

# Construction sector COVID-19 health and safety standards and protocols – key messages

- When we transition back to work as alert levels are lifted, health and safety must be the top priority for all businesses and workers.
- The Prime Minister will announce when the lockdown will be lifted on Monday (20 April).
- Consistent health and safety standards and protocols are essential to both protect workers and stop the spread of COVID-19, and to give people confidence that it is safe to return to work.
- The Construction Sector Accord's COVID-19 Response Plan included the development of a new framework for how to work safely and maintain health on construction sites while COVID-19 is still in the community. The framework includes common standard requirements for the sector working under COVID-19 risk levels and protocols that demonstrate how these standards can be achieved.
- Construction Health and Safety New Zealand (CHASNZ), the sector's peak health and safety body and a member of the Construction Sector Accord, developed the industry standards in collaboration with government agencies, WorkSafe, Construction Sector Accord member groups and client organisations.
- The standards lay out the key principles and requirements for healthy and safe construction-related operations under COVID-19 Alert Levels 2 and above.
- Supporting the standards are a set of protocols that guide the industry in how to implement these requirements.
- The development of the protocols has been led by SiteSafe, Civil Contractors New Zealand, Vertical Construction Leaders Group, and other leaders from the residential sector. These organisations have collaborated with field experts from within industry to develop healthy and safe protocols for all who work in and around the construction sector while under COVID-19 alert levels.
- There are two sets of protocols – one for the residential sector, and another for the civil and vertical sectors. These are available on the CHASNZ and Construction Sector Accord websites.
- The protocols include guidance for businesses on creating a COVID-19 control plan including physical distancing, hygiene practices, site entry and exit, cleaning, deliveries, and visitor protocols.
- It's very important for contractors, subbies and everyone who is permitted on and around sites to understand and work to these protocols.
- The Construction Accord welcomes the standards and protocols and has endorsed their use to guide the sector in good health and safety practice. The Council of Trade Unions and the E Tū union have also endorsed the standards.
- While the standards are not a legal requirement for work sites, they do represent current best practice, and the expectation is all construction sector businesses and workers will apply them, and do the right thing. The sooner we can stamp out COVID-19 in New Zealand, the sooner our businesses can thrive again. A return to Alert Level 4 will have even more serious consequences for our businesses, jobs and economy.
- The industry standard provides businesses with clear guidelines to follow to ensure they are taking 'reasonable and practicable' steps to protect the health and safety of workers under the Health and Safety Act.
- All businesses are encouraged to take a zero-tolerance approach to breaches of their controls plan.
- Civil, vertical and large residential clients have a significant role to play in ensuring their principal contractors meet the standards and follow the protocols.
- The protocols are a 'living document' and will be updated as best practice develops and we receive further industry feedback.