

**Subject: COVID-19 update: international and domestic travel restrictions**

Tēnā koutou katoa

This email contains information for all Fire and Emergency personnel about domestic and international travel restrictions, **effective immediately**. These instructions follow the Ministry of Health's advice and are designed to keep you safe so we can continue providing an emergency response service to New Zealand.

COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation, and the government is making tough decisions to make sure we can contain the virus. The Ministry of Health's assessment remains that with continued vigilance the chance of a widespread community outbreak is expected to remain low to moderate. However, all of us have a role to play in stopping further spread, and the measures below are aligned across government agencies to ensure the best chance of minimising any spread of the virus.

1. All **work-related international travel** until 31 March should be cancelled.
2. If you have recently returned from overseas or are currently overseas, *and* you have been advised to self-isolate, *and* your role doesn't allow you to work from home: you should apply for special leave based on your normal process. If you become sick during your self-isolation period, you should apply for sick leave, based on your normal process.
3. The government has now advised all New Zealanders to avoid all non-essential travel overseas. If you choose to travel overseas for personal reasons from today (16 March 2020) *and* your role doesn't allow you to work from home *and* you will need to complete self-isolation on your return to New Zealand: this will come off your discretionary leave balance. The exception to this is travel related to a family bereavement.
4. All **non-essential work-related domestic travel** until 31 March should be reconsidered. The government recommendation has been to minimise domestic work-related travel.
5. We believe that essential domestic travel means travel required to maintain our operational response and only where it needs to be done face to face. I expect there will be very few instances where this applies. Please discuss your situation with your direct manager if you are unsure.
6. Please use video and teleconferencing where possible, in place of travelling for meetings. There's information about [how to use these facilities on the Portal](#). For international VC options please contact Andrew Knox.
7. Travel to attend **training** should continue for now while we assess what essential critical training still needs to occur.
8. If you need to cancel international or domestic travel bookings please email [Cancellations@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:Cancellations@fireandemergency.nz) rather than contacting Orbit directly. Business Services will coordinate all cancellation requests with Orbit.

9. If you need to work remotely, please **do not** do this from our fire stations if you are not usually based there.
10. If you have an underlying medical condition eg compromised immune system, and you need to take more precautions to protect yourself against all infections including COVID-19, please speak with your manager about working from home.
11. If you have a COVID-19 Fire and Emergency-related question, please check the dedicated [COVID-19 Portal page](#) in the first instance. If your question isn't answered there, please ask your manager; if they can't answer your question please email it to: [Covid@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:Covid@fireandemergency.nz). Questions and answers will be regularly updated on this Portal page.

Finally, don't forget basic good health etiquette will go along way to helping minimise the potential spread of the virus. For example – washing hands for 20 seconds and drying them well, sneezing into your arm, and not touching your face.

We are committed to updating you regularly with information specific to Fire and Emergency as the COVID-19 situation develops. Please share this email with your Fire and Emergency colleagues if they haven't seen it.

Noho ora mai rā

nā Rhys