

TEU Health & Safety Guide - Alert Level 3

August 2021

One of the key things during the COVID-19 response is to ensure that you are all looking after each other, and your health and safety needs are taken seriously. So we thought it timely to share some simple health and safety information as most of the country prepares for a return to Level 3.

As we know, Auckland remains at Level 4, and all tertiary educational activities will continue to be delivered remotely

In short, under Level 3 Covid-19 Delta conditions the following were identified as key areas where changes need to be made:

- class sizes are reduced - staff/student bubbles should be limited to 10 people or fewer (with onsite examinations only allowed for these groups);
- mask wearing and social distancing is a must for all staff and students; and
- ideally all staff are fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

If you want to check the detailed advice on what is expected from your tertiary education institutions, MOE/TEC guidance can be found [here](#).

Generally, under Level 3 you continue to work from home (unless in essential services); but the details are worth a read.

In tertiary education, all teaching should continue to be delivered remotely, wherever possible. At alert level 3 some facilities may open for limited activities involving small groups (up to 10 people including tutor) where it is not possible to deliver teaching remotely.

Before Level 3 comes into effect, some site access is permitted to enable preparation for re-opening; however, this should only involve minimal numbers of staff for minimal periods of time maintaining physical/social distancing and infection prevention measures (including mask wearing) at all times, and with properly noted contact tracing records.

The employer's obligations to ensure health and safety of workers so far as reasonably practicable still apply. This means implementing the highest levels of physical distancing practicable. Given the high infection and transmission rate of the Delta variant we/TEU recommend at least 2m social/physical distancing as a minimum.

While this advisory is about health and safety under Levels 3 of the COVID-19 Alert System, don't forget about other 'more usual' H&S hazards and associated risks, as your employer has an obligation to continue managing all those other risks as well as managing the specific risk from Covid-19.

Awahi atu, awahi mai | Taking care of each other

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Please remember that as work practices may change to adapt to a Covid-19 safe work environment, new hazards and risks may present themselves. If you identify any new hazards or risks please make sure you report to your employer, health and safety rep, and TEU (you can find TEU contact information at www.teu.ac.nz or can call us on 0800 278 348).

Refusing to return to the worksite.

If you are a person who is vulnerable to COVID-19, due to age or because you have an underlying medical condition that increases your vulnerability (or are in a bubble with someone who has such a vulnerability), you should not return to work on-site under level 3. You may also wish to remain away from work at lower levels. Your right to do this is secured by the provisions discussed below regarding your duty to keep yourself safe at work

Your employer may request information confirming that you have an underlying medical condition. If you are unsure about what information it is reasonable to request please contact your organiser.

Stopping/Ceasing Unsafe Work

Please note at any time if you believe your work is unsafe you have the right to cease work [s83 HSW Act 2015]. Under s83 you can cease, or refuse to carry out, work if:

1. You believe carrying out the work will expose you, or any other person, to a serious risk to you or any other person's health;
2. The exposure to the hazard is immediate or imminent.

If you have any concerns about unsafe work, tell your employer – in writing [and verbally] immediately – contact your Health & Safety Representative and TEU at teu@teu.ac.nz .

You can also make a notification to [Worksafe](#)

Good Hygiene at work

Along with physical distancing another key factor in minimising the spread of COVID-19 is ensuring there are good hygiene practices at work.

Good hygiene includes:

- **staying at home if you are sick;**
- hand hygiene – that is, washing hands regularly with soap and water, or cleansing with hand sanitiser;
- cleaning surfaces regularly;
- ensuring good air ventilation;
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow, and then washing yours hand with soap and water and/or cleansing with hand sanitiser;

You should also consider what provisions have been put in place to clean your workplace and sanitise equipment and work vehicles.

Is your Mental Health being looked after?

Working at home and managing family life is challenging for anyone's mental health. Your employer has obligations under the H&S at Work Act to protect your health and safety while at work and this includes your mental health. Any changes to your work and/or your workplace as the lockdown continues, and you progressively return to the workplace, please get in touch with your Branch President or local TEU Organiser. There are a number of organisations providing support and resources for all workers to access. They include:

- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/covid-19/top-tips-to-get-through/>
- <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-taking-care-your-mental-wellbeing->

For a range of other mental health helplines: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/in-crisis/helplines/>