



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**  
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

# COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic lights)



Guidance for Social Service  
Providers to be read in  
conjunction with general  
CPF Guidance



**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

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# Introduction

The traffic lights are the next stage in our COVID-19 response plan. They allow social services to open and operate in a way that is as close to normal for vaccinated people while minimising the virus' spread. This helps keep vulnerable people and those that can't be vaccinated right now safe as they go about our daily lives.

The framework empowers social service providers and organisations to take responsibility for minimising the spread of COVID-19. Having a highly vaccinated population that regularly uses My Vaccine Pass means we will be better able to protect our hospitals and health system.

Social Services can operate at all traffic light settings; however, some requirements will remain the same and some requirements will be different.

The guidance and advice on this website is interim. It will be updated to reflect any changes in the COVID-19 Protection Framework Order.

There are three parts to this page that should all be read together in conjunction with the overarching Framework ([COVID-19 Protection Framework | Unite against COVID-19](#))

1. Guidance for all COVID-19 Protection Settings
2. Guidance that applies only at some of the traffic light settings
3. Additional guidance

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# 1. Guidance for all COVID-19 Protection Settings

## Settings differ depending the services you provide

### Vaccine passes

- Whether you must require vaccine passes depends on the service you provide and the traffic light level you are in.
- Vaccine passes cannot be required for clients of some services (non-vaccine pass services):
- For **social services**, there are certain premises where my Vaccine Passes can't be required for people accessing certain social service premises, including:
  - Kāinga Ora premises or services delivered on premises
  - premises let on behalf of registered community housing providers (as defined in section 2 of the Public and Community Housing Management Act 1992) but only if the tenancy was granted as a tenancy of social housing to a tenant assessed under the Public and Community Housing Management Act 1992 as eligible to be allocated social housing
  - emergency accommodation funded by government agenciesand premises delivering:
  - any health and disability service
  - Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) programmes
  - other housing or accommodation services funded by government agencies to people in need
  - shelter or emergency and temporary housing in a civil defence emergency.

### Staff vaccination

- The vaccine pass requirements apply to clients as well as workers. This means if you require vaccine passes, your workers providing the service **must also be vaccinated**.
- If your service is **not** using vaccine passes, there is some choice about whether staff are to be vaccinated, although this may impact on whether you can operate under all levels.
- Providers should use the assessment tool to help make decisions about vaccinations in the workplace. [How to decide what work requires a vaccinated employee and WorkSafe's enforcement approach | WorkSafe.](#)
- Some workers are covered by other mandatory Orders, including the Health, Corrections and Education mandates, and the mandates that cover workers in a food and drink business or service, people who work and gyms, close-proximity workers and workers who carry out work at permitted events. [COVID-19: Mandatory vaccinations | Ministry of Health NZ.](#)

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## Other requirements

- If you are selling or providing food and drink, you may need to follow certain food and drink requirements. This does not apply to food and drink provided on the premises of a health service, or to the provision of food or drink in connection with a [specified social service](#) (outlined below)
- QR codes must be displayed and businesses and services must have systems in place to ensure clients scan QR codes or provide contact records on entry.

## Social Services that deliver critical wellbeing services

- Social services that deliver critical wellbeing can open under Red, Orange and Green.
- These are services provided under the Oranga Tamariki Act, and also those services that support people to maintain critical well-being and as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless.
- Examples of critical wellbeing services include: family violence and sexual violence crisis response services, and welfare support for those self-isolating.
- Some critical wellbeing services might provide services in close-proximity, but they are not included in the close-proximity services rules below. Social services that deliver critical wellbeing services (legally referred to as ‘Specified Social Services’) are excluded from the close-proximity business and service definition.
- Social services that deliver critical wellbeing are required to have systems and processes in place to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that each relevant person who enters any workplace of the business or service scans the QR code for the workplace; or provides a contact record in accordance with the workplace’s alternative contact record systems and processes. This requirement applies at all traffic light levels.

## Vaccine passes

- It is **optional** for vaccine passes to be required for clients at all levels, unless your service is listed above as a non-vaccine pass service who cannot require vaccine passes for clients.
- Some factors providers should consider in making this decision may include:
  - your capability/capacity to safely provide services to unvaccinated clients which may include having different operating models in place at the same time.
  - the ability for unvaccinated clients to access that service elsewhere in their area should a vaccine pass be used as a condition of service.
  - the outcome of your risk assessments under the Health and Safety Act.

## Staff vaccination

- If vaccine passes for clients **are used**, staff must **be vaccinated**.
- If vaccine passes for clients **are not used**, staff **do not** have to be vaccinated **unless** they are covered by another Mandatory Order.
- Social service providers/organisations should carry out their own risk assessments to ensure their Health and Safety obligations at work are met.

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## Close-proximity services

- **Close-proximity** businesses and services are businesses and services that can't be undertaken without physical contact, or close-proximity, including workers being within 1 metre of clients.
- If your service provides critical wellbeing services, please see the heading "[Critical wellbeing services](#)" above.
- Social service providers/organisations should consider, based on their service model, whether they provide close-proximity services. An example of a close-proximity service may include driving instruction, some OSCAR programmes or transporting service participants.

