

Guidelines for the Hospitality and Accommodation Services during COVID19 Level 3 restrictions

MBIE and other Accommodation Industry Associations included BBANZ have created the following guidelines on the compliance for all accommodation providers whilst in COVID-19 Level 3.

The Level 3 status means:

- People are still instructed to stay home unless for essential personal movement. Essential personal movement is for activities such as accessing local services and businesses, recreation or work and school.
- Staying in extended bubbles of not more than two households.
- Workplaces must operate safely – keeping one metre between workers, recording who is working together, limiting interaction between groups of workers, disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining high hygiene standards.

Further details are available at: <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/alert-level-3>

Alert Level 3 carries forward many of the restrictions in place at Level 4, but permits aspects of the economy to reopen in a safe way that will allow the economic recovery to begin.

At Alert Level 3, everyone must still work from home unless that is not possible. Workplaces can be reopened if the work cannot be done from home, for example forest harvesting, wood processing and construction, and the workplace can operate consistently with public health guidance. However, there cannot be contact with the public. For example, retail needs to be by contactless purchase and delivery, including drive-through and click and collect.

Retail storefronts, including hospitality businesses, cannot open to customers (except supermarkets, dairies and petrol stations).

The information below provides guidance to help you navigate these extraordinary times.

Why we're limiting physical interaction:

The reason for moving New Zealand to COVID-19 Alert Level 4 was to take measures to eliminate COVID19 by severely minimising interactions between people. Eradicating the disease is vital to protect people's health and ensure our health system can cope and look after New Zealanders who become sick.

The Government attacked the disease early and hard by going into lockdown to eliminate the disease, so hopefully we can recover as a country and as an economy sooner. The lockdown has helped us to move to Alert Level 3. However, restrictions on activities, including at work places and socially, are required to address a high risk of disease transmission within New Zealand.

Your responsibilities as an essential service:

If you are providing essential goods and services, you must:

1. minimise, or eliminate if possible, physical interactions amongst staff and with and between customers,
2. ensure appropriate health, hygiene and safety measures are in place,
3. restrict activity to only what is essential during the Alert Level 3 period.

It is for a business to decide how to best do this. We would expect practices to include the likes of:

- a) Working from home as far as possible.
- b) Limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction between staff e.g. through physical distancing, split shifts, staggered meal breaks, and flexible working arrangements.
- c) Limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction with and between customers e.g. through online or phone orders, contactless delivery, or managed entry (while also avoiding crowding outside) and physical distancing both inside and outside the premises.
- d) Hygiene basics of hand washing and sanitisers.
- e) Frequent cleaning of premises, especially counters and eftpos terminals, and other high-touch surfaces (cleaning advice is available on the Ministry of Health website).
- f) Protective equipment for staff as appropriate.

Physical distancing needs to be maintained even if you are an essential service

If you are considered an essential service, you need to adhere to the restrictions while providing that service. This means measures such as appropriate hygiene needs to be maintained at all times, as well as appropriate distancing.

For example:

- contactless room delivery of food and beverage for inhouse guests will be required to ensure they leave a good space by leaving the food at the door without interaction
- contactless food and beverage pick-up for external guest should follow the Alert Level 3 – Hospitality Guidelines

In all situations be clear with your customers about your procedures and why they are in place.

Accommodation is an essential business:

Any entity that provides accommodation services for essential workers, isolation/quarantine, and emergency housing is considered an essential business. For clarity, that includes the following types of accommodation for in-house guests (at all times no external guests are allowed access):

- Hotels
- Motels
- Backpackers
- Lodges
- Bed and Breakfast
- Short-term Serviced Apartments
- Hostels
- Hall of Residence
- Holiday Parks and Campgrounds
- AirBnBs – whole house only, no shared rooms
- Self-contained vehicles, such as motorhomes or campervans

Clear communication with your employees is very important:

Accommodation providers should clearly communicate to their employees and contractors that accommodation is an essential business and that they are deemed essential workers. Some may find this unsettling, but you can reassure them by outlining the steps you will take to ensure their safety, as well as that of your guests.

Accommodation Provider Guidance

Physical distancing needs to be maintained.

