



24 March 2022

Tēnā koe

On 18 January 2022, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *The relevant sections of your COVID Safety Plan that deal with the risk of COVID-19 infection by vaccinated staff to; other staff, contractors, suppliers, clients, and members of the public.*
- *MSD and others documents, assessments and reports that you hold that detail and assess the above risks from vaccinated staff.*

For clarity, I will address your points in turn.

- *The relevant sections of your COVID Safety Plan that deal with the risk of COVID19 infection by vaccinated staff to; other staff, contractors, suppliers, clients, and members of the public.*

The Ministry has developed a comprehensive set of protocols for each level and phase of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to guide managers and staff with the implementation of health and safety measures. This ensures we keep staff, clients, contractors, visitors and the public as safe as possible.

The relevant excerpts of the latest version of the protocol document for settings under the COVID-19 Protection Framework (as at 2 March 2022) are made available to you in **Appendix One**, attached.

Please note, the Ministry's advice within this protocol document changes depending upon the evolving situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *MSD and others documents, assessments and reports that you hold that detail and assess the above risks from vaccinated staff.*

As outlined in section 16(1)(e) of the Act, I will provide a summary of the assessments taken by the Ministry of the risks associated with COVID-19 for our staff, contractors, providers, visitors and members of the public.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), the Ministry is required to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers, those workers whose activities are influenced or directed by the Ministry such as providers and contractors, and other persons such as the public or visitors, while they are carrying out work.

As the public health advice and response to the COVID-19 pandemic has changed over time, the Ministry has continually reviewed the Health and Safety risks faced by our people and the controls we have in place to ensure we are doing everything that is reasonably practicable to protect Ministry staff, contractors, visitors and clients.

We have an obligation to eliminate risks so far as is reasonably practicable, and if elimination is not possible, minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The Ministry must also consider how COVID-19 may disrupt our services and how this can be minimised.

Throughout the pandemic, the Ministry has followed advice from the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Te Kawa Mataaho (Public Service Commission or PSC) and WorkSafe to ensure we have the safest working environment for our people based on the knowledge available to us at the time.

While most COVID-19 controls in place have been mandated by the Government through the implementation of public health measures, the Ministry has conducted our own risk assessments to ensure the safety of our staff, contractors, visitors and clients. Any changes in legislation, public health measures, virus strains, risk or work environment, prompts the Ministry to review the controls in place to continue to ensure the health and safety of our people.

Health and Safety risk assessments are not a static process, and the Ministry has, and will continue to assess and monitor the controls we have in place in response to managing COVID-19 in our workplaces. The Ministry must consider, based on a health and safety risk assessment, whether existing controls are sufficient and if not, what additional controls would be appropriate to either eliminate or help minimise risk and protect people from exposure to COVID-19 both in the workplace and for the public visiting our sites. Vaccination is one of those controls.

As the Ministry has continuously reviewed the health and safety risk faced and the controls in place to protect our people, we have made changes to most

protocols and controls over time in line with public health advice as the response to the pandemic has changed.

The management of risk needs to be appropriate and/or proportionate to the scale of the risk. This means that risks with potentially significant consequences (e.g. chronic ill-health, serious injury or death) may require additional effort and resources to determine the most effective way to eliminate or minimise the risk.

Ministry staff are not medical professionals, and as such the Ministry relies on official medical and health advice. We must also ensure our controls are safe, and just as we would for any other hazards at the Ministry when considering controls, we talk to the subject matter experts. For COVID-19 risks and controls, the Ministry relies on MOH advice and MedSafe Safety Reports.

A number of health and safety risk assessments/workshops were carried out during September, October, November 2021 and January 2022. Regular reviews of the risk of COVID-19 were required as the Delta variant was identified and had started to spread within the community in New Zealand. Following the arrival of this variant, the Government announced and prepared to move towards the COVID-19 Protection Framework (also known as the Traffic Light System).

The move to the COVID-19 Protection Framework indicated that the New Zealand Government's approach to COVID-19 had changed from elimination of the virus in the community to minimisation and protection from the virus.

