorded and from same work team in workplace. Sanitizer wipe of high touch areas before and after journey to and from work. Wash hands before and after every journey.
in van / bus	Record of passengers should be made. Passengers must have a 1 metre distance from other passengers or wear appropriate PPE. Sanitizer wipe of high touch areas before and after journey to and from work. Wash hands before and after every journey.

The above applies to travel to and from work and all other travel.

Distancing at work

Physical distancing between workers must be maximised at much as possible. All sites **must** strive for physical distancing in an upright position of at least 1 metre.

All staff must:

Movement on site restricted	Workers to remain at their assigned work station, in assigned amenities and rest break areas. Workers must walk directly between their assigned areas and the entrance/exit to work (e.g. car park). Create walkways to ensure workers are separated as much as possible when moving through work areas.
Establish work teams	Establish work teams. Record people in the teams, and ensure that different teams are not to mingle.

	Contact between different teams must be minimised and there must be no mingling.
Stagger work times to avoid mixing of teams	Stagger work times (rest breaks, lunch, start of shifts) to avoid mixing teams. If possible, use separate ingress and egress zones.
Work in processing operations will be by essential personnel	Only workers essential to processing will be permitted in processing operations (i.e. boners, slaughtermen & labourers). Non-essential workers if required to enter a processing area must be recorded and monitored.
Minimise contact between people at site	Minimise contact with essential visitors using facilities such as pay-wave, internet banking and drop shipments.
Maintain 1 metre or more separation	Workers must keep at least 1 metre from each other. Install barriers or other mechanisms e.g. tape lines on floors, where they assist in ensuring separation of at least 1 metre. Workers can occasionally pass each other within 1 metre but must minimise time and avoid face-to-face contact as much as possible.
Where less than 1 metre separation is unavoidable	Sites must strive to minimise situations where workers may come within 1 metre. Where it is not reasonably practicable to ensure working with at least 1 metre separation site must put in place control measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • masks or full-face visors must be worn; • gloves must be worn; • screens may be used as an addition to masks or visors. The screen between workers must be large enough that the minimum face-to-face distance between workers around the screen is at least 1 metre. The screen must be regularly disinfected.

Avoid large numbers of people in the same place

Time for commencing and ending work, and lunch and rest breaks should be staggered so as to ensure personal contact is limited.	Do not mix different teams of workers in the same space at the same time and ensure sufficient time between breaks to avoid close contact in corridors and areas people have to move through to get to their assigned areas. Stagger shifts and lunch and rest breaks between different processing areas. Lunch and rest areas to be cleaned and disinfected between breaks.
Limit the number of people permitted in smoko / rest break areas	Set up areas to maintain physical distance (i.e. space tables and chairs further apart where able). Temporary break areas (such as marquees) need to be established to ensure compliance.

Sickness leave protocols

<p>Worker has Covid-19 symptoms must stay home and contact doctor or Healthline</p>	<p>If a worker has Covid-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) they must contact doctor or Healthline 0800 358 5453 immediately. The worker must call Return to Work Officer (RTWO), Supervisor or appropriate manager and confirm they have called doctor or Healthline.</p> <p>Worker calls RTWO, Supervisor or appropriate manager and notifies them that they are going to be absent and the reason why i.e. symptoms that they are experiencing.</p>
<p>Worker reports or is observed with Covid-19 symptoms</p>	<p>If worker has Covid-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), send them home immediately (ideally provide them with tissues or mask to cover face).</p> <p>Supervisor to identify other workers in that team and possible work-related “close contacts” (including address and phone numbers) in case public health need to trace (if need be, by speaking to worker by telephone).</p> <p>Worker must immediately advise RTWO or appropriate manager that they have contacted doctor or Healthline, and if a Covid-19 test undertaken and disclose the test result.</p>
<p>Confirmed Covid-19 worker</p>	<p>Any worker with a confirmed case of Covid-19 being notified at work will be subject to a strict risk management regime; worker will be immediately quarantined and subsequently managed by the Public Health Unit (PHU) from Ministry of Health.</p> <p>Worker must immediately advise RTWO or appropriate manager if Covid-19 test undertaken and disclose the test result.</p> <p>Worker is required to present full medical clearance to the RTWO or appropriate manager before they can return to work. Worker is also required to complete a health checklist.</p> <p>Supervisor have ready a list of all workers (including addresses and phone numbers) in the team and all workers who have been “close contacts”.</p> <p>Isolate spaces that the infected worker may have spent significant time in and ensure cleaning and disinfection is undertaken before they are able to be used.</p> <p>Send workers in team home and tell them to self-isolate (stay home, avoid contact).</p> <p>The PHU will notify the site of any requirements.</p>
<p>Sick (all illness) reporting sick and call back to return to work</p>	<p>RTWO or appropriate manager phones worker on first day of absence to complete Ministry of Health (MOH) Covid-19 checklist (link below) by phone and determine process of return to work.</p> <p>If a standard absence (e.g., dental, sporting injury etc.) with NO Covid-19 symptoms experienced (fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat), worker to call RTWO or appropriate manager when fit and ready to return to work.</p>

	<p>All workers returning to work from sick leave must complete a health checklist prior to starting work.</p> <p>If health checklist raises concerns and/or worker is experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat) refer below process. Worker must remain home.</p>
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Identify higher-risk workers (those who are over 70, and/or have compromised immunity (i.e. respiratory illness, immune suppressant medications etc)

Workers over 70	Workers over 70 to be given the option to go home and a choice to utilise long service leave, annual leave or unpaid leave.
Workers with a known history of respiratory illness or compromised immunity	Workers to be given the option to go home or if possible placed on work at reduced contact. They will given the choice to utilise long service leave, annual leave or unpaid leave.
Pregnant Workers	Workers to be given the option to go home or if possible placed on work at reduced contact. They will given the choice to utilise long service leave, annual leave or unpaid leave.

