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Working During a declared Pandemic

At all times maintain a diary of where you have been (QR scans)

Overview

This procedure was developed during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. This should be read in conjunction with other SOP's, official government advice and Horizons Emergency Management directives. While this document applies to all ED work a second SOP 1.8 appendix A applies to SOE and sampling and is jointly shared with NRP (Science). For general advice refer to Horizons COVID page: <https://horizonsregionalcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/COVID-19.aspx> or the ministry of health website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/current-alert-level/>

Also refer to the Horizon's Risk Management Plan 37 Working in a pandemic



Precautions and basic hygiene

- **Stay home if you're sick** - Staying at home if you are sick is one way to stop any possible spread of COVID-19.
- **Practice good hygiene** - It's still important that we use basic hygiene measures, including washing your hands, coughing or sneezing into your elbow and cleaning surfaces.
- **Keep track of where you've been** - Fast and effective contact tracing helps us to prevent any further spread of COVID-19 in New Zealand. You are encouraged to use the [NZ COVID Tracer app](#) for this purpose and enable the Bluetooth tracing function.
- **Wear a face covering** - Face coverings can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. At Alert Level 4 the wearing of **face covering are mandatory when visiting essential services including council offices and the lab.**
- **Maintain physical distancing** - Physical distancing is an important way we can protect ourselves against COVID-19.

Guidance and rules in each level are likely to change. Keep up to date with current government advice.



Risk Analysis

Current knowledge

- Currently, the incubation period of COVID-19 is assessed to be between 2 and 14 days.
- This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone who has coronavirus, they are not contagious (it is possible to have contracted the disease but remain asymptomatic).
- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 meters) such that droplets could be inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching door knob or shaking hands then touching own face)
- Covid-19 is highly infectious

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- Covid-19 can cause serious illness and death
- Vaccines are currently shown to be 88% effective against infection to the delta variant and greatly reduces the risk of hospitalizations.

Delta Variant

For the latest information please see:

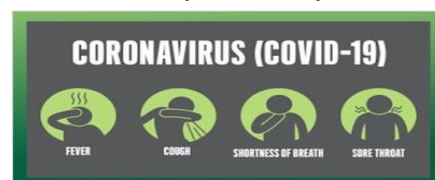
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/about-covid-19/covid-19-about-delta-variant>

- Delta can cause people to develop more serious COVID-19 illness than other variants of the virus
- People with a Delta infection are at higher risk of needing hospitalisation.
- The chance of infecting others such as within your household or other contacts is very high because Delta is so transmissible. It is estimated that on average, one person infected with Delta may infect 5 or 6 other people. This is how Delta outbreaks in places overseas have grown so rapidly.
- People with Delta infections seem to carry much more virus (have a higher viral load) and for a longer period of time than those infected with the original virus or other variants.
- The time from exposure to the virus until first symptoms is shorter for the Delta variant. Some people may have no symptoms (asymptomatic) when infectious.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to a range of other illnesses such as influenza and do not necessarily mean that you have COVID-19. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Temporary loss of smell
- Sore throat
- Runny Nose
- **Difficulty breathing.**



Difficulty breathing is a sign of possible pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

General

During the Pandemic it will not be business as usual. Essentially during level four all water quality programmes are suspended and only critical IVR and flood warning sites can be repaired. During Level three programmes will start being brought online. This plan will change as we proceed through the levels and as more information come through.

- Working from home except of course approved field work
- One person per truck
- Management approval to visit a site (Get Home safe tracking essential)
- In level three, some runs will be considered as approved (refer below)
- Only one person in the lab calibrating and preloading chili bins (wearing a mask)
- Only one person in science shed, (wearing a mask)
- No overnight stays (affects Northern teams runs)

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- No boats or helicopters, (affects Lake Programs)
- No “Cold calling” ring ahead of time and gain permission of land owners
- At all times maintain a dairy of where you have been and who you have seen. **We strongly recommend the government QR scanner with blue tooth turned on.**

Before conducting field work

- Staff that need to work in the field must obtain permission from their Manager / Team Leader or nominated person of planned locations and approximate time of return to office or home.
- If visiting a site where it is likely a contractor or landowner may be present please call them first and:
 - confirm access time and date;
 - check if anyone will be in close proximity to area of work;
 - explain what work you intend doing and the precautions you will take.
- If you are visiting sites controlled by other PCBU's you must follow their protocols at all times, unless their standards are less than is required by the Council's procedures.
- If the site is in a public place, also sanitise all contact points on the shared external surfaces such as gates, latches etc, both on entry and exit.