The Ministry has carried out a number of separate health and safety risk assessments relevant to COVID-19 vaccination as a control covering both the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19. Workshops have, at various times, involved internal and external participants and representatives.

The representation for the health and safety risk workshops was across as wide a range of roles as possible. Those attending brought their experience of their roles and business units to the process, as well as expertise across a wide range of environments. The consultation period also gave everyone in the Ministry the opportunity to comment on the November 2021 risk assessment and provide feedback. This feedback was taken into consideration by the Leadership Team before making the final decision on the Ministry's COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

The primary tools used to guide the Ministry on the Health and Safety risk assessments are:

- The Ministry's internal Health Safety and Security Risk Framework.
- WorkSafe: [www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/how-to-decide-what-work-requires-a-vaccinated-employee](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid/how-to-decide-what-work-requires-a-vaccinated-employee); and,

- MBIE: [www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/covid-19-vaccination-and-employment/](http://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/covid-19-vaccination-and-employment/).

The Ministry is providing our internal Health Safety and Security Risk Framework as **Appendix Two**.

*September 2021*

On 6 September 2021, as staff were returning to the office following the lockdown in August due to the Delta variant entering our community, a risk assessment workshop was held to identify the Ministry's COVID-19 exposure risk. This health and safety risk assessment also considered where there was a high risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 to others in the business, and whether there was any particular work that Ministry staff completed that must only be carried out by workers who are vaccinated.

At the time of this risk assessment:

- a) the Government had adopted a policy of elimination of COVID-19 in the community and this was reflected in the public health measures put in place, including the Alert Level System, border controls and vaccination. In the Alert Level System, the government had established behaviours calculated by public health experts to eliminate COVID-19 from NZ.
- b) the primary control in place to manage the Critical Risk was to comply with the Government's public health measures reflected in the Alert Level System.
- c) the Government vaccine mandates only applied to workers who come into close physical contact with people who have or are most likely to have COVID-19, such as border workers.
- d) Two Ministry roles were covered by the border vaccine mandate.

The outcome of the September 2021 risk assessment was that no additional roles, other than the two roles already identified, would require Ministry staff to be in close physical contact with people who have or are most likely to have COVID-19. Accordingly, no changes to the controls in place were identified as being required.

In receiving this assessment, the Leadership Team were also advised that the risk was changing rapidly and accordingly, it was recommended that the Ministry reviews its assessment as new events occurred – including when any changes were made to the Government public health measures or Alert Levels.

*October 2021*

On 11 October 2021, the Government announced that the Government vaccine mandates would extend to a wide range of frontline 'high-risk' workers, which affected some Ministry workers (Health and Disability, Education sectors and Corrections prisons). Those mandates applied to workers who are most likely to work with unvaccinated people, vulnerable communities, or people at higher risk of serious illness or death if they caught COVID-19.

On 22 October 2021, the Government announced the COVID-19 Protection Framework and that New Zealand would transition from the existing Alert Level System, which was aimed at elimination of COVID-19, to a 'Minimise and Protect' strategy using vaccination as the key tool. This transition would mean that COVID-19 would be in the community, and as such this increased the likelihood of the virus also being in workplaces.

Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, Ministry sites would remain open and providing face-to-face services at all levels unlike during the Alert Level system.

These changes meant that the Ministry would need to consider the increased likelihood of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in our workplaces, as Government health measures would no longer be as effective as under the Alert Level framework.

At this time, Te Kawa Mataaho also advised that each public service agency must conduct a health and safety risk assessment to determine whether, and to what level, vaccination is required to work in the public agency workplace.

On 28 October 2021, the Ministry held a risk assessment workshop based upon the new COVID-19 Protection Framework and extended mandates, and to review the risk assessment conducted on 6 September 2021.

The workshop considered whether Ministry workers undertake activities that carry a sufficiently high risk of contracting and/or transmitting COVID-19, and whether it would be deemed reasonably practicable to implement any of the following controls:

- a) vaccinations for workers who undertake high-risk activities.
- b) vaccine certificates for clients to present before entering our sites.
- c) additional health and safety controls to those already established.

