



**Kia Ora tātou,**

For most businesses, 2021 has been a challenging year. If the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted your business and you're feeling discouraged about hitting your year-end targets, I want to let you know that there's still hope.

The holiday season is coming in just a few weeks. As a time when consumers become extra enthusiastic about shopping, it is a great opportunity to boost your sales and revenue.

Businesses and workers need to be prepared to learn and adapt to find the best ways to maintain physical distancing, and good hygiene and cleaning practices.

encourage workers to engage in work health and safety matters. The Health and Safety at Work Act requires businesses to ask their workers and health and safety representatives about health and safety issues– not just assume that they will speak up.

Many businesses and organisations will already have effective incident reporting approaches that can be adapted to assess how well their COVID-19 controls are working. If a business does not have an incident reporting approach, or its usual practices are not right for the circumstances, then it will need a way to find out if COVID-19 controls are working.

We've compiled some information we hope will be helpful below, but we know your needs will be particular to your business.

We are here to help so please don't hesitate to get in touch for a chat or to discuss how we might help you approach any issues.

Town Centre Manager Rana Judge is available on 027 274 6401 and [manager@obaotara.org.nz](mailto:manager@obaotara.org.nz) and is always happy to hear from you.



## Workers who are at higher risk of severe illness

(per the Ministry of Health's advice), they may be able to work if the worker and employer agree that their risks can be appropriately managed. Working from home is the best model here, wherever it is practicable.

With the agreement and good faith and all appropriate measures in place, including around how the worker travels to and from work, some of these workers may still be able to work safely outside of their homes.

The Ministry of Health also has guidance for businesses and organisations that employ workers who may be classified as 'at risk' or immune-compromised against COVID-19. An 'at risk' or immune-compromised employee is someone who is at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and/or is more likely to suffer long term effects from the virus.

Ways to address the risk of COVID-19 transmission for either type of issue could include:

- implementing controls such as isolating workers, putting engineering controls in place, good hygiene practices, physical distancing, or PPE as appropriate. The business should explain to their workers why the activity is needed and explain exactly what the controls can and can't do.
- asking individual workers to work from home, or carry out reasonable alternative duties while the risk is addressed, and paying them normally,
- agreeing when paid or unpaid leave will be used.

If an employer does not address an employee's reasonable belief or concern about COVID-19, then they should not require any worker to come to a workplace or the employer will likely be in breach of the HSWA.

### **No worker who is sick with COVID-19, or who is required to self-isolate, may go to work in any circumstances**

Employers should not require or knowingly allow workers to come to a workplace when they are sick with COVID-19 or required to self-isolate (as a suspected case, a close contact, or on return from overseas) under public health guidelines for COVID-19. If they do, they are likely to be in breach of their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA).

If a worker tries to come to work in these circumstances, they are also likely to be in breach of the HSWA.

### **Follow Social Distancing Guidelines**

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COVID-19, it can be difficult to maintain in the workplace. Still, social distancing is the new norm—and it will be for the foreseeable future. Depending on your workspace, here are some ways the CDC recommends to help employees and customers keep a safe distance:<sup>8</sup>

- Rethink desks, displays, and workspaces to create more distance
- Move some staff to different workstations or stagger work hours to limit the number of workers in one area at any given time
- Limit the number of seats in common areas
- Use tape to mark six-foot intervals in places where workers or customers wait in lines
- Manage break rooms to limit the number of people who gather at one time
- Post signs outside the office or shop that advise people not to enter if they have had COVID-19 symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has been infected

Set a good example for your workers and customers. If you're asking them to wear a mask, you should, too.

## **Clean and Disinfect your Store**

It's always smart to maintain a clean workspace, but it's especially important now. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least once a day—and much more frequently in high-traffic areas, such as checkout counters or office kitchen counters and break areas.

Be sure to clean doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, tables, desks, keyboards, remote controls, elevator buttons, toilets (including handles), faucets, sinks, cash registers/point of sale (POS) displays, business equipment, and phones.

