A Risk Management Checklist for Businesses Operating under COVID-19 Alert Level 3

As New Zealand prepares to ease the lockdown, enterprises operating under COVID-19 Alert Level 3 need to work out how to do so safely. The core objective of Level 3 is to:

- enable more enterprises to resume, while
- protecting the health and safety of workers, and
- protecting the wider population from transmission and spread of the virus.

This checklist aims to help enterprises resuming at Level 3 to check if their plans are robust.

☐ 1 **Industry knowledge:** <u>Do I know what my industry is doing?</u>

If your industry association has not published guidance they are almost certain to be preparing it.

☐ 2 **Industry Guidance:** <u>Am I following my industry association guidance?</u>

If your industry association has published guidance on managing COVID-19 risks then that's a great starting point. Think about how your particular situation is different. There might be additional hazards or pathways that you need to consider. Or you might have other opportunities to reduce the risks. Here is some industry guidance:

Level 3: Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum, Construction Health and Safety NZ,
Level 4 Essential Businesses: Aquaculture NZ, Seafood NZ.

☐ 3 **Working Remotely.** <u>Can some of my staff work from home</u>?

People who can work from home are legally required to do so. If office staff can work from home. This may mean providing suitable equipment and new ways of working including more trust in some areas.

☐ 4 **Physical Distancing:** <u>Am I keeping my staff 2m apart?</u>

If you can keep your staff at least 2m apart then you are expected to do so. If not, government guidance is that 1m is acceptable in the workplace, provided that you know who has been in contact with whom for to enable contact tracing. Practically this means working in teams that stick together.

☐ 5 **Consistent Work-groups:** <u>Am I keeping my staff in small and consistent groups?</u>

Minimise the number of contacts of each worker, by keeping the groups consistent and minimising interactions between groups. This also makes your business more resilient as it means that fewer people will need to self-isolate if a worker becomes infected.

☐ 6 **Mingling:** <u>How are we avoiding mingling at arrival/departure and breaks?</u>

Times and places where people normally mingle pose risks of transmission. People can be separated in space or time. Consider expansion of rest areas, and staggering start and knock off times and rest breaks.

☐ 7 **Work Related Travel:** <u>Is our work-related travel safe?</u>

Where travelling together is required as part of work consider providing alternative transport that minimises the need for workers to travel together in close proximity (e.g. pay mileage for some staff to travel in own vehicles to worksite for duration of Alert Level 3).

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☐ 8 **Sanitising:** Do we have adequate sanitation plans?

How frequently are we sanitising high contact surfaces – taps, door handles, tools and equipment? Does every worker have adequate access to hand washing facilities and sanitising? Do we know when and how to properly wash our hands? MoH advice and posters in multiple languages can be found here.

☐ 9 **PPE:** Do workers know how to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

If using COVID-19 PPE ask if there are other ways of doing the job. If not, maybe that task shouldn't be done under Alert Level 3. If PPE is being used as an infection control barrier then it's critical that workers know how to use it properly. Safe use and removal is hard to get right. Guidance from the Ministry of Health can be found here and here. A guide to putting on and removing PPE can be found here.

☐ 10 **Safety Interference:** Are our control measures increasing other forms of safety risk?

Safeguards against COVID-19 infection should not increase the risk of other forms of accident or injury, e.g. by restricting vision. If PPE is required for COVID-19 protection and safety is compromised, then consider other ways of doing the task. If it can't be done safely then it shouldn't be done.

☐ 11 **Monitoring and isolation:** How will we identify and isolate workers where required?

COVID-19 Isolation needs to apply to those who display relevant symptoms, test positive, have been in close contact with someone who tests positive, or have been overseas in the last 14 days. How are workers supported so that they don't come to work when they should be self-isolating?

☐ 12 **Worker Engagement:** How are we engaging and motivating our workers?

Have Health and Safety representatives been involved in our return to work planning? How do you encourage and empower my staff to look out for each other and remain COVID-19 free at work and at home? How can workers discuss COVID-19 safety with management and raise issues and suggestions? How are we monitoring for stress, supporting our teams and celebrating success to build morale?

☐ 13 **Minimise Contact with Outsiders:** Are we minimising contact with outsiders?

Agree pick-up and delivery of goods arrangements in advance, and/or through signage to maintain 2m distance. Excluding contact with members of the public is legally required for non-essential businesses operating under Alert Level 3. Record all persons who have been on site. e.g. through a visitor register.

☐ 14 **Production:** Are our production expectations realistic?

The experience with some essential industries under Level 4 was that throughput at food processing plants was half of pre-COVID controls. How can we set realistic targets and manage people's expectations and frustrations?

☐ 15 **Continuous Improvement:** How will we continuously improve?

Alert Level 3 may be a long haul, lasting many weeks, and possibly months. Expectations will evolve under Alert Level 3 as our medical understanding and medical technology evolves (e.g. antibody tests). Good work practices will also evolve. Continuous horizon scanning is essential. This could be through industry associations or through independent review and advice from risk management professionals.