The workshop started by looking at the nature of the exposure, the likelihood, the consequences, the inherent rating, the mitigations in place, then the residual rating, the additional planned mitigations and finally the impact of vaccinated versus non-vaccinated workers.

During the discussion with workshop participants, employees were grouped into five main groups as follows:

- Workers who interact with Ministry clients both on and off-site
- Workers who interact with the public in the course of their work, excluding clients
- Workers who work in controlled environments without any interaction with the public
- Ministry workers who work from non-Ministry controlled premises, where vaccines are mandated for their workers
- Contracted providers' workers – where overlapping duties exist.

The outcome of the October 2021 health and safety risk assessment workshop highlighted five different categories of worker activities (listed above). Some of these categories were considered at-risk in that vaccination, as a reasonably practicable control, should be required. Other categories needed further consideration for broader business risks.

At this workshop, the focus was on the risk of COVID-19 infection and transmission in the work environment caused by interaction between staff and external people. The general consensus was that:

- a) Ministry workers faced similar risks as workers under existing mandates, which aim to protect vulnerable groups of people in the community; and,
- b) in undertaking the assessment, the number of interactions with people with an 'unknown' vaccination status was highly important, and, where a risk of cross-contamination between groups of people existed.

The workshop outcomes and considerations were used to inform discussions already underway across Government about workplace vaccination settings, to support government decision making about guidance for businesses and agencies on undertaking HWSA risk assessments, and whether any further Government vaccine mandates were required.

In late November 2021, announcements were made by the Government on additional mandates, along with introducing four weeks' paid notice of termination and paid time off to get vaccinated. The Government also issued further workplace vaccination decision making guidance through WorkSafe on 15 December 2021 (in addition to its earlier guidance which we utilised in November – see below).

The workshop outcomes were also used to inform the Ministry's further risk assessment process undertaken in mid-November 2021.

November 2021

On 17 November 2021, the Health, Safety and Security Team completed a risk assessment, using the then recently issued WorkSafe guidance.

The Risk Statement that was applied to the risk assessment is: (Primary duty of care) – *In relation to the risk posed by COVID-19 (and variants) is the Ministry ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers, those workers whose activities are influenced or directed by the Ministry (e.g. providers and contractors), and other persons (e.g. the public and visitors) while they are carrying out work.*

Based on previous health and safety risk assessments, consultation with internal and external stakeholders and risk assessments completed by similar agencies, the Ministry was aware that there are various Ministry roles where there is the potential for exposure to COVID-19 and the risk of a Ministry worker transmitting to a client and other workers. For the purpose of this risk assessment, workers performing these roles were grouped into two categories, based on the nature of their activities:

- Group 1: Front-facing staff including regional and national staff who regularly engage with people in the community (work and have contact with either the public, Ministry clients, community providers and other agencies, including those who are vulnerable and at high risk of the consequences of contracting COVID-19).
- Group 2: National Office staff, contact centre staff, processing staff and a number of other groups of staff, who do not regularly engage with people in the community and are primarily working from their office environment (work in offices with a high volume of staff, and in roles that are critical to business continuity and the Ministry's ability to maintain the welfare system).

The Ministry considered this to be a reasonable approach given the vast number of individual job descriptions across the Ministry, and instead focussed on characteristics of roles and types of interactions that may occur. We set out the work areas covered in each group and assessed the work areas as having similar characteristics. The risk of exposure for these roles is different but still significant if COVID-19 is present in the workplace. The indirect health risks to the public, if our ability to deliver services is impacted because of COVID-19 infection leading to staff becoming severely ill and unable to work for long periods, was also a factor.

The risk assessment looked at, in order:

1. The category of workers against all health and safety risk factors from WorkSafe, giving them a rating of either low, medium or high risk of occurrence.

