

TEU Health & Safety Guide - Alert Level 2

September 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 on what to expect as most of the country moves to Level 2.

As we know, Auckland remains at Level 4, and all tertiary educational activities will continue to be delivered remotely for institutions in the region.

Under Level 2 Covid-19 Delta conditions the following were identified as key areas where changes need to be made:

- Strengthened contact tracing requirements – TEU is advocating for the use of the Government tracer app on all shared spaces at campuses.
- Mask wearing required in some parts of campuses and strongly recommended everywhere else – TEU strongly advocates mask wearing on campus at all times. Employers should provide masks.
- Capacity limits for large teaching and learning spaces of a maximum of 100 staff and students, with physical distancing of 1-metre, are strongly recommended. Where physical distancing is not possible, online provision will continue.

TEU wants all institutions to ensure that a Health and Safety Plan is developed, and that union representatives are involved in this process. There is no unified approach to Level 2 for the tertiary education sector, so it's important you ask for your institutions' plans which should provide detailed information.

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

The key points are:

Noho marae: Overnight noho marae will not be permitted at Alert Level 2, due to the increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 with cumulative exposure time.

Contact-tracing: TEOs should display the official NZ COVID Tracer QR code posters in a prominent place at or near main entrances, and ensure (to the greatest extent practicable) that each person entering the facility scans the QR code or provides details to enable contact tracing. In particular, TEOs are responsible for ensuring contact tracing information that identifies which students and staff (and any other visitors) have been in each 'controlled learning space' and 'other controlled environments' and at what time, is collected (whether via the COVID-19 Tracer App, or other means).

Face coverings: Staff and students should bring face coverings or masks with them when attending on-site activities at Alert Level 2. Face coverings must be worn at student health services,

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pharmacies, banks and other retailers on campus. Face coverings are strongly recommended at all other times – including teaching and learning spaces, and research and laboratory spaces, where practicable – but are not mandatory under the Health Order.

Large teaching and learning spaces: Capacity limits for large teaching and learning spaces of a maximum of 100 staff and students, with physical distancing of 1-metre, are strongly recommended. Where course enrolment exceeds recommended capacity limits, TEOs should offer courses online and/or implement alternative in-person teaching and learning arrangements. TEOs should have protocols in place to ensure staff, students and visitors maintain physical distancing when entering and leaving teaching and learning spaces as appropriate – for example, ‘one-way doors’ for entrances and exits, adjusting timetabling to provide more time in between classes, or requiring face coverings if 1-metre physical distancing is not practicable.

Libraries: The rules for TEO libraries at Alert Level 2 depend on whether access is restricted. Where access is restricted to staff and students, libraries may open in accordance with the public health control measures for TEOs e.g. physical distancing of 1-metre, and face coverings are strongly recommended. Where a TEO library is publicly accessible, it should operate in accordance with the public health control measures that apply to public libraries e.g. physical distancing of 2-metres, and mandatory face coverings.

Research and related activities: We have clarified public health measures for research and related activities, which include maintaining physical distancing of at least 1-metre at all times; face coverings, which are strongly recommended in research and laboratory spaces; controlled group sizes, subject to health and safety assessments; and contact tracing systems.

Student accommodation and travel: Students are not required to wear face coverings at tertiary hostels and halls of residence as these are their places of residence, but may wish to do so in shared and communal areas. On travel to accommodation: students in Alert Level 2 areas may travel domestically to student accommodation in an Alert Level 2 areas. Students in Alert Level 2 areas may also return to their primary home or place of residence in Alert Level 4 areas. Students must carry evidence of their purpose of travel and destination if returning home from an Alert Level 2 area to an Alert Level 4 area, e.g. proof of accommodation arrangements. Once home, they are not able to return to Alert Level 2 while their area is in Alert Level 4. For more information, see [Personal travel across an Alert Level boundary | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#).

Travel across Alert Level boundaries: As we prepare to move to an Alert Level 4/2 split, please remember that at this stage an exemption is needed from the Ministry of Health in order for someone to move between Alert Level areas.

Public health measures for staff: Staff in non-public facing roles should maintain a 1-metre distance from each other. Staff in public-facing roles (e.g. student services and other roles not in controlled learning spaces) should maintain a 2-metre distance from students and visitors, and face coverings are strongly recommended. TEOs may implement limits on the number of people in some spaces to allow everyone to safely physically distance. Staff working in hostels and halls of residence are not required to wear face coverings, but may wish to do so in shared and communal areas.

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 Level 2 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.

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)

Here’s a simple check-list that will help you decide if you should call your health and safety reps:

| | | |
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| 1 | Is the area well ventilated? | |
| 2 | Are we able to practice physical distancing (1 metre at least)? | |
| 3 | If we can’t distance, are all people in the space wearing masks? | |
| 4 | Is the area clean and is hand sanitiser provided? | |
| 5 | Is the Government tracer app being used? | |
| 6 | How long will I be in the space with others? | |

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. You can simply do this by emailing teu@teu.ac.nz and we’ll put you in touch with the right staff member.

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 your 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/>

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