## Vaccine passes

- If the service is open under Red or Orange, vaccine passes are required.
  - Providers who wish to operate without requiring vaccine passes may not operate close-proximity services under the Red or Orange level settings of the COVID-19 Protection Framework.
- If open under Green, vaccine passes are not required. Providers should carry out their own risk assessments to ensure their Health and Safety obligations at work are met.
  - Providers who wish to operate without requiring vaccine passes under the Green level setting may operate if they have systems in place to:
    - Ensure face coverings are worn as required.
    - Comply with applicable physical distancing rules.
    - Mitigate risk of spreading COVID-19 to the extent physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - Businesses and services must display whether vaccine passes are required.

## Staff vaccination

- If your service is using vaccine passes, staff vaccination is required.
- If your service is **not** using vaccine passes, staff vaccination is not required, unless workers are covered by another Mandatory Order.
- Social services providers/organisations should carry out risk assessments under the Health and Safety at Work Act to determine whether it is appropriate to require staff to be vaccinated, if vaccine passes are not used.

## Other requirements

- Face coverings must be used by workers and clients in indoor public areas under Red and Orange settings.

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## OSCAR

OSCAR services can open under Red, Orange and Green settings.

### Vaccine passes

- Vaccine passes for participants is prohibited for all OSCAR services.

### Staff vaccination

- Please refer to [OSCAR subsector guidance](#)

## Other services that are not close-proximity or social services, food and drink businesses or services, or gyms

- Can open under Red, Orange and Green settings.
- Examples: counselling services, employment services.

### Vaccine passes

- It is **optional** for vaccine passes to be required at all levels, unless your service is a [non-vaccine pass service](#).

### Staff vaccination

- If your service is using vaccine passes, staff vaccination is required.
- If your service is **not** using vaccine passes, staff vaccination is not required, unless workers are covered by another Mandatory Order.
- Providers should carry out risk assessments under the Health and Safety at Work Act to determine whether it is appropriate to require staff to be vaccinated, if vaccine passes are not used.

## 2. Guidance at different traffic light settings

### Green

- » COVID-19 in New Zealand, including sporadic imported cases. Limited community transmission.
- » COVID-19 hospitalisations are at a manageable level.
- » The health system is ready to respond (primary care, public health, and hospitals).
- » Social Services can operate, but some requirements will remain the same and some requirements will be different. Social Services providing critical wellbeing services do not have to follow the 'close-proximity' guidelines.

#### General operating arrangements at the Green setting

- Workplaces and any retail operations can open.
- Social service providers are all open with staff on site.
- There are no restrictions on visitors (unless you are holding an event or a gathering), but staff details must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing. They must also meet any other health requirements applicable at the time.
- There are requirements around close-proximity services where [vaccine passes are not required](#).
- Businesses and services must display QR codes.
- Social services and close-proximity business and services must ensure people entering their premises scan QR codes or provide a contact record.

#### Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Programmes

- OSCAR - Playgrounds can be used along with maintaining good hand hygiene.
- Physical and cultural activities can go ahead on site (all other public health measures must be maintained including good hygiene practices).

### Orange

- » Community transmission with pressure on the health system.
- » The whole health system is focusing resources, but can still manage primary care, public health, and hospitals.
- » Increasing risk for at-risk populations.
- » Social Services can operate, but some requirements will remain the same and some requirements will be different. Social Services providing critical wellbeing services do not have to follow the 'close-proximity' guidelines.

#### General operating arrangements at the Orange setting

- Workplaces can open.
- Any retail aspect of the service may open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing.
- Face coverings are encouraged in the workplace and are mandatory for retail and close-proximity services (unless a person is exempt).
- There are no restrictions on visitors (unless you are holding an event or a gathering). Those on site must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing and must meet any other health requirements applicable at the time.
- Businesses and services must display QR codes.
- Social services and close-proximity business and services must ensure people entering their premises scan QR codes or provide a contact record.

#### Critical wellbeing

- In some circumstances in order to provide the required level of assistance to people with **critical wellbeing needs** it is permitted for social services to engage in close contact work without requiring a vaccine pass. This is where the services are defined as **'a service provided under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, and other social services provided to support persons to maintain critical well-being and as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless.'**
- This will include providers involved in the Care in the Community Welfare Response.
- Organisations providing these services will need to assess themselves against this definition.
- [PPE](#) requirements will be in place.

#### Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Programmes

- OSCAR - Playgrounds can be used along with maintaining good hand hygiene.
- Physical and cultural activities can go ahead on site (all other public health measures must be maintained including good hygiene practices).

### Red

- » Action needed to protect the health system from facing an unsustainable number of hospitalisations.
- » Action needed to protect at-risk populations.
- » Social Services can operate, however, some requirements will remain the same and some requirements will be different. Social Services providing critical wellbeing services do not have to follow the 'close-proximity' guidelines.

