



**New Zealand Food Safety**

Ministry for Primary Industries  
Manatū Ahu Matua

COVID-19 Alert level 3

# **Running a food business during COVID-19**

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Unite  
against  
**COVID-19**



# INTRODUCTION

This document provides information to help you operate your business during COVID-19 Alert Level 3. You'll find general information for you and your workers, as well as specific information about the steps you'll need to take if you want to make changes to your business.

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# TOP 5 KEY FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

With a few changes, your current Top 5 food safety requirements will help you manage risks related to COVID-19. See the **bolded** items below, for additions to your current Top 5 practices.

## Separate and prevent cross contamination



- Keep sick people from passing their bugs to others – ensure sick staff don't come to work.
- **Implement physical distancing appropriate to the alert level that applies.**
- Everyone needs to practice good personal hygiene at all times.
- Don't touch unwrapped food (e.g. unpackaged bread, cakes, fruit, meat, and salads) if you don't need to. Use clean tongs/utensils instead.
- Make sure that handles of utensils don't come into contact with the food.
- Frequently wash, rinse and sanitise food contact surfaces and utensils.

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## Washing hands



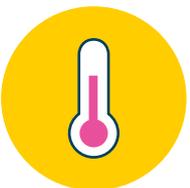
- Proper hand hygiene is essential **to reduce the spread of COVID-19** as well as keeping food safe.
- Wash regularly with soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands thoroughly.
  - Wash hands after going to the toilet, and after sneezing and blowing your nose.
  - Wash hands before working with food, and after touching things like rubbish bins and fridge/door handles.
  - Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow to prevent bugs spreading to people and food surfaces.

## Cleaning and sanitising



- Regularly clean and sanitise food preparation surfaces.
- Don't forget – sanitising doesn't work unless things have been cleaned first. So wash surfaces with hot soapy water, rinse with clean water, then sanitise.
- Identify all frequently-touched surfaces, such as door handles and touch-pads, and make sure these are regularly cleaned and sanitised.
- Ensure that staff who are ill with COVID-like symptoms do not work. Report the situation to the Healthline (on 0800 358 5453) or local GP. Visit the [COVID-19 website](#) for more advice.

## Temperature control



- Continue to follow the temperature control rules for storing and cooking foods and for cooling potentially hazardous cooked foods (e.g. seafood or pre-prepared meals).

## Staff training



- Make sure people (staff, contractors) know they are not to come to work if they, or others in their household, feel ill.
- Also make sure staff understand, if they feel unwell, to report to management and go home, and **contact the Healthline on 0800 358 5453.**

# WANTING TO MAKE A CHANGE TO YOUR BUSINESS?

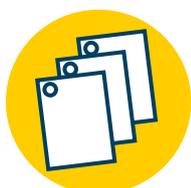
Follow these steps:



## Step 1

### Check your current plan or programme

If you already have the cards of 'Transporting food' and 'Packaging' then all you need to do is follow your WorkSafe Safe Practice Plan (Step 6).



## Step 2

### Add any cards you need

If you don't have the cards, download the relevant pack from page 8 for your change of scope. And attach these cards to your current plan or programme.



## Step 3

### Email your Registration Authority

If you have made changes to the scope of what you do (e.g. added takeaway or delivery services or are cook/chill/freezing food) then you will need to let them know.



## Step 4

### Complete the re-opening checklist

See separate document on our website [Re-opening a Food Business Checklist](#). We have also included it in this document (see page 8).



## Step 5

### Follow your revised plan or programme



## Step 6

### Complete and follow the WorkSafe Safe Practice Plan

[worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/your-covid-19-safety-plan/](https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/your-covid-19-safety-plan/)



Step 1: Check your current plan or programme

# WHAT CHANGES CAN YOU MAKE UNDER YOUR EXISTING PLAN OR PROGRAMME?

The following table on the next page provides details about allowable changes based on your current plan or programme.