Encourage workers to clean their personal phones, too, as well as any other equipment they bring from home into the workplace.

Of course, all of these cleaning and disinfecting supplies can be dangerous if not used properly. Be sure to provide guidelines for using them safely and provide the proper equipment—such as gloves and masks—and adequate ventilation to limit chemical exposure. Better yet, hire professional cleaners who already have safety systems in place.

# What financial support can I get?

New Zealand Government

Unite  
against  
COVID-19

## Financial support for businesses

COVID-19 financial support for businesses is changing as New Zealand transitions into the COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic light system).

No new rounds of the Wage Subsidy Scheme or Resurgence Support Payment will be opened under the new Framework.

The Short-Term Absence Payment, Leave Support Scheme and Small Business Cash Flow Loan Scheme will continue to be available.

## Transition payment

A one-off transition payment is available for eligible businesses as New Zealand moved into the new Framework. The payment is particularly in recognition of the length of time Auckland, Waikato and Northland businesses spent under higher Alert Levels.

**When:** Applications opened on 10 December 2021. If your business had reduced income between 3 October and 9 November, you may be eligible for the payment.

**How much:** \$4,000 per business plus \$400 per full time employee (FTE) up to a cap of 50 FTEs.

**How to apply:** You can apply through the Resurgence Support Payment system in myIR. The eligibility criteria is the same as for Resurgence Support Payments.

[Apply for the Resurgence Support Payment](#) — Inland Revenue

If you're unable to pay your taxes on time due to the impact of COVID-19, we can help. If you'd like to break down your payments, you can set up an instalment arrangement in myIR.

[Apply for an instalment arrangement in myIR](#)



## Checking My Vaccine Passes

Businesses operating under My Vaccine Pass rules must check customers' passes. We recommend at or near the point of entry, or as soon as possible after entry (for example, if there is only one staff member, this might be at the counter).

- Businesses who choose to require the My Vaccine Pass must sight Passes, and must verify a reasonable number using a verifier app.
- Some businesses are prohibited from asking for My Vaccine Passes. These include supermarkets, pharmacies, health and disability services, specified social services, food banks, petrol stations and public transport (excluding air-travel).

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- Businesses are not required to check a customer's pass if they reasonably consider that the customer is a child under the age of 12 years 3 months.
- The free NZ Pass Verifier app is available now from the Apple and Google Play app stores for downloading. The app is used to verify digital or printed My Vaccine Passes, by scanning the QR code on the Pass.
- The Verifier app can be downloaded onto a smart phone or tablet. [NZ Pass Verifier](#) — Ministry of Health

## Customer compliance

Businesses must display posters or signage indicating to customers if entry is contingent on having a My Vaccine Pass. These can be downloaded from the COVID-19 website.

[Posters for businesses and organisations](#) — COVID-19

Customers must show a My Vaccine Pass before they can enter business premises that require them, this includes showing it for verification if asked.

It is recommended businesses provide staff with wording for customers who do not wish to comply with requirements, so staff are best able to de-escalate a situation. Make it clear when workers should walk away or decide not to continue to engage with a person. Consideration should also be given to what kind of behaviour might mean calling the Police.

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## Businesses of the Month



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the town centre a trendy and fun place to visit. Their efforts to connect with the community on their social media is praiseworthy as it not only allows them to build long-lasting relationships but also bring new traffic and talent to the centre.

Visit them here: [Otara Music & Arts Centre OMAC](#)



Second shoutout is well deserved by TYLA Youth Development Trust for making the town centre a welcoming and loving place for visitors of all ages. Their ambition to help the youth at-risk is highly recognised as it helps the community move towards a better tomorrow. They also deserve this spot because of being highly active on their socials to reach and target their target audience. The opportunities TYLA provides to the youth is admirable and we are proud to have you as of our community.

Visit them here: [TYLA Youth Development Trust](#)

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