Contract tracing


As a staff member working in the field, you **MUST** keep a daily record of who you have been in contact with in relation to your Council work – if you are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, you will need to be able to provide this information to the Ministry of Health to enable contact tracing. Please download and use the New Zealand COVID contract tracing app.

Returning home


To stop the possible spread of COVID-19, it is important that when you return home after work, you take all the necessary precautions to ensure that you and everyone in your bubble are safe. Here are five simple guidelines to follow:

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No touching
When you return home, try not to touch anything until you have cleaned your hands properly.




Shoes
Remove your shoes, do not walk through the house with them on - leave them outside.



Items
Leave non-essential items at work and disinfect items you have used at work that you have to keep with you, e.g. mobile phones.



Clothes and bags
Place your clothes and bags in a container and wash in a hot washing machine cycle.



Shower
Have a shower and make sure to clean your hands, wrists, arms, neck, nails and areas that might have been exposed.

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Accessing office/depot during pandemic

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU: consider others, they may still wish to exercise physical distancing. Stay away if you have flu like symptoms.
3	Work from home where possible. Exercise physical distancing. Stagger smoko breaks. Limit face to face meetings. Management / EOC approval is required prior to entering an HRC office, the WQ Lab, or any depot for any reason. We still need to maintain Physical distancing. As such we need to know and manage how many staff are in each office.
4	Management / EOC approval is required prior to entering an HRC office or depot for any reason. Accessing an HRC office or depot will be considered as a last resort and be undertaken by named essential staff only. Plan and prepare to reduce need to access an office or depot space. All effort needs be made to control the spread of the virus. Wash or disinfect hands prior to entering the office. Restrict access to one external door and minimise movements within the building. Treat both yourself and every surface as though they are infected. Wearing a face mask indoors is mandatory. Avoid using bathroom and kitchen facilities where possible. Avoid touching surfaces with hands, sanitise your hands have before and after entering an office or room. Always cough into your arm or a tissue and discard tissue responsibly. Movements in and out of HRC offices will be monitored by EOC.

Staff or public contact during pandemic

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU: consider others, they may still wish to exercise physical distancing. Stay away if you are feeling unwell.
3	Limit face to face meetings. Where possible keep to the 2 metre physical distancing guidelines. Wash hands with soap regularly
4	Management / EOC approval is required prior to staff having direct contact with the public. This approval may simply be for the duties you need to carry out. When approved staff are to follow strict physical distancing for any person who does not belong to your bubble (those you currently live with). Do not stand closer than 2m from anyone, if windy double this distance, or ensure there is a cross wind. Maintain a log of these face to face encounters and who you have met with. Wear a face mask when meeting with people outside your bubble. Wash hands thoroughly with soap regularly.

Storage and use of vehicles

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU
3	Keep vehicle full with fuel, and clean ready for repurposing in case of level 4 escalation. Sanitise hands with regularly, when entering vehicles. Only one person in the vehicle unless special permission has been obtained, in which case one is to sit on the back seat where possible. Store vehicles at your private residence unless directed otherwise.
4	Store vehicles at your private residence unless directed otherwise. Use only the single vehicle assigned to you. Do not swap vehicles unless you are authorised to. Do not access other hydro vehicles for the purpose of sourcing equipment and spares, ask the person who is assigned that vehicle to do this for you if needed.

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Accessing monitoring stations during pandemic

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU: consider others, they may still wish to exercise physical distancing. Stay away if you are feeling unwell. Use the get home safe app every time you are in the field.
3	A risk assessment needs to be done prior to visiting any site taking into consideration likely C19 transmission hot spots such as gates, handrails etc. Urban monitoring stations likely pose a higher risk due to movements of people out exercising etc. Only one person to be in a vehicle at any one time. Try to limit Vehicles to dedicated drivers only. Limit face to face meetings. Where possible keep to the 2 metre physical distancing guidelines. Wash hands with soap regularly. Use the Get home safe app to report your duties and intended time that you will be safely home.
4	<p>Authorisation needs to be obtained from the Environmental data manager or deputy before visiting any site. Only priority sites are to be visited (Flood warning, IVR, critical webcams, and supporting infrastructure). A risk assessment needs to be done prior to visiting any site taking into consideration likely C19 transmission hot spots such as gates, handrails etc. Urban monitoring stations likely pose a higher risk due to movements of people out exercising etc. Only one person to be in a vehicle at any one time. Try to limit Vehicles to dedicated drivers only.</p> <p>Make an effort to contact landowners especially if you need to pass through a number of paddocks etc. Wear a mask when you come across a land owner or member of the public.</p> <p>Wash hands with soap and water prior to accessing a site.</p> <p>Where practical, access site via the nearest public road, duck through fences rather than having to touch gates. If opening a gate is unavoidable, disinfect gate after touching. Wash hands thoroughly prior to leaving each site. Wash hands thoroughly with soap regularly.</p>

