

August 2020

- The COVID-19 pandemic still exists outside New Zealand's borders, but no border is 100% failsafe.
- Other countries that had the virus under control have had resurgence.
- The reality is our fight against the virus is not over and we must have a plan at the ready to protect our current position if it comes back.
- We need to prepare now for the possibility of new cases in the community and have a plan ready.
- In observing resurgence overseas, it is clear we need a rapid response to break the chain of transmission while we gather information and get the virus under control.

Principles for our response

1. Continue to pursue the elimination strategy for COVID-19.
2. The core of our response will be personal hygiene, staying home when sick, testing, contact tracing and isolation.
3. Rapid response to prevent further transmission while information gathered to inform decisions.

STAGE 1

Case confirmed

A case of COVID-19 is identified in the community

Case investigation to identify:

1. Is case isolated?
2. Risk of transmission – movement, case history, symptom onset and severity
3. Sources of infection

Close contacts
isolated and tested

Casual contacts
tested

Community
testing

Rapid regional response

Within the shortest possible timeframe, the region where the new case is identified will have a range of controls implemented, similar to those at Alert Level 3, e.g.:

- > Movements are restricted
- > Stay home within your bubble
- > Work from home unless you are unable to
- > Some businesses open, but no physical interaction with customers
- > 2 metre physical distancing
- > Masks are required when outside bubble and in public enclosed spaces where physical distancing is not possible.

For limited time, while information is gathered and contact tracing and testing is underway.

Responsibility:

Regional Public Health Unit or District Health Board

Decision about regional controls or Alert Level made by Minister of Health

At the local level the operational response will be coordinated by regional leadership groups comprising: Mayors and local government chief executives in the region, District Health Board and Public Health Unit leaders and central government regional officials (e.g. Police District Commanders, Ministry of Social Development Commissioners, Regional Directors of Education), iwi Māori.

Civil Defence Emergency Management Group - regional operational lead.

STAGE 2

Based on information gathered and testing undertaken in Stage 1, and advice and information from public health and other officials, a decision is made by a group of Ministers.

Scenarios

Decision about Alert Levels locally and nationally or any other response will be based on the situation, but potential scenarios and response examples:

- 1 **One or two further cases are detected amongst close contacts and there is a connection back to the original source of infection at the border.**
Is likely that the region returns to controls similar to Alert Level 2 or 1.
- 2 **There is a single cluster of connected cases in the region with no evidence of community transmission in the region and no cases in other regions.**
Is likely that the region continues with similar controls to Alert Level 3, or 2.
- 3 **Widespread community transmission in the region but no confirmed cases detected in other regions.**
Is likely that the region retains controls similar to Alert Level 3 or 4. The rest of the country may move to Alert Level 2.
- 4 **There is at least one cluster in the region and confirmed cases in other regions.**
Is likely that the region continues with similar controls to Alert Level 3, and other affected regions may have the same controls introduced. Unaffected regions may move to Alert Level 2, or, depending on the number of regions, the whole country may shift to Alert Level 3.