

***UPDATED* COVID-19 (coronavirus) Building and Construction Industry Advisory**

This document has been prepared as a general Toolbox Talk for building and construction workers and supervisors. It supplements but does not replace information from the government and Ministry of Health which will always be the primary source of advice in this matter. [Please see the MOH website for further information](#)



New Zealand is currently in its second week of alert level 3. Building and Construction work continues for most of the sector under level 3 health and safety requirements while the government considers moving down to level 2.

COVID-19 What it means for business in Construction and Building

Congratulations NZ, we have “flattened the curve” of new cases of COVID-19! For the last week, the number of daily new cases reported has been in the single digits. Not only that, but we’ve had two consecutive days with zero new cases reported. Sadly, the death toll is now at 21 and our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones. Most building and construction businesses are back at work under level 3 protocols although some have not returned to full capacity. More information about New Zealand’s COVID-19 alert system and response methods can be found [here](#).

Our mates at [Mates in Construction](#) (MIC) are also back out on site ensuring the mental wellbeing of our workforce is well looked after. Additionally, they’ve been maintaining all of the great online tools they rolled out during lockdown. Slade McFarland from MIC has become quite a sensation for his daily social media posts which have sparked smiles at a time when we really need them – great work mate!

Back at work

Keep an eye out for the latest decisions about the [COVID-19 health and safety Standard and Protocols](#) which are being continuously updated. While there’ve been a few media reports of construction sites breaching protocols, most businesses and workers are being compliant and working safely. It’s vital we comply with alert level 3 requirements to maintain the progress we’ve made to suppress the virus and eliminate its spread.

The government will announce on Monday, 11 May when we will move to [alert level 2](#). Once the decision has been announced, it’s likely that we’ll have 48 hours to transition between levels.

Work is proceeding on protocols for operating at level 2 and will be available soon. Physical distancing and contact tracing will still be essential, but we’ll be able to gather in larger numbers and travel restrictions will be eased further.

NZCIC members working with the Construction Sector Accord

Several NZCIC members sit on the Construction Sector Accord (CSA) Steering Group and more have joined the COVID-19 Response Forum. This work has been carried out in demanding timeframes and created huge value by uniting government and industry responses in the crisis.

We're continuing to expand and clarify guidance for procurement and contractual issues being raised in the sector due to the COVID-19 disruption. The CSA is working with experts to develop further guidance for government agencies to assist when negotiating the cost of variations due to the level 4 shutdown. These will align with the Construction Sector Accord principles and will be made available to the wider sector.

The Construction Sector Accord is monitoring alert level 3 operations to understand potential financial and health and safety impacts. Work is also underway to clarify procurement guidelines on how risk is allocated in relation to COVID-19 for future procurement activity.

The CSA continues to work with Crown Infrastructure Partners and the Infrastructure Commission to identify projects that can be expedited and "shovel ready" in the next 12 months. Over 2,000 projects have been put forward for consideration. A selection of these is expected to be presented to cabinet in mid-May.

Efforts to identify models that will accelerate projects and remove barriers to progress during the recovery phase are underway. This work proposes opportunities to streamline processes including consenting, governance, funding approval and procurement, and will be presented to Ministers this week (4 May). The government announced measures to speed up RMA applications as part of the COVID-19 response last week. This move is welcomed by those working to get a quick start on projects.

Groups across the industry are working together to find new ways to support the residential sector, including holding discussions with banks. Kāinga Ora are working to get their public housing build programme up and running quickly. The CSA is working on ideas to support consumer confidence in the residential building sector and advice will be going to Ministers next week.

The Construction Sector Accord is also working with government agencies, training organisations and industry leaders to ensure we retain current apprentices and have sustainable apprentice and training programmes to maintain and develop workforce capacity and capability.

For any media inquiries or if you're interested in becoming a member of the NZCIC, please contact the NZCIC Chair, Graham Burke at graham@grahamburke.co.nz or 021 249 3459.