Refuelling vehicle during pandemic

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU: consider others, they may still wish to exercise physical distancing. Stay away if you are feeling unwell.
3	Keep vehicle full with fuel in case of level 4 escalation. Wash hands with soap regularly. Where possible refuel locally, before leaving for a day in the field.
4	<p>Please take care in all areas where there is higher levels of 'people traffic' such as petrol stations. Try to refuel at the same fuel station near to your home. Ensure tank is full at the start or end of a day before leaving your local area. It is a legal requirement that you wear a mask while refuelling.</p> <p>Priority should be given to unmanned petrol stations to reduce human contact (do our fuel cards work at these?) Wash hands prior to touching anything at a petrol station.</p> <p>Open fuel cap. If pump attendants are present let them insert put pump nozzle and inform attendant that you will close the fuel cap yourself.</p> <p>Where possible use corner of fuel card to push eftpos buttons. Check fuel cap is closed, wash or disinfect both hands and fuel card before re-entering vehicle.</p>

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Work to be completed onsite

Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU
3	Maintain sites with a view to having access to the site restricted in the future. Keep rain gauges clean and empty. Batteries and solar systems checked and replaced where necessary. Prepare sites for extended periods of operation with no staff on site.
4	<p>Work to be conducted onsite will not be business as usual. You will be instructed on specifics prior to driving to the site. One person per vehicle.</p> <p>For example, you will be sent onsite to replace a failing battery or fix water level sensors. Do not conduct a gauging or download any in-river loggers; unless you have been instructed to. Essentially don't touch more than you must.</p>

Undertaking work that requires two staff on site

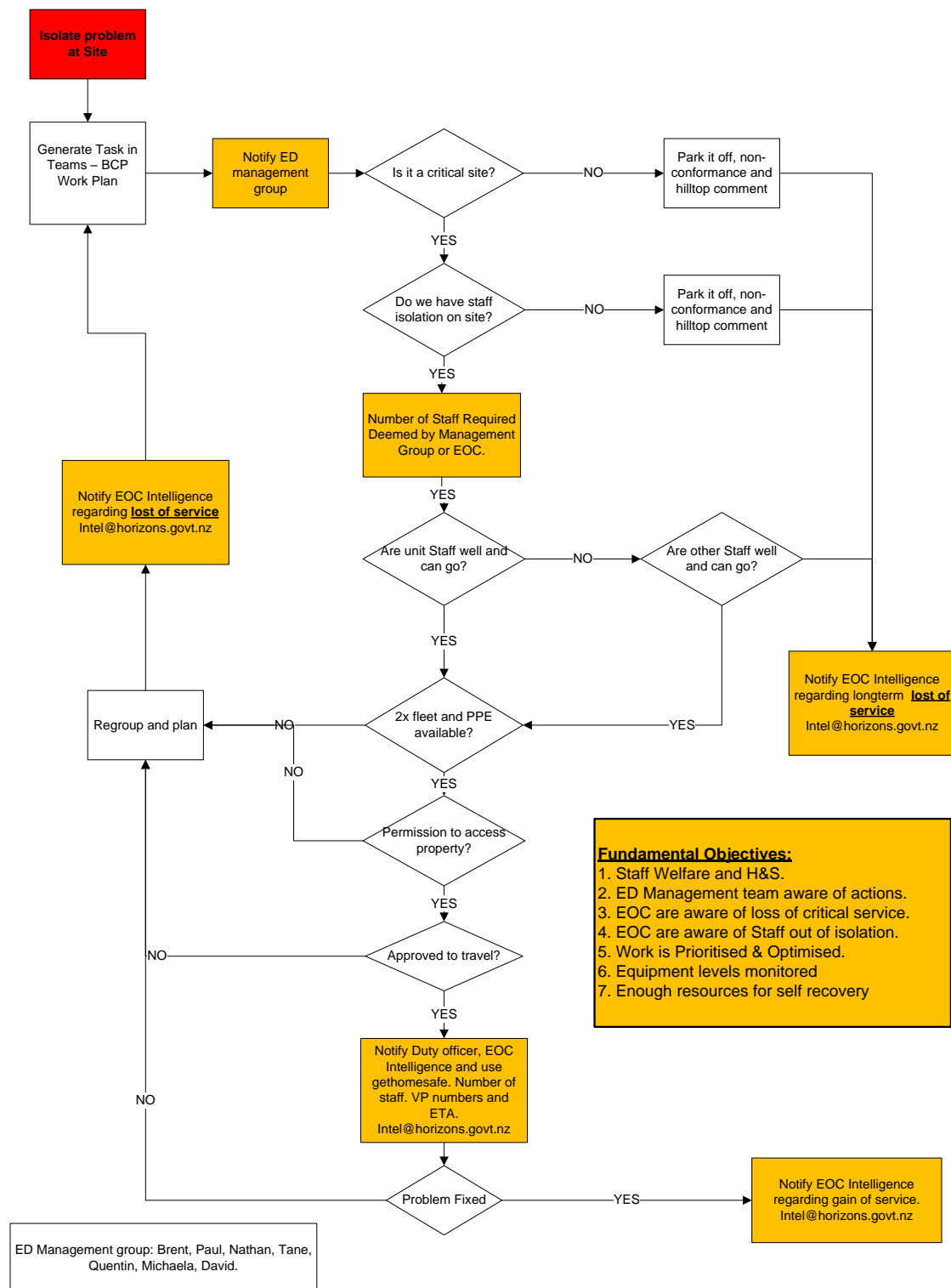
Pandemic Level	Operating principles
2 or Less	BAU
3	One person only in a vehicle, maintain the physical distancing rules (2 metres)
4	<p>Authorisation needs to be obtained from the Environmental data manager or their deputy. A log must be maintained of who was working with who in case contact tracing is needed. In the event two staff are required onsite for safety reasons staff are to drive in separate vehicles to the site.</p> <p>Prior to starting works wash or disinfect hands. Do not touch your workmates vehicle, tools, or equipment and ensure you maintain a distance of at least two meters at all times.</p> <p>In the event a heavy item needs two people to lift onsite ensure that it is disinfected prior to being reloaded into a vehicle.</p>