Physical distancing and minimised communal contact within your accommodation venue needs to be maintained and managed. As an essential service, you can still operate.

- Guest check-in/arrival is a great opportunity to collect and provide key information.
- As per normal, when guests arrive collect the usual information such as guest(s) name and two forms of contact details (eg. mobile phone and email address).
- You may also want to collect additional information that may help things like contact tracing like their passport (if applicable) and details of recent travel.
- You will also need to consider how you will inform your guests about what they can do themselves to respect the restrictions. For example, limit how many go into a lift or not congregate in groups.

Non-essential communal facilities and spaces need to close:

All shared and communal areas that are not providing essential services will need to close. This includes bars, restaurants, dining rooms, gyms, pools, playgrounds, day spas, conference centres. Anywhere where the space is shared must close.

Shared accommodation such as dorms can still operate under strict management:

Shared accommodation, such as dorms in backpackers can still operate as they provide necessary accommodation for many people in New Zealand. In the first instance, operators should book non-dorm rooms (eg. self-contained rooms) and only utilise dorm rooms when absolutely necessary. Where possible, occupancy should be limited to enable sufficient physical distancing (2 metres).

Essential communal facilities can stay open but must comply with restrictions:

Essential communal facilities are communal kitchens, bathrooms and laundries in shared accommodation, such as backpackers, holiday parks or hostels that do not have self-contained facilities and do not offer services such as room service.

These facilities can still be utilised in these types of accommodation to ensure the guests have access to basic necessities. While these can still operate, operators need to create strict procedures will need to be developed to ensure physical distancing and rigorous hygiene practices can be maintained. For example:

- The use of these facilities must be carefully managed and kept to an absolute minimum.
- They are only to be used by named guests that have no alternative.
- Heighten the level of your cleaning protocols.
- Provide all guests that use the shared facilities – bathroom kitchen and dining – with disinfectant spray to wipe down contact areas after use.
- In the case of kitchen, dining and laundry facilities you should allocate times for guests use and the hygiene expectations should be made very clear.

In-house kitchens can continue to operate for room service and contactless delivery or pick-up:

All restaurants and bars must close their premises to both in-house guests and the public.

In-house kitchens continue to service the in-house guests through contactless delivery of food and beverage via room service. This can include both food and beverages.

Please be mindful though that ID needs to be sighted in most cases when serving alcoholic beverages.

Guests must occupy the same room/dorm for the entire COVID-19 Level 3 duration:

To ensure the risk of transmission, please ensure that your guests are assigned to the same room for the entire duration of the COVID-19 Level 3 period.

Housekeeping will need to be limited:

To minimise COVID-19 transmission and risk, rooms will not be able to be serviced as usual.

As long as you following appropriate and safe cleaning measures, you will be able to confirm the best way to provide these services for guests.

Some examples of how to manage this may be to provide your guest with more than enough towels for a few days, notify them that they will need to change their own sheets after a few days, and provide bags or containers to place used linen.

Just be clear upon check in of the requirements and new operating procedures. Most people will understand the need to limit contact.

Clearly communicate the changes to your guests at check-in:

These measures will only have a positive effect if we all follow them. It is vital that you let your guests know of all of the changes and requirements. Think about how you might reinforce this throughout their stay too. Most will want to follow the new rules, but if not, remind them of the reason why we're limiting physical interactions. We all have a part to play, including them.

You may want to create a guest welcome letter that addresses all the changes and requirements during their stay whilst operating under COVID-19 Alert Level 3. Displaying the COVID-19 Alert Level 3 requirements may also be helpful.

You should not enforce the COVID-19 Level 3 restrictions:

If any of your guests are not respecting the Level 3 restrictions, please do not try to intervene yourself. If there are any issues, please report the breach online or call 105 to report.

Not following the restrictions may include things like changing accommodation frequently or congregating in large groups.

Some AirBnBs can still operate:

AirBnBs can still operate, but only those with the option for renting out a whole house. Those offering shared accommodation (such as a room in a house) cannot operate.

Finding alternative accommodation:

Accommodation providers should refer those people who are unable to meet the requirements of self-isolation to the Temporary Accommodation Service on 0508 754 163.