



## **Proactive Release**

The following items have been proactively released by the Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

**Update on Essential Services: Online Ordering of Retail Goods and Furniture Removals**

**Minute of Decision: Online Ordering of Retail Goods**

# UPDATE ON ESSENTIAL SERVICES: ONLINE ORDERING OF RETAIL GOODS AND FURNITURE REMOVALS

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| <b>To</b>   | Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 Response |             |            |
| <b>From</b> | John Ombler, All-of-Government Controller     | <b>Date</b> | 25/03/2020 |

## Purpose

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1. This paper provides a framework for online ordering and the provision of essential retail goods during Alert Level 4 for agreement. This framework outlines the conditions retailers will need to meet for the public be allowed to order essential retail goods on-line. It also notes an issue that has been raised through the helpline related to the delivery of household effects in transit.

## Comment

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### *Ordering of Essential Goods On-line for Delivery during Alert level 4*

2. While New Zealand is at Alert Level 4, it is likely that people will need to buy retail goods that are essential to safely isolate, work from home, and continue studying over the four-week period.
3. These are goods which are vital to ensure households can continue to function while we are at Alert Level 4. Examples include: blankets, fridges, heaters and computers / tablets to work from home, or do distance learning. Failure to be able to purchase these could have public health impacts. For example a broken fridge during this period would mean people venturing out of their homes more often to purchase fresh food, which is something we want to limit. Devices are also key to ensuring people remain socially connected even if they are physically separate.
4. Officials recommend that people be allowed to order only essential retail goods subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Retailers should take orders online or by phone. They should not have open storefronts, and the public should not be able to visit stores to select goods.
  - b. Retailers should only take orders for essential retail goods
  - c. Retailers should fulfil orders while taking all appropriate public health measures (e.g. physical distancing, PPE for staff).
  - d. Retailers should deliver orders in a contactless manner (i.e. no physical interaction between deliverer and customer).
5. If retailers cannot meet any of the above conditions, they should not offer to sell essential retail goods while the country is at Alert Level 4. Retailers who choose to take orders for essential retail goods online are responsible for managing compliance with the conditions listed above. This includes ensuring only those goods which are vital to ensure households

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can continue to function are able to be ordered and delivered during the period of this alert level.

6. When all of these precautions can be taken, this will make the public health risks associated with maintaining the availability of essential retail goods similar to that for maintaining access to food.

### *Delivery of Household Effects in Transit*

7. The Essential Services Helpline has received requests around Household Effects in transit. A small number of cases have been identified where a house move was commenced before Level 3/4 announcements, but household effects (including beds, whiteware etc) are still in transit.
8. This raises two questions:  
  
Can people in the process of moving house complete their move under alert level 4?  
  
Can furniture deliveries currently in transit complete their deliveries under alert level 4?
9. Officials have considered this issue and have formed a view. Only businesses that are essential to the provision of the necessities of life may remain open during the Level 4 Alert period. In general we do not consider furniture movements as essential.
10. However, as the deadline for domestic travel has been extended until midnight Friday 27 March, an option is to extend the deadline for in transit movements to allow anyone in the process of moving house to complete their move before midnight Friday 27 March. We propose to follow this approach in responding to this issue.

## **Recommendations**

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11. It is recommended that the Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 Response:
  1. **Agree** that the public be allowed to order only essential retail goods subject to the following conditions:
    - a. Retailers should take orders online or by phone. They should not have open storefronts, and the public should not be able to visit stores to select goods.
    - b. Retailers should only take orders for essential retail goods
    - c. Retailers should fulfil orders while taking all appropriate public health measures (e.g. physical distancing, PPE for staff).
    - d. Retailers should deliver orders in a contactless manner (i.e. no physical interaction between deliverer and customer).
  2. **Note** that if the precautions outlined in 4.c and 4.d then officials consider the public health risks associated with maintaining the availability of essential retail goods similar to that for maintaining access to food.
  3. **Note** that if retailers cannot meet any of the above conditions, they should not offer to sell essential retail goods while the country is at Alert Level 4.



# Meeting of the COVID-19 Ministerial Group

## Minute of Decision

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### Online Ordering of Retail Goods

The group of Ministers with Power to Act on COVID-19 matters [CAB-20-MIN-0130] convened on 26 March 2020 at 10.30am, and in accordance with their Power to Act:

- 1 **agreed** that the public be allowed to order only essential retail goods subject to the following conditions:
  - 1.1 retailers should take orders online or by phone. They should not have open storefronts, and the public should not be able to visit stores to select goods;
  - 1.2 retailers should only take orders for essential retail goods;
  - 1.3 retailers should fulfil orders while taking all appropriate public health measures (e.g. physical distancing, PPE for staff);
  - 1.4 retailers should deliver orders in a contactless manner (i.e. no physical interaction between deliverer and customer);
- 2 **noted** that if the precautions outlined in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above are taken, officials consider that the public health risks associated with maintaining the availability of essential retail goods would be similar to that for maintaining access to food;
- 3 **noted** that if retailers cannot meet any of the above conditions, they should not offer to sell essential retail goods while the country is at Alert Level 4.

Michael Webster  
Secretary of the Cabinet

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