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COVID-19: Employment and work visas

Government guidance and advice for employers and visa holders affected by COVID-19.

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- [Managing health concerns for yourself and your staff \(/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#managing-health-concerns\)](/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#managing-health-concerns)
- [Making changes to employment agreements \(/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#making-changes\)](/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#making-changes)
- [Parental leave changes \(/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#parental-leave-changes\)](/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#parental-leave-changes)
- [Young employees \(/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#young-employees\)](/covid-19/employment-and-work-visas/downloadpdf#young-employees)
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Employers and employees need to work together to slow the spread of COVID-19, protect New Zealand and keep each other safe. This means that normal obligations to keep in regular contact and to act in good faith are more important than ever.

Managing health concerns for yourself and your staff

If you might be sick with COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, you should not go into work at any alert level. Businesses should not allow or ask such employees to work. As an employer, you may be able to access the COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme.

[COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme\(external link\) \(https://workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/leave-support-scheme/index.html\)](https://workandincome.govt.nz/covid-19/leave-support-scheme/index.html) — Work and Income

If you or someone you live with may be at higher risk of severe illness from contracting COVID-19, you should discuss these concerns with your employees. Employees and employers should agree whether such workers can work from home or change their workplace arrangements to minimise the risks.

[Flexible working \(/hiring-and-managing/managing-people-day-to-day/flexible-working-arrangements/\)](/hiring-and-managing/managing-people-day-to-day/flexible-working-arrangements/)

Businesses need to meet their health and safety obligations at all alert levels, including engaging staff and managing risks. If a worker is concerned these are not being met, they can raise it with their health and safety representative, union, or notify WorkSafe.

Making changes to employment agreements

Many people's working arrangements have changed due to the effects of COVID-19. Where there has been agreement to change the working arrangements, an employee's employment agreement must be updated to reflect the changes. These may be things such as a change in operating hours.

In the first instance, you should discuss and agree these changes with your employee. Then follow up your conversation with a new employment agreement or a signed letter of variation.

[Letter of variation \[DOCX, 21 KB\] \(/assets/Uploads/Documents/letter-of-variation-template.docx\)](#)

Having the agreed terms and conditions in writing is a legal requirement, whether the change is temporary or permanent.

[Modifying or terminating employee agreements during COVID-19\(external link\) \(https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/changing-an-employees-work-arrangements/\)](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/changing-an-employees-work-arrangements/) — Employment NZ

[Employee redundancy \(/hiring-and-managing/ending-employment/employee-redundancy/\)](/hiring-and-managing/ending-employment/employee-redundancy/)

Parental leave changes

Temporary changes to parental leave law have been made in response to COVID-19. The law changes will allow some workers on parental leave to temporarily go back to work without losing their entitlements. Visit Employment New Zealand for more information.

[Temporary changes to parental leave law due to COVID-19\(external link\) \(https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/parental-leave-law-change-covid-19\)](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/parental-leave-law-change-covid-19/) — Employment New Zealand

Young employees

If you employ school-aged students, their work hours must return to being outside of school hours only and not between 10pm and 6am. Employment New Zealand has more information about young employees.

[Young employees\(external link\) \(https://www.employment.govt.nz/starting-employment/rights-and-responsibilities/young-employees/\)](https://www.employment.govt.nz/starting-employment/rights-and-responsibilities/young-employees/) — Employment New Zealand

Got questions? Call the COVID-19 business helpline.

North Island 0800 500 362

South Island 0800 505 096

Self-isolating

Employers and employees need to work together as we unite for the recovery, protect New Zealand and keep each other safe.

This means that normal obligations to keep in regular contact and to act in good faith are more important than ever.

Employment New Zealand has specific guidance in response to COVID-19 including how to handle self-isolation and leave.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and the workplace\(external link\) \(https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/?utm_source=business.govt.nz&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=special_cv_edition\)](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/?utm_source=business.govt.nz&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=special_cv_edition) — Employment New Zealand

If you have questions about handling information about an employee that self-isolates or displays possible COVID-19 symptoms, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner has guidance to help.

[Can staff be told an employee might have COVID-19?\(external link\) \(https://privacy.org.nz/further-resources/knowledge-base/view/549\)](https://privacy.org.nz/further-resources/knowledge-base/view/549) — The Office of the Privacy Commissioner

Travel and visas

There is updated criteria for critical workers seeking to enter New Zealand on work visas. There have also been automatic extensions to work visas which had an expiry up to 9 July 2020.

[COVID-19: Key updates\(external link\) \(https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/coronavirus-update-inz-response\)](https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/coronavirus-update-inz-response) — New Zealand Immigration

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[Info on developing a COVID-19 safety plan as well as health & wellbeing.](#)

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COVID-19: Tax

[\(/https://www.ird.govt.nz/covid-19/business-and-organisations\)](https://www.ird.govt.nz/covid-19/business-and-organisations)

[If you're having difficulties meeting your tax obligations due to COVID-19, Inland Revenue has support to help.](#)

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ACC levy invoices delayed to October

[\(/https://www.acc.co.nz/covid-19/businesses/\)](https://www.acc.co.nz/covid-19/businesses/)

[Invoices for the 20/21 financial year usually sent in July are now delayed to October. ACC has more info.](#)

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