

COVID 19 (Corona Virus) Construction and Building Industry Toolbox Talk

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 ministry of health which will always be the primary source of advice in this matter. Please see the MOH website for further information www.health.govt.nz

FACTS

This is a new virus and what we know about it will change over time.

New Zealand has currently very low rates of the virus however this situation could change rapidly.

It is more infectious than normal flu but with similar symptoms. The virus affects older people with underlying conditions. For most working age people the mortality rate is less than 1%.

It can cause fever (high temperature), sore throat, cough, breathing problems, and muscle aches.

Symptoms can start day after exposure but could be up to 14 days later.

Most have a mild illness but like other flus it can be fatal.

It is most likely spread by coming into contact with droplets created by people sneezing, coughing or even talking. The droplets infect you when they enter your mouth, nose or eyes. If you touch contaminated objects (e.g. handles that were recently touched by an infected person) then touch your face you can become infected.

If symptoms are mild they can be treated with normal medicines to lower fever and reduce discomfort. If symptoms are more severe (e.g. trouble breathing) then hospital may be required.

Tests are needed to confirm Covid 19.

What can you do to prevent catching COVID 19?



Maintain good personal hygiene. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Dry your hands.

Use Alcohol based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.

Keep away from sick people, don't let them cough and sneeze on you – if you are coughing and sneezing keep yourself to yourself. Cough into your elbow. Its ok not to greet by shaking hands.

Do not share food, drinks and personal items.

Flu vaccination will help reduce the risk of seasonal flu and possible confusion with Covid 19.

If you think you have been exposed to Covid 19 or have symptoms – please call 0800 358 5453 which is the ministry of health line dedicated to this.

You will need to stay home out of contact for 14 days.

Practical things to think about for Construction

- Make sure there is enough water, soap and handtowels to dry hands available on site.
- Used handtowels to be put in bins and regularly disposed of by somebody wearing disposable gloves
- Check in with your team regularly and if people aren't feeling well (e.g. fever, coughing, sneezing) tell them to take time off.
- Review your projects and plan ahead for goods and material deliveries, slow or no deliveries for China sourced materials could have an impact on projects. Think about potential alternative suppliers of critical materials.
- For those on wages that may struggle for money during isolation, think about how you can support your staff and each other for food and necessities.
- Masks are for people with the flu to prevent spread rather than as a protection against it.

Wider New Zealand Construction Industry Perspectives

New Zealand construction businesses should be thinking about three potential scenarios (credit McKinsey):

1. Quick recovery – where cases continue to grow causing a strong public reaction and drop in demand. However China is already showing signs of dramatically reducing new cases. Other countries respond (most relevant to NZ, Korea and Australia) and achieve the same rapid control as China. Levels of concern start to ebb as low fatality rates in working age people become known. Working age people's concerns are around their parents and older friends/neighbours/colleagues. The virus shows that it is seasonal and decreases in the northern hemisphere. Most people in NZ continue their normal lives. Fast rebound of economy by Q2 by Europe and US. China's factories return to full output by end of March.
2. A global slowdown – most countries are not able to achieve the rapid control that China achieved. Cancellation of public events and travel disruption occurs. Major cities (most likely Auckland) would be a major epicentre with most towns with a handful of cases. Greater shift in peoples behaviours lasting 6-8 weeks. Small to mid-sized businesses most effected. Service sectors hardest hit. Aviation impacted with Air NZ potentially reacting to manage overcapacity. Private sector construction demand reduces with slowdown in tourism and general GDP. BNZ recently published their views that a recession was now probable.
3. A pandemic drive recession – this assumes that the virus is not seasonal. Case growth continues in Q2/Q3 and overwhelms health systems. Global recession occurs for the rest of 2020.

Risks and issues to construction to consider:

- Supply chain challenges. For Chinese sourced materials impacted by factory shutdowns in China. Hubei is still in the early phases of recovery but normal restrictions may prevent normal exports till Q2.
- Workforce restrictions: with air travel being impacted and stand-downs being enforced for some origins there may be some disruption for migrant workers entering New Zealand or wanting to return home.
- Some migrant workers who are asked to self-quarantine may not have enough financial support to do so and return to work regardless.
- Cash flow and liquidity – in a recession although interest rates may remain low, support for working capital by banks and lending institutions may become more restricted as confidence decreases. Early discussions and planning with banks and financial institutions is advised for businesses that traditionally require working capital support over the New Zealand winter. Reforecasting budgets and cashflow throughout Q2 and Q3 based on conservative estimates of private sector income and delayed projects because of shortfalls in material supplies should be undertaken. Some potential price rises should be anticipated for critical imported goods and competition and scarcity require more cash up front to secure supply
- The government's economic approach to Covid 19 will become more clear this week as Finance Minister Grant Robertson is delivering an on the record speech to Wellington Chamber of Commerce on Thursday.

Please note that CHASNZ does not provide financial advice or opinions to the construction sector. The views above are not forecasts but potential scenarios collected from market sources with additional commentary from CHASNZ and are only provided to assist construction businesses with their thinking over the coming period.

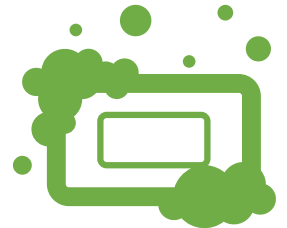
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Individuals should always consult with their own financial advisors and base their decisions on careful consideration of their own circumstances.

Fight Colds and Flu



Get a flu shot – its not too late to protect yourself from seasonal flu



Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds – dry them properly

Cover your cough – in your elbow not your hands.



Stay home if you are sick.