2. Whether requiring vaccinations for Ministry staff meets the reasonably practicable criteria – particularly considering the right to refuse to undergo medical treatment under the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990.
3. The operational impacts of COVID-19 infection or transmission in the workplace or during work activities, considering the controls in place and compliance with these controls.
4. Other controls and whether they would be reasonable additional controls.

The outcome of the November 2021 risk assessment found that Group 1 were considered to meet a number of high-risk criteria, requiring greater controls than we currently had in place to protect both workers and clients from contracting or transmitting COVID-19. Requiring vaccinations for workers in this setting would be proportionate to the risk of workers and clients contracting and spreading COVID-19 in that setting.

While Group 2 did not meet all of the same high-risk criteria as Group 1, the volume and proximity to others for extended periods of time as well as the operational impacts were considered. As such, additional controls to those already in place were also necessary for Group 2.

The November 2021 risk assessment and related advice was considered by the Leadership Team on 23 November 2021. They made a decision to release the risk assessment and proposed draft Vaccination Policy for consultation with all staff.

In addition to current controls, further controls were considered at that time, such as potentially implementing the use of Perspex screens, N95 masks, face shields and Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT). These controls are continually being reviewed and assessed – however, the particular usage of RAT to keep staff safe is not considered an alternative to vaccination, which decreases the likelihood of someone being infected and developing severe illness, as testing does not prevent infection.

As noted in the outline of the risk assessments, under the HSWA, the Ministry must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its workers, those workers whose activities are influenced or directed by the Ministry such as providers and contractors, and other persons such as the public or visitors, while they are carrying out work.

The Ministry has considered the viability of the vaccine as a health and safety measure and considered it a reasonably practicable step that we can implement to keep our staff, contractors, visitors and clients safe.



*January 2022*

Following a decision by Government in late December 2021 that Ministry premises were included in the list of prohibited premises where vaccine passes cannot be required for clients or their support people, and alongside the movement of New Zealand into phases two and three of the Omicron outbreak – widespread community transmission – the Ministry considered it was appropriate to review the controls in place to help ensure the health and safety of staff, contractors, visitors and clients.

In mid-January 2022, the Ministry undertook a further health and safety risk assessment related to the impacts of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 on our staff and how this would impact the ability of staff to deliver our services to clients.

The outcome of this risk assessment noted that vaccination remains a reasonably practicable step to take, and it is accepted that it is still the best tool available to the Ministry to manage the impact of the global pandemic on our people, contractors, clients and visitors.

The risk assessment also determined that whilst we know we cannot eliminate contraction, transmission and illness from COVID-19, including the Omicron variant, we can minimise the likelihood and consequence for our staff, clients and visitors. Vaccination can, based on official medical advice from MoH, reduce transmission and severity of contracting COVID-19. This was important both from an individual perspective and slowing transmission to others, but also to ensure we have a healthy workforce who are not absent from work due to sickness for long period of time, given our essential service provision.

As stated, the Ministry continues to update our health and safety risk assessments in line with the changing environment of the pandemic.

You can find a copy of the Ministry's Vaccination Policy introduced on 16 December 2021 available on our website at the following link: [www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/msd-covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf](http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/covid-19/msd-covid-19-vaccination-policy.pdf).

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by

publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Melissa Gill

**Deputy Chief Executive  
Organisational Assurance and Communication**

## **Appendix One – Summary of relevant protocols under COVID-19 Protection Framework for Ministry staff (as at 2 March 2022)**

### **Staff numbers on site:**

All Ministry sites are open for business and staff can return to the office in line with business guidance. They must consider health requirements, protocols and individual circumstances when deciding this.

Service centres must work out capacity of staff numbers while ensuring they can still meet physical distancing requirements. This means that some activities and services to clients that have been paused in previous levels can now be resumed and we need to support continuity of our services while COVID-19 is circulating in the community, while ensuring the range of hygiene and health measures are being adhered to, and a business continuity plan is in place for critical functions. The below considerations should be made when deciding numbers but there is no maximum cap:

- the ability to maintain business continuity for critical functions and meeting capacity or physical distancing requirements; and,
- the ability to deliver our business as usual services, including face to face employment services.

