

# TEU Information Sheet

## COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4

As a community we will do our bit to unite, be kind, and be strong during this pandemic. These are the core values of our union – tū kotahi, tū kaha; awhi atu, awhi mai; ngā piki, ngā heke; tātou, tātou e – underpinning all our mahi and a necessary step at this stage and moving forward.



Here's a few words of advice around working from home, your rights, and what we can do to help each other.

### Working from home – Level Four lock down

1. If you are unwell, your sick leave should be used as normal. Some of our institutions have “as and when required” sick leave in our collective agreements (CAs) and others have specified days.

If you have insufficient sick leave available, then employers must use either the “special leave on pay” provisions of the CAs or special leave provisions as mandated by MBIE. The [guidance from MBIE](#) to both employers and employees (jointly developed by MBIE, Business NZ and the NZ Council of Trade Unions) is helpful on this and other questions of paid leave.

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- Unwell dependent/s: If you have a dependent who is unwell, sick leave can be used to care for them. Staff with insufficient leave should, again, be granted special leave in these circumstances.

Self-isolation: Staff required to self-isolate (as all those in non-essential work now are), are not required to use sick leave or annual leave. Wherever practicable, you should be able to work from home during this period so this should be treated as work as normal. If you can't work from home but can't attend work to do your job because of self-isolation requirements you must be paid as normal. In this regard it is worth noting that the Government's 'COVID-19 Leave Payment Scheme' is available to tertiary sector employers to support them in paying staff. (<https://www.employment.govt.nz/about/news-and-updates/workplace-response-coronavirus-covid-19/>)

- If you are doing extra duties, such as cleaners, administrators, IT staff, you must be paid for the additional work created by our responses to COVID-19.
- You should try to keep a check on the hours you work at home and make sure you are doing things like taking breaks. If the workload grows, you need to communicate with your manager about what is needed to keep it in check.

## New Zealand COVID-19 Alert Levels

- These alert levels specify the public health and social measures to be taken.
- The measures may be updated on the basis of (i) new scientific knowledge about COVID-19 and (ii) information about the effectiveness of intervention measures in New Zealand and elsewhere.
- The alert levels may be applied at a town, city, territorial local authority, regional or national level.
- Different parts of the country may be at different alert levels. We can move up and down alert levels.
- In general, the alert levels are cumulative, e.g. Level 1 is a base-level response. Always prepare for the next level.
- At all levels, health services, emergency services, utilities and goods transport, and other essential services, operations and staff, are expected to remain up and running. Employers in those sectors must continue to meet their health and safety obligations.

LEVEL	RISK ASSESSMENT	RANGE OF MEASURES (can be applied locally or nationally)
<b>Level 4 - Eliminate</b> Likely that disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained and intensive transmission</li> <li>Widespread outbreaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People instructed to stay at home</li> <li>Educational facilities closed</li> <li>Businesses closed except for essential services (e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics) and lifeline utilities</li> <li>Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities</li> <li>Travel severely limited</li> <li>Major reprioritisation of healthcare services</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 - Restrict</b> Heightened risk that disease is not contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community transmission occurring OR</li> <li>Multiple clusters break out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel in areas with clusters or community transmission limited</li> <li>Affected educational facilities closed</li> <li>Mass gatherings cancelled</li> <li>Public venues closed (e.g. libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, amusement parks)</li> <li>Alternative ways of working required and some non-essential businesses should close</li> <li>Non face-to-face primary care consultations</li> <li>Non acute (elective) services and procedures in hospitals deferred and healthcare staff reprioritised</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 - Reduce</b> Disease is contained, but risks of community transmission growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>Uptick in imported cases OR</li> <li>Uptick in household transmission OR</li> <li>Single or isolated cluster outbreak</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry border measures maximised</li> <li>Further restrictions on mass gatherings</li> <li>Physical distancing on public transport (e.g. leave the seat next to you empty if you can)</li> <li>Limit non-essential travel around New Zealand</li> <li>Employers start alternative ways of working if possible (e.g. remote working, shift-based working, physical distancing within the workplace, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave arrangements)</li> <li>Business continuity plans activated</li> <li>High-risk people advised to remain at home (e.g. those over 70 or those with other existing medical conditions)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 - Prepare</b> Disease is contained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heightened risk of importing COVID-19 OR</li> <li>Sporadic imported cases OR</li> <li>Isolated household transmission associated with imported cases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Border entry measures to minimise risk of importing COVID-19 cases applied</li> <li>Contact tracing</li> <li>Stringent self-isolation and quarantine</li> <li>Intensive testing for COVID-19</li> <li>Physical distancing encouraged</li> <li>Mass gatherings over 500 cancelled</li> <li>Stay home if you're sick, report flu-like symptoms</li> <li>Wash and dry hands, cough into elbow, don't touch your face</li> </ul>

## The right to refuse work

Employees also have a right – and indeed a duty – to take all practicable steps to keep themselves safe (s.83 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015).

1. If you believe that you are at additional risk from COVID-19 because you or a member of your whānau have a compromised immune system or other condition that makes you more vulnerable you should advise your employer (i.e. your line manager) **now** of your additional risk.

This applies whether the risk is of contracting the virus or suffering serious health effects if you do contract it, or if someone in your immediate family is at risk of serious health effects. You can take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of your personal information, but you need to be clear to your employer (i.e. your line manager) about the nature of the additional risk.

2. Whether or not you personally have any additional risk factors, if you believe you are being asked to enter a hazardous situation – taking into account any measures already taken and communicated by the employer – then you may refuse to enter that situation.

You must also, though, advise the employer of your actions and the basis for them. That advice should be given as early as possible, preferably in advance. The HSW Act is explicit at s83 that you must advise the employer. You should also advise your employer of steps you have taken - if any - to make alternative arrangements to cover your absence. The requirement to take steps to make alternative arrangements must be a reasonable requirement in the circumstances.

3. An employee refusing to carry out work due to safety considerations can be asked to do 'alternative duties' (within the scope of their collective agreement) and that request cannot be unreasonably refused.
4. Generally speaking, your workload must be reasonable, equitable and, most importantly, safe.

If you believe you are at risk from an excessive workload due to the special demands created by COVID-19 then the same principles as those outlined above apply. Advise your employer as early as possible of the risk and of any immediate steps you deem or have deemed it necessary to take. Wherever possible, seek an agreed timeframe in which your manager will address non-urgent workload issues - and be prepared to negotiate acceptable duties and workload levels.

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5. In both the above situations, be sure to copy in your union organiser, and contact them if you have any concerns.

### Helping you work in new ways and manage workloads

Do I have to rewrite all my lecture/tutorial notes?

- No – good enough is good enough right now. This is not about turning your work into online savvy and amazing courses (we know you all want to do your best) but these aren't normal working conditions.

What if I don't have the skills needed to do online teaching/learning?

- Let your manager know you need additional support. And remember good enough is all we can do right now.

Where can I go for advice and help with online teaching approaches and managing online

conversations/tutorials/workshops?

- Some quick guides will go up on [teu.ac.nz](http://teu.ac.nz)
- Talk by phone with teaching and learning staff
- Help out your colleagues

If there is no teaching or my teaching can't go online

- You will be paid. So you stay home and do other things.

**The health and wellbeing of staff, students, and whānau is of immediate concern. This includes both physical and mental health. We feel that the principles of Te Whare Tapa Whā – the four dimensions of health must be recognised: spiritual, mental, physical, and whānau – provide an appropriate framework at this time.**

**For more on COVID-19 we recommend:**

[COVID-19](#)

[Ministry of Health](#)

[The Spinoff](#)

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