

COVID-19

A Public Health guidance document for temporary accommodation providers

Guidance for managers of temporary accommodation on managing
individuals with COVID-19 isolating at their property

Version 1.0

22 December 2021

Foreword

It is important for people with COVID-19 and their close contacts to isolate quickly to prevent the virus spreading. Safe and effective isolation/quarantine is most likely to occur when individual and whānau needs are met, including health, cultural, welfare, and wellbeing needs.

This guidance document 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 (<https://www.arphs.health.nz/>), Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (<https://immunisation.northernregion.health.nz/>) 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,

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Deputy Chief Executive

Sector Support and Infrastructure

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Interpretation

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

1. *Property* – Refers to all temporary accommodation, or more commonly known as temporary housing such as boarding houses, motels, campervan parks, holiday parks, Air B&Bs, 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, kitchen, etc
2. *Temporary Accommodation/Housing* – Refers to all accommodation types that is not someone's primary or permanent place of residence, such as boarding houses, motels, hotels, campervan parks, camping or holiday parks, Air B&B and caravans
3. *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.
4. *Guests* – Refers to all persons occupying a property.
5. *Case* – Refers to a person or individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
6. *Contact* – Refers to a person who has been exposed to a case and is at risk of developing COVID-19 as a result.
7. *Public Health Service/Unit* – Refers to the local Public Health Unit within the local District Health Board who carries out the initial contact and liaises with the COVID-19 case/s.
8. *Isolation/Quarantine* - In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the terms 'isolation', 'self-isolation', and 'quarantine' have not been used consistently between agencies. This may lead to confusion in documents and in public understanding. To avoid further confusion, unless reference to specific legal terminology is required, for example when referring to Medical Officer of Health functions, duties, and powers under the Health Act 1956, the umbrella term 'isolation/quarantine' will be used to refer to any person who is required to isolate or quarantine for a defined period because they have been deemed to pose a public health risk relating to COVID-19.

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About this guidance document

Isolation helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from person to person. This is especially important with the advent of new variants of the virus, such as Delta and Omicron.

This guidance document is to prepare social service agencies, emergency and transitional housing, 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.

This guidance document is based on international guidelines and best current evidence available. Further updates may be made as new evidence emerges and in response to the level of community transmission in New Zealand.

What to do if there is a case or a close contact of a case staying at the property

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: https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2021/0386/latest/LMS607377.html?search=sw_096be8ed81b90940_Emergency+Housing_25_se&p=1

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 Protection Framework \(Traffic Light\) level in effect](#).

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): <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/operating-safely-what-you-need-to-think-about>

Tenancy Services has COVID-19 resources that outline the landlord / tenant relationship (refer to *Appendix One* for guidance) or go to <https://www.tenancy.govt.nz/covid-19-information-for-landlords-and-tenants/>

Routes of transmission

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It is spread through the air both as droplets and aerosols. Settings with poor ventilation such as small, enclosed spaces increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

A case will breathe out small particles that contain live virus and remain airborne for many minutes or hours, depending on the circulation of air in the room. If a case or a close contact of the case is identified at a property, the manager can expect the following steps to occur:

1. Public Health Service will contact the infected person; they will be interviewed, and contact tracing will begin. A decision will be made about where the person will isolate (i.e., MIQ facility or usual place of

- residence, where they currently are or in an alternative location). The ability of the person to isolate safely is considered as part of this assessment. Public Health Service will also make the necessary referrals to the appropriate government entities for support services for the case.
2. A health professional will also carry out an initial health assessment to gather personal health information to ensure that all health needs are provided for when they are in isolation. The person may also be admitted to hospital if they are very sick.
 3. Using the checklist provided in *Appendix 1* of this guidance document, property managers will need to submit a contact list, of staff, guests and contractors associated with the property. This may include name, date of birth, room number (for guests), contact phone number and email address. The manager will have to consider which guests may have been exposed because they use shared facilities at the property.
 4. Once the manager has compiled the contact list of the cases at the property, the manager will need to:
 - a. Email it to the Public Health Service which notified you of the case. A list of the Public Health Service Unit for the region the property is located in can be found at:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units>
 - b. Check where the nearest testing centre to the property is on [here](#):
<https://www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19/>. The Public Health Service working with the manager may provide the manager with a special code that guests/staff/contractors/visitors should give to testing staff when they go for their test. This will help to link results to the property to enable Public Health Service to provide the manager and guests at the property with prompt assistance. In some circumstances, onsite testing and vaccination may also be offered as an option by the Public Health Service.
 - c. Public Health Service will work with the manager to provide specific advice to guests at the property, depending on whether they are at a higher risk of COVID-19.
 5. If *unvaccinated* or *partially vaccinated*, the person with COVID-19 who may already be staying at the property will need to isolate at the property for up to 14 days. Regardless of the length of isolation period, the case will still need to be cleared by the Public Health Service before they are released from isolation.
 6. Anyone living with the person with COVID-19 at the temporary accommodation will be required to get tested and isolate for the same period as the case, **PLUS** an additional ten days after that. *This is required whether the contact is vaccinated or not.*

