

14 August 2020

Construction Work at COVID-19 Alert Level 4

NZCIC supports the government's Alert Level response to COVID-19 and the need to contain and eliminate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The construction industry successfully worked during Level 3 across the country and is currently doing so in Auckland. We've seen positive outcomes using the industry protocols developed by Construction Health and Safety NZ (CHASNZ) and endorsed by the Construction Sector Accord and MBIE.

The construction industry directly employs approximately 10% of New Zealand's workforce and contributes approximately 6% of the country's GDP. A large proportion of businesses within the industry will not survive another prolonged shutdown. It would be hugely detrimental to the national economy as well as wreaking havoc on the lives of business owners, workers, and the supply chain. The national recovery from COVID-19 will be put at significant risk if the construction sector is forced to stop work again.

The construction industry is inherently high-risk and businesses within the sector are experienced in assessing and controlling critical risks in the workplace. The industry was a leader in developing standards and protocols to manage risks through Alert Levels 1,2 and 3 and has demonstrated its ability to work under the protocols. These protocols have been widely adopted by the industry, having been developed in collaboration with CHASNZ, working under the direction of the Construction Sector Accord. NZCIC believes that the industry will come together again to develop a set of Level 4 Protocols that will enable the industry to continue much of our work. These protocols will protect our workforce and the general public as well as support the government's aims to contain and eliminate COVID-19. We envisage these Level 4 Protocols will include: heightened requirements of personnel monitoring and screening, tighter controls around social distancing, increased independent auditing, and reporting requirements.

Businesses or sites that cannot meet the Level of control required by Level 4 Protocols would not be able to continue operating under Alert Level 4. There are international examples of the construction industry continuing to work under lockdown conditions without contributing to the risk of spread of COVID-19. Examples from Australia, UK and other jurisdictions will be used to develop protocols for New Zealand. Additionally, we will draw on the experience of domestic construction businesses, which were operating as essential services under our previous Alert Level 4 restrictions as well as those construction businesses who have been operating in Australia during COVID-19 restrictions.



NZCIC strongly believes that responsible construction businesses that commit to using strengthened industry Protocols can effectively manage the risks of operating at Alert Level 4. Doing so will significantly reduce the harm to mental health and financial hardship that will be inflicted on tens of thousands of workers and business owners, should there be another forced closure of the industry.

Yours faithfully,



New Zealand
**Construction
Industry
Council**

Graham Burke
Chair of the New Zealand
Construction Industry Council