#### General operating arrangements at the Red setting

- If it is appropriate for your job you can work from home. Talk to your employer about what is appropriate for you.
- Any retail aspect of the service may open with capacity limits based on 1m distancing
- Face coverings are encouraged in the workplace and are mandatory for retail and close-proximity services (unless a person is exempt)
- Minimise attendance on site for non-essential services as much as possible. Those on site must be captured in a visitor register or other system, to support contact tracing and must meet any other health requirements applicable at the time.
- Businesses and services must display QR codes.
- Social services and close-proximity business and services must ensure people entering their premises scan QR codes or provide a contact record.

#### Critical wellbeing

In some circumstances in order to provide the required level of assistance to people with **critical wellbeing needs** it is permitted for social services to engage in close contact work without requiring a vaccine pass. This is where the services are defined as **'a service provided under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, and other social services provided to support persons to maintain critical well-being and as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless.'**

- This will include providers involved in the Care in the Community Welfare Response
- Organisations providing these services will need to assess themselves against this definition
- [PPE](#) requirements will be in place.

#### Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR) Programmes

- OSCAR providers must maintain their own groupings of up to 20 children (staffing requirements as per existing standard OSCAR guidelines). Where there are multiple groupings, the groups must maintain 1m distancing from each other indoors.
- Having OSCAR groupings means that a provider will be able to easily identify who children have interacted with if any staff or child tests positive for COVID-19, and schools will be able to identify which groups that child is part of in the classroom.
- Playgrounds can be used (maintain good hand hygiene) but consider rostering use by different groups to minimise congestion.
- Exercising and singing must be held outdoors.
- Physical education classes and break time activities can include access to sports equipment, but good hygiene practices should be observed before and after playing with equipment.

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## 3. Additional guidance

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### Localised protections and lockdowns

- In localised protections and lockdowns, social and community-based services provided to support persons to maintain critical well-being or as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless, services provided under Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, foodbanks, and cooked food delivery services referred by the Ministry of Social Development, or a District Health Board, are able to operate within a restricted area.
- Government services, including those state services related to the COVID-19 response or infrastructure, are also able to operate within a restricted area.
- OSCAR programmes must close.

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### Crossing boundaries

- No restrictions for staff working with clients that prevents them from crossing between different traffic light zones to provide welfare assistance.
- In localised protections and lockdowns, social and community-based services provided to support persons to maintain critical well-being or as crisis support for people who are unsafe or homeless, services provided under Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, foodbanks, and cooked food delivery services referred by the Ministry of Social Development, or a District Health Board, are able to cross boundaries to operate within a restricted area.

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### Food preparation

- If you prepare food onsite to provide to clients you must check the MPI guidance on food safety and ensure your school and any suppliers meet all health and safety requirements.
- Food should be eaten outside wherever practicable at Red. [MPI guidance on food safety.](#)

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### Managing in an emergency

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- You should continue to operate practice drills as normal at green, orange and red settings.



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## Health and hygiene

- Managers must be especially diligent about checking in with their staff daily and send anyone home who is not feeling well.
- Staff are encouraged to regularly disinfect surfaces and have good hand hygiene, and to thoroughly clean their desk and equipment before and after work every day.
- Staff should wash hands before starting work and at every opportunity during the day, especially after using shared spaces or touching items someone else may have touched (e.g. drawers) and before going home.
- Staff should practise good cough/ sneeze etiquette.
- Wash hands after unpacking goods received.
- The extended daily cleaning will continue (for a deeper clean) and the additional clean during the day of high-touch areas, e.g. door handles, kitchen, handrails, etc will be reinstated for most sites. Note that these cleaning products are stronger than the normal eco-friendly cleaner.
- Staff are to observe clients on arrival. Those presenting as unwell can be asked if they have been tested and, if not, to get tested as soon as possible and to call their doctor or Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for advice about getting tested.
- You may switch between operating under My Vaccine Pass is required/not required, as long as your premises are cleaned between groups. For example, a conference venue can host a conference for a small group of people under the unvaccinated rules, clean, and they can then host a larger gathering for vaccinated. You must clearly communicate what settings you are operating under, and display any required signage. ([COVID-19 Protection Framework — business.govt.nz](https://www.business.govt.nz))

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## Displaying information

- Display COVID-19 posters at all entry points asking all staff, clients, and contractors to stop and check they are not showing any symptoms before entering any site.
- Display QR Code posters.
- The requirement to display QR codes does not apply if the workplace is a vehicle or for workers of a social service who customarily enter the home or place of a clients residence.

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## Working in close proximity

- Staff should be fully trained and equipped to use the appropriate [PPE](#).

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## Ventilation

- Indoor spaces should be well ventilated, for example by opening windows, doors, and any vents. If mechanical ventilation is used, make sure the ventilation system is regularly maintained.

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\* The Order defines Health Service as:

**health service** means— (a) health service within the meaning of section 5(1) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003; and (b) treatment or social rehabilitation provided under the Accident Compensation Act 2001; and (c) disability support services within the meaning of section 6(1) of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000