7. Isolating at home is playing an increasingly important role in supporting the health system to better manage COVID-19 cases in the community. This will reduce the need for transfers to Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ).
8. Regular health checks will be made with the person and others living with them, making sure they are well enough to isolate, are at home and have the essentials they need – such as groceries and medications.
9. Some guests, staff and contractors at the property may be considered contacts and will have to take different actions depending on how they were exposed to the infected person. Public Health Service will advise the manager on the appropriate steps to take.
10. In certain circumstances, the manager may be asked by the Public Health Service to alert all staff and guests to the fact that COVID-19 has been identified at the property. This is due to potential exposure of the staff and guests to virus and may be at risk of getting COVID-19 too. The Public Health Service will guide managers of properties and provide them with the advice they may need to share with their staff, guests and contractors (i.e., being asked to get tested and isolate, or just to get tested and watch for symptoms).
11. Please refer to the Ministry of Health’s [Guidance for Isolating in Apartments](#) for further information on managing physical environments and shared facilities at the property. Responding to cases of COVID-19 can take several weeks when you allow for testing, case and contact isolation and vaccination.

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.

Welfare assistance

In some circumstances, welfare support (such as the supply of food and other essentials) will be provided to guests at the property e.g., if people are being asked to isolate due to being close contacts of someone with COVID-19. For more information, go to <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/posters/care-in-the-community-support-if-you-get-COVID-19.pdf>

Supporting Isolation

For information when it comes to a person isolating with COVID-19 at a property, go to [COVID-19 information for landlords and tenants » Tenancy Services](#)

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 and guests can be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.

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 <https://covid19.govt.nz/languages-and-resources/posters/> 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 brushing up on their vaccine knowledge to help them in having a conversation with guests and visitors. Managers can access useful information here: [Get the facts about COVID-19 vaccination | Unite against COVID-19](#). Support workers are also some of the best people to encourage their guests to get vaccinated.
 - 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 <https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/>
2. Managers of properties will need to ask to see guests' *'Vaccine Passes or proof of a negative COVID test'* at check-in. Those who are unvaccinated and relying on a negative COVID-19 test result should be asked to provide a COVID-19 negative test result every three days to give the manager of the property the assurance that they are not unwell while staying at the property.
3. Advising staff and contractors on the symptoms to watch for when doing visits or inspections, and the advice to give guests. Encourage and support the guests to get tested if they have symptoms or have been at a **Location of Interest**. 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:

1. Wear face covering such as a disposable or washable mask whenever they leave the property. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 foyer 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 1 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. Manager will need to consider how they manage shared facilities at their properties. Increasing 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 is used by those using the shared facilities will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- c. Guests encouraged to maintain a minimum of 1-metre physical distancing from anyone outside of 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 is for the use of cases and close 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.
- b. The requirements of the *COVID-19 Protection Framework* must be adhered to - <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/covid-19-protection-framework/>
- 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 manager is aware of a case frequenting the communal spaces within of the property. 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: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice>

Maintenance

The manager of the property will need to ensure tradespeople wear the appropriate PPE, scan using the NZ COVID Tracer app and maintain good hygiene <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-general-cleaning-and-disinfection-advice>

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 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 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>), 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. If the unit starts to smell, then that is an indicator of poor air circulation and will be time to open some windows.

1. Supporting unwell guests staying at the property; to get tested and isolate until they receive a negative test result or are released from isolation by the Public Health Service.
2. 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. Unite Against Covid-19 - <https://covid19.govt.nz>
2. The Ministry of Health - <https://www.health.govt.nz/>
3. Public Health Service - <https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units>
4. Tenancy Services - <https://www.tenancy.govt.nz/>
5. Ministry of Housing and Urban Development - [COVID-19: Information for the housing and urban sectors](#)
[| Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development \(hud.govt.nz\)](#)
6. Worksafe - <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz>
7. Work and income - <https://workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/>
8. 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?

There will be regular checks by health agencies and other providers, through phone calls or texts, to make sure those isolating is safe and have the 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 close 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 close 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](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-advice-Cases/how-safely-clean-your-home-after-covid-19-diagnosis) (<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-advice-Cases/how-safely-clean-your-home-after-covid-19-diagnosis>)

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

Public Health Service 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 | www.health.govt.nz/covid-19

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?

If the result is positive, they should hear back in around 48 hours. Negative tests can take a bit longer to return. They should contact their doctor or testing centre if they have not received their result within five days. *Public Health Service* will let the staff member know whether they need to stand down or can keep working, based on the type of contact they had with the confirmed case and their vaccination status.

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

Public Health Service will liaise with you about this process, and will prioritise pick-up for people in residential facilities who can't isolate safely.

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

- a. For queries relating to Transitional or Emergency Housing properties/facilities/property's, please contact the government agency you are contracted to.
- b. For other queries about people with COVID-19 or close 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](#)