### **Sites co-located with other agencies**

Sites co-located with other business units should consider how shared spaces are utilised to ensure physical distancing requirements are met and everyone is familiar with the settings in place.

### **Physical distancing**

MSD premises are prohibited from requiring vaccine passes from people who access our services. To reduce the risk of transmission, maintain a distance of 1.5 metres from anyone accessing our services and their support people. Moving to a one and a half metre physical distance aligns with the definition for 'contacts' when determining whether isolation is required, supports managing capacity on site and addresses concerns about client privacy.

Client-facing sites should use signage and tape on floors to indicate distancing.

Physical distancing between staff of 1.5 metres is strongly encouraged.

Please note: *Physical distancing requirements should not prevent people with a disability from receiving the assistance they need. We should continue to provide assistance to those who need it (e.g. being a sight guide for the visually impaired) regardless of the applicable physical distancing requirements. In these instances, it is recommended to take extra precautions including wearing*

*face masks where practicable and following all hygiene practices before and after assistance is provided.*

## **Events and gatherings**

### **For clients**

Workshops and seminars for clients can go ahead with a maximum of 15 attendees. One and a half metre distancing must be maintained. Client events such as employment expos cannot be held under the traffic light system as we are unable to request My Vaccine Pass.

Avoid having workshops and seminars for clients Under Red Phase 3 unless they can be held virtually. Client events such as employment expos cannot be held under Red and Orange.

### **For staff and stakeholders**

Gatherings for business purposes held on site (i.e. in a Ministry office), if there are no external people in attendance (Ministry staff only), can go ahead without restrictions on numbers (but maintaining capacity limits based on one metre distancing). This can include get togethers, graduations, and other meetings etc.

Events for staff attended by external people must meet the guidelines of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and must not be held on any site where clients access Ministry services as we are unable to request My Vaccine Passes. However, meetings between staff and stakeholders can still occur if they provide their My Vaccine Pass.

Staff can attend external events where the organisers meet the traffic light requirements for their area, however staff must comply with the requirements of the event including the requirement to show My Vaccine Pass.

No events or social gatherings are to be held under Red Phase 3.

## **Cleaning and Hygiene**

All sites must display the updated COVID-19 posters at all entry points asking all staff, clients, and contractors to stop and check they are not showing any symptoms before entering any site. You will find updated posters for the traffic lights [here](#). Managers must be especially diligent about checking in with their staff daily and send anyone home who is not feeling well.

You must regularly disinfect surfaces and have good hand hygiene. Thoroughly clean your desk and equipment before and after work every day.

Wash your hands before starting work and at every opportunity during the day, especially after using shared spaces or touching items someone else may have touched (e.g. drawers) and before you go home.

Practise good cough/ sneeze etiquette.

The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, but it is good practice to make sure you wash your hands after unpacking goods received. Gloves are not recommended as COVID-19 cannot be absorbed through the skin.

The extended daily cleaning will continue (for a deeper clean). Note: cleaning products are stronger than the normal eco-friendly cleaner.

## **Face masks**

### **For everyone**

Face masks are always mandatory for everyone in client-facing sites, and for all interactions with the public or external people.

Face masks are not mandatory in non-client facing sites, except when in shared lobbies or using lifts - even if you're not sharing the lift with anyone at the time.

### **Client facing sites and roles**

All staff working from a public-facing site, including those in non-client facing roles, must wear a face mask when in the office. Refer to the [Face Covering Exemption Guidelines](#) for staff who work in a public-facing area and are not able to wear a mask due to a health condition or disability.

Staff are exempt from wearing a face mask while working with clients who are deaf or hard of hearing to enable communication, as visibility of the mouth is essential for these people.

Please arrange for someone to see them without a face mask and consider other ways to minimise the risk of transmission.

You can use the following steps:

- using a desk set up with a Perspex screen; and/or,
- maintaining one and a half metre distance from the client at all times
- ensuring the desk is thoroughly cleaned before and after seeing the client.