Definitions

Use sanitisers to wipe or spray clean contact surfaces or high traffic touch points in non-processing areas.

- Surface disinfecting wipes e.g. Mediwipes / Azo-wipes / Sanitiser spray or equivalent;
- Sanitiser spray, gel or equivalent e.g. Sanicol
- Any sanitiser with a “Flash off” ingredient that doesn’t leave a residue on the applied surface.

High risk area

High risk areas include:

- Screens between work stations
- Doors / turnstiles
- Canteen table tops / chairs / microwave / toaster/pie warmers, tea/coffee facilities, and fridge doors
- Hand dryers / towel dispensers / vending machines
- Corridors
- Smoking areas
- Offices used by multiple people - desks, keyboards, door handles, window latches, etc
- Lockers
- Laundry / gear collection / Tuck shop benches and exteriors of food cabinets
- Toilet doors
- Hand basins
- Soap dispensers
- Sprayers
- Cutlery
- Hand rails (stairwells)
- Control panels/conssoles, processing tablets, keypads, etc

High risk areas will be spray/wiped down between breaks and shift changes.

Medium risk area

Medium risk areas include:

- Dry stores
- Exterior of plant pedestrian gates / hand rails
- Engineering workshop benches (particularly kiosks and contractor spaces)
- Maintenance tools.

Medium risk areas must be spray/wiped down daily.

Other considerations

- Additional people resource for sanitising
- Chemical availability and cleaning equipment
- PPE
- Regular restocking of tissue / hand sanitiser dispenser stations

Clothes and PPE

- Clothes and other personal gear is to be kept physically separate from other workers' clothes and personal gear.
- Wash hands before collecting and donning PPE.
- Face-masks need to be changed regularly and when wet/damp
- Visors should be full face but do not have to seal at base
- Glasses are not a substitute for masks or visors
- Disposal/cleaning/laundrying of PPE, including overalls, boots, etc, handled normally.
- Workers should be trained on correct use of face mask PPE and frequently reminded of protocols for use; including:
 - how to don and doff correctly which includes washing hands before and after use and ensuring all face masks are fitted correctly.
 - Do not touch the inside surface of face-masks
 - Dispose of masks that are wet, dirty or difficult to breathe through
 - If face-masks are to be reused, they must never be shared with another worker and should be stored correctly between use

Further information on PPE can be found at:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/latest-updates/guidance-for-wearing-protective-equipment/>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-face-mask-and-hygiene-advice>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/ministry-of-health-covid-19-guidance-on-use-of-ppe-27mar20.pdf>

Return To Work Officer (RTWO)

This is a new and temporary position created in some processors to monitor any worker who calls in to work as being absent due to illness. Companies may use equivalent procedures for managing sick leave/absences.

The RTWO who will contact every employee who is off work sick to determine the symptoms of their illness. The RTWO will complete an over the phone screening checklist to determine whether any of the symptoms are Covid-19 related.

The RTWO also monitors by phone those people until they are symptom free and ready to return to work, they will then be advised of the return to work process which is another screening of symptoms and health checklists on site before being allowed to return to their working area.

Site Security

There have been warehouse break-ins. Companies should register the address of their sites/warehouses with the NZ Police so they are aware this is an essential service commercial site and can prioritise call-outs accordingly.

Shipping

NZTE are working with Air NZ, MFAT and others to secure some airfreight support by way of charter flights to key Air NZ destinations. Companies can register their requirements for airfreight at myfreight@nzte.govt.nz

Supplies of various resources

NZTE are building an online place where all the requests for equipment, staff, storage and other resources can be put. People can email marketplace@nzte.govt.nz with their request and NZTE will look to make the necessary introductions.

Supply chain

MFAT have set up a contact point for companies facing issues with the domestic supply chain. You can email MFAT on dom.supplychains@mfat.govt.nz

Food and Beverage Exporters

If there are specific market access/trade issues send them through to MIA and to Covid-19.Trade@mpi.govt.nz

Letter for workers to confirm that they are working in an essential industry

If stopped by the Police on their way to or from work, workers may need proof that they are working in an essential industry. Companies can provide a letter confirming their workers' status as essential services workers, and permitted to travel between their home and work.

Worker In Essential Services

Name _____ ,

Date of birth _____ ,

is employed at _____ .

Their employment assists in the provision of essential for processing services. As part of this, they are required to travel between their home and the processing plant.

Should you need to verify that this person is legitimately required to travel between home and the processing site, please contact any of the people below:

Name	Position	Phone

Ministry of Health Checklist

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/covid-19-triage-checklist-21mar2020.pdf>