Hand washing and disinfecting surfaces

2 or Less	BAU
3	Refer to guidelines for level 4.
4	<p>According to NZ's Ministry of Health, hand washing often with soap and water for 20 seconds, then drying your hands for 20 seconds, is a vital practice needed to reduce the spread of covid-19.</p> <p>Carry a minimum of 10L of water, a cake of soap or liquid hand soap for hand washing. You will also need to carry disinfectant spray for the purpose of disinfecting those surfaces you have touched onsite that might lead to virus transmission such as gates and gate chains.</p> <p>Treat yourself and surfaces (gates etc) as though they are infected with C19. It is essential we change our behaviour to ensure we take the above precautions, as essential workers travelling large distances it is vital we safeguard the communities we are travelling to and of course our colleagues and ourselves.</p>

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Environmental Data: Critical Site Repair under Level 4 Pandemic.



Horizons: Environmental Data and Science Programme Status Summary

As at 1-September-2021

Programmes Current status:	Core ED Functions																
	Flood / IVR	Consents	Webcams	ED sites	Survey	Flow meters	Manual GW	SoE Surface	SoE Ground	SoE Lakes	Periphyton	Macroinverts	Contract WQ	Swim Spots	Fish	Coastal	ESR Trial
Current Level: 3 Level 3 - Restrict Heightened risk that disease is not contained	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	Boating not permitted under level 3. No Helicopter sampling	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle inform all parties of status	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle
Level 0 - No Pandemic										Programme under review							Programme now on hold
Level 1 - Prepare Disease is contained													Inform contract mangers of our limitations	Inform and discuss with mid central health			
Level 2 - Reduce Disease is contained, but risks of community transmission growing	Clean and maintain sites in prep for extended period without access to site	Clean and maintain sites in prep for extended period without access to site	Ensure key EM webcams are operational, batteries etc	Clean and maintain sites in prep for extended period without access to site		Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date	Check and ensure run guides are up to date
Level 3 - Restrict Heightened risk that disease is not contained	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	Boating not permitted under level 3. No Helicopter sampling	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle inform all parties of status	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle	one person per vehicle
Level 4 - Eliminate Likely that disease is not contained	Permission required from EOC	Only when directed by EOC	Only when directed by EOC	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity inform contract partners this can affect consents	Cease activity inform mid central health	Cease activity	Cease activity	Cease activity