



SUBJECT Operational update COVID-19
DATE 23 March 2020
TO All personnel
FROM Kerry Gregory – National Commander
STATUS Operational instruction

Action Please ensure all personnel read and follow these instructions.

Situation Today the Prime Minister announced that New Zealand is at Alert Level 3, and will move to Level 4 in forty-eight hours' time. To clarify that New Zealand will move to Alert Level 4 at 11:59 pm on Wednesday 25 March. Until then, we are at Alert Level 3.

She stressed that these unprecedented measures are to give our health system a chance against COVID-19.

We are a critical service to New Zealand, now more than ever. It has never been more important for us remain calm and professional, and to support, protect and give confidence to the communities we serve.

All of the decisions we are taking, and will share with you as they are made, are to ensure we can continue to provide an emergency service to New Zealand. This is not only in response to COVID-19, but also so we remain prepared to respond to any other emergency. The work we do is not just a job it is a responsibility to our communities and we need to stay healthy so we can continue to serve them.

In addition to maintaining our frontline operational capability we need to ensure we can also maintain our NCC, RCCs, LCCs and our executive rosters. I can assure you we are continuing to plan for the escalation of the virus across NZ and what it means for our delivery of service.

The instructions in this National Notice are in addition to the instructions in the following National Notices:

- [018/2020 Operational response to COVID-19](#) 18 March 2020
- [020/2020 Operational update to COVID-19](#) 20 March 2020
- [021/2020 Operational update to COVID-19](#) 21 March 2020

Note: you will need to be logged into the Portal to view these

Career stations

- Training on station should continue within your watch.
- Operational crews should only be undertaking response activities.

Volunteers

- Limit brigade activity to response activities only
- To limit spread across Brigades ALL training is to stop, effective immediately.
- In light of the suspension of PCAs, all rural PACK tests are suspended until further notice.
- Volunteer brigades should also determine if it is appropriate for everyone to continue to respond to each pager alert. In Brigades where capacity allows, consider if a roster system should be put in place to limit exposure across whole Brigade.
- We have already had incidents where whole volunteer brigades have needed to be stood down due to exposure to COVID-19. This is something we need to try and avoid. We need to do everything we can to limit our contact and possibility of exposure within brigades to ensure we can maintain our delivery of service across NZ.

Leaders

- To all of our Service Delivery leaders, this is the time where we all need to stand up and lead this organisation through the challenges the country faces. I have every confidence in your abilities to do this.
- It is just as vital that you do what you can to reduce exposure so that you can continue to lead and can continue to operate.

More information and questions

- I remind you, if you have been in close proximity to known cases of the COVID-19 virus, you should immediately self-isolate and immediately notify the Area or District Office or Brigade management to do that on your behalf.
- Keep checking the [COVID-19 Portal page](#) for the latest updates. It is publicly available, and you don't need to be logged in.
- If you have questions that need addressing or decisions that need to be made send them to Covid@fireandemergency.nz.
- If you are feeling stressed or anxious and want to talk to someone please talk to your manager or use the [support available](#) for all Fire and Emergency personnel and their immediate families. If you know others are in self-isolation please keep in contact so that they feel supported.
- You can also check the wellbeing advice from the Mental Health Foundation - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/covid-19/>

I want to reassure you that we are considering every step and plan very carefully to keep you safe, so you can keep your community safe. It has never been more important for us to stay connected and to demonstrate manaakitanga to one another than it is now. Thank you for your support.

End of Notice.