Mask fatigue can be reduced by scheduling face-to-face appointments in a way that allows staff to have regular breaks in between clients, with the ability to go outside for fresh air or somewhere face masks are not required.

## **Sites that are not client or public facing**

Staff at non-public facing sites are strongly encouraged to maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres. Meetings should be virtual by default. Where this isn't possible staff must wear face masks during interactions with the public, including for meetings with external people and other agencies.

Always keep your face mask with you and use it in any situation where you may be unexpectedly exposed to others outside your work colleagues.

## **Clients and other visitors**

Medical/surgical face masks must be made available near the site entrance. Tautiaki (Security Guard) will point clients and visitors who aren't wearing one, to the supply of face masks and remind people they are legally required to wear a mask if aged 12 and over when visiting Government agencies.

A container or bin should be placed near the entrance/exit for clients to dispose of used masks on their way out if they wish. Cleaners will empty bins at the end of each day.

The mask requirement does not apply to children aged under 12. Clients or visitors do not have to wear a face covering in the following situations:

- it is unsafe, or if they have a physical or mental health illness or condition or disability that makes wearing a mask unsuitable.
- there is an emergency.
- people need to prove their identity.
- if visibility of the mouth or face is required for communication e.g. the need to communicate with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.
- a person needs to eat, drink or take medicine.

If clients present at site without a face mask (or wearing an unsuitable face mask e.g. displaying a gang affiliation), we will ask them to use a disposable one available at the entrance and remind them they are legally required to wear one.

If a client presents at a service centre and advises they cannot wear a face mask safely or comfortably due to a health condition or disability, they should be allowed entry – we do not need proof.

You can use the following steps:

- suggest the use of alternative channels.

- use a desk set up with a Perspex screen where there is one available.
- maintain a one and a half metre distance from the client at all times.
- ensure the desk is thoroughly cleaned before and after seeing the client.

Should the client be able but not willing to wear a face mask, Tautiaki can refuse entry, suggest the use of alternative channels and follow our regular security protocols for refusing access to sites.

Staff must use paper towels or disposable gloves to pick up and dispose of any masks or face coverings left behind by clients or visitors, then wash or sanitise hands thoroughly afterwards.

### **Dealing with the public/clients**

Under all traffic lights our service centres and national/regional offices will be open to the public. Under Red and Orange, service centres will operate on a restricted access basis.

Clients accessing services, and their support people and children, are not required to provide proof of their vaccination status to access services in a service centre.

The most important things to help us manage this safely are:

- for everyone to scan the QR code or use an alternative contact tracing system.
- for everyone to wear a face mask when dealing face to face with clients or members of the public.
- to ensure clients, visitors and contractors all wear a face mask when entering our premises.
- to ensure clients keep a one and a half metre separation from other clients and staff.
- to maintain a high level of hygiene.

At Red and Orange, service centres will book face-to-face client appointments, with contact centres booking phone appointments with case managers.

Phone screening for booking face-to-face appointments will include a health screening and an agreement to follow the one and a half metre physical distancing rules, to wear a face mask and record their visit when entering the site.

If a client presents at service centre without a booked appointment, Tautiaki will arrange for the Front of House/Connector member of staff to meet the

client at the entry-point of the office whilst maintaining a one and a half metre distance. The purpose of this engagement will be to make sure appropriate health screening is completed.

Tautiaki will indicate to clients where to scan the QR code or fill out the [contact tracing ballots](#). Clients who refuse to scan or use the manual alternative will still be seen by a case manager, provided they follow all other health and safety requirements on site.

If clients present at site without a face mask, Tautiaki will ask them to use a disposable one available at the entrance and remind them they are legally required to wear one. If the client cannot or will not wear a face mask, please refer to the face mask section above, under "Clients and other visitors".

Ensure you have your COVID-19 contact tracing poster on all entries and around the building and [ballots](#) ready for those who don't use the NZ COVID Tracer app.

