

## COVID-19 Safe to start Guidance

This COVID-19 Protocol Document has been developed by industry representatives. It is a great example of collaboration and cooperation across the industry and thank you to the many people who contributed. The document covers the extra measures required in all parts of the forestry supply chain from forestry nurseries, land preparation and planting through to harvesting, processing and exports. The protocols meet the Ministry of Health and Ministry for Primary Industry (MPI) requirements to operate at Alert Level 3, and Alert Level 4 if permitted, and has been reviewed by WorkSafe and the Forestry Industry Safety Council (FISC).

The document has been presented to MPI to demonstrate that the forestry sector is well prepared to begin business with COVID-19 safe practises.

There is no room for complacency. The forest industry is very fortunate to be allowed to work at Level 3 and the use of COVID-19 safe practises is of critical importance to the continued success of our industry. If we have further cases or outbreaks of COVID-19 in Level 3 then NZ will very quickly be put back to Level 4. As forestry is not an essential service this will have significant consequences for our sector and those who work in it.

At Level 3 MPI, WorkSafe and Police NZ will all be authorised to visit, and audit registered operating businesses to verify COVID-19 safe practices are being implemented effectively.

Use this document as a guide to develop your own COVID-19 safe practises for your business and workplace in discussion with your workers and your supply chain connections. Document what has been agreed and check in with your people that these measures are working. Be prepared to adapt as needed.

The document reinforces the Ministry of Health existing guidance to keep yourself and others safe:

- Maintain physical distancing; Alert Level 3: Stay 1 metre apart; Alert Level 4: 2 metres apart.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds regularly with soap and dry thoroughly or use sanitiser
- Clean and disinfect common contact surfaces frequently and keep other surfaces clean
- Provide PPE only if appropriate.

Our focus is a safe restart when we move to Alert Level 3. **This is not a return to business as usual.**

In addition to COVID-19 safe practices we must consider other pressures arising from the shut down and our existing critical risks in forestry. These additional pressures, very real concerns relating to financial pressures and future of work, may increase the already significant risks associated with forestry operations and must be effectively managed alongside the COVID-19 infection risks.

This is also the longest break from work that many people will have had. Be aware of your people's mind set, physical fitness and general health and wellbeing when they return to work. Ensure you are aware of any pre-existing health conditions of any workers or of their family / dependents within their existing 'bubble'.

A well planned and phased return to work addressing COVID-19 safe practises, the pressures introduced from the shutdown and our known industry risks is needed to ensure a safe restart of the whole industry.

Under Alert Level 3, businesses over 5 employees are likely to have to register with MPI. While this is yet to be fully clarified these protocols will support any registration process.

Safe to start is where everyone in the forestry sector has to be when we go to Alert Level 3.

If you have any further questions or comments please contact Fiona Ewing, National Safety Director, FISC in the first instance.



**Signed on behalf of the National Industry Group**

**Fiona Ewing, National Safety Director  
Forest Industry Safety Council**

**Supported by:**