Use tape on the floor to mark the one and a half metre separation where clients sit or stand when talking to staff at reception, client interview desks, or where queues may form.

Do not share equipment with clients and make sure to sanitise your desk in between clients.

Supply sanitiser in the front of house so clients can sanitise before and after using kiosks, water coolers, kids' areas and public toilets where they are available.

### **Managing client numbers in service centres**

Managers need to determine the maximum number of clients that can be in a service centre at any one time while meeting the one and a half metre distancing requirement. This includes:

- clients at an appointment with a case manager or work broker.
- clients in the waiting area.
- clients in the queue or at the reception desk.

Managers need to brief Tautiaki on the maximum number of clients that can be in the service centre. Clients with a booked appointment can enter the service centre within 10 to 15 minutes of their appointment time.

Appointment scheduling (face-to-face) across the site needs to be managed in a way that ensures client numbers are not exceeded and distancing requirements are maintained.



## **Contractors, providers, suppliers and visitors (excluding people accessing MSD services)**

External people who enter our sites for other purposes than to access MSD services, such as contractors, providers, suppliers and visitors must show their My Vaccine Pass to access our sites. They can access all our sites but must follow all protocols in place while working from MSD premises.

Meetings can be held with external people at all our sites, however you cannot hold events or gatherings at frontline sites, see the "Events and gatherings" section for more info about this.

You can find detailed information on Vaccination requirements for external people on the MSD Vaccination Policy decision page.

## **Record keeping for contact tracing**

Ongoing contact tracing is important. To meet public health requirements, we must have the COVID-19 contact tracing poster (QR code poster) on all entries to the site/office and we are responsible to ensure every visitor and client scans the code on entry to the site.

You must scan the site's QR code every time you enter the site. If you do not use the COVID Tracer App, please make sure to let your manager know every day you're onsite. Managers should record this and keep that record for 60 days.

For clients and visitors who do not use the COVID Tracer App, use ballot forms to be filled out and deposited in the accompanying ballot box, which should all be available close to the site's entrance.

Ballot boxes must be emptied at the end of each day and ballots safely stored in an envelope for each day. Ballots older than 60 days must safely be disposed of, in the destruction bins.

## **Co-located offices**

If you are co-located with other Ministry business units or external agencies in the same site, site managers must contact the other units/agencies to explain how the Ministry will be working under the traffic light system. Where agencies spaces overlap (such as access to the site or in shared spaces like stairwells, bathrooms, and kitchens), agencies must decide jointly how things will work on site. Make sure you let everyone know about these arrangements, including security guards.

If you are co-located with public-facing businesses or units, you are not required but you are encouraged to wear a face mask outside of shared spaces.

Find out what measures co-located agencies are taking to manage contact tracing and hygiene.

### **Building Ventilation**

Our sites use a variety of systems for heating, cooling and many of these include active ventilation control to introduce fresh air and extract stale air.

Workplace Services has been working with Landlords to understand the other systems we have. In many cases systems are running at full capacity but where it is possible, fresh air rates have been increased.

Fresh air intake may be increased by opening windows and doors if they are able to be opened safely. Sites must ensure this does not create a security risk.

### **Visitor sign in and contractor management**

As normal business practice, any visitor or contractor is required to sign the visitor register and receive a health and safety induction outlining hazards on site – ensure you have the correct version of both forms which are available on Doogle (the Ministry's internal intranet).

All contractors, providers, suppliers and visitors must show their My Vaccine Pass to access our sites and must adhere to all other protocols in place.

Keeping accurate records of who is on site and when is very important for contact tracing, even for other Ministry staff visiting the site. Ensure they scan the QR code when coming onto site.

Contractors must wear a face mask.

Provide hand sanitiser for their use after using pens to sign in and before entering the office.

### **Introducing new people**

New staff must receive a health and safety induction outlining the distancing and hygiene requirements and any other hazards on site.

The induction modules for new staff are being regularly revised, and there are some additional steps we will continue to take when new staff start working at the Ministry.