**For full details of the rules required for making a change to your food business during COVID-19, please refer to [Re-opening or making changes to a food business under COVID-19 Level 3](#).**

If the change you want to make isn't covered by this table, contact your Registration Authority for advice.

See over for the table

What you currently do	What you would like to start doing	What you need to do					
		Follow safe practice plan (COVID-19)	Add 'Pack 1 (Takeaway and pick up)'	Add 'Pack 2 (Delivery)'	Add 'Pack 3 (Meal kits and repacking bulk foods)'	Add 'Pack 4 (Making Chilled and Frozen Meals)'	Let Registration Authority know you are changing scope
<b>National Programme 2</b>							
Bakery making bread only (including buns, bagels & pita bread)	Online Sales Delivery	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>National Programme 3</b>							
Corner dairy	Repacking bulk food (e.g. flour)	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
Green grocer	Prepare and deliver fruit & vegetable boxes	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
<b>Simply, Safe &amp; Suitable (Template Food Control Plan)</b>							
Retail bakery making bread, pies, pastries and/or cakes, eat-in & takeaway	Deliver food	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Café, restaurant or bar	Make prepared meals and provide both fresh and frozen meals Provide my food for pick up (takeaway)	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Restaurant, eat-in only	Prepare (raw) meal boxes or ingredients for pick up or delivery	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Caterer wanting to make meals, already has transport in plan	Make chilled/frozen prepared meals for delivery	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Fish & chip shop, burger bar etc.	Deliver food	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Food truck	Make chilled/frozen meals only for delivery	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
<b>My Food Plan (Custom Food Control Plan)</b>							
Café or restaurant	Make chilled/frozen meals only for delivery	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Manufacturer of chilled or frozen meals	Takeaway/contactless pick up	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Wholesale bakery making bread, pies, pastries and/or cakes	Add pick up and delivery	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓

Note: if you relocate a food business from its registered site (e.g. you want to work from home rather than your store), you may have to register a new plan before you can trade. Please note that a new My Food Plan or Custom Food Control Plan registration will likely require a minimum of 4-6 weeks before you can begin to sell food.

Step 2: Add any cards to your plan

# WHERE TO GET CARDS TO ADD TO YOUR PLAN

Select the activity you're interested in and you'll be linked to downloadable pdf of the cards you'll need to add to your plan or programme.



**Pack 1**  
**Takeaways and pick up**



**Pack 2**  
**Delivery**



**Pack 3**  
**Meal kits and repacking  
bulk foods**



**Pack 4**  
**Making chilled or frozen meals**

The icons above are clickable links to the cards you want. Or, you can select the links from the list below.

- Takeaways and pick up [www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40319-covid-19-pack-1-takeaway](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40319-covid-19-pack-1-takeaway)
- Delivery [www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40322-covid-19-pack-2-delivery](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40322-covid-19-pack-2-delivery)
- Meal kits and repacking bulk foods [www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40325-covid-19-pack-3-meal-kits-and-repacking-food](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40325-covid-19-pack-3-meal-kits-and-repacking-food)
- Making chilled or frozen meals [www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40328-covid-19-pack-4-chilled-and-frozen-food](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/40328-covid-19-pack-4-chilled-and-frozen-food)

# CHECKLIST FOR RE-OPENING A FOOD BUSINESS AFTER COVID-19 LEVEL 4

## 1. Check your business can re-open

Check the COVID-19 website before you re-open your business for any trading restrictions in place for your type of food businesses opening after COVID-19 Level 4. What does Level 3 look like for your food businesses (i.e. online sales and delivery)? You need to have the right NZ COVID-19 safety assurances in place to operate under Levels 3-4. Your business may not be able to open fully until Level 1 or 2. For latest advice: for food and beverage production and processing, visit MPI's Primary sector businesses, services, and support services; for food service (cafes and restaurants), food retail (supermarkets and dairies), trucking, or shipping, visit MBIE's Workplace operations at COVID-19 alert levels.

## 2. Check conditions at your business

Was your business premise/building closed during the COVID-19 Level 3-4 response?

If yes, make sure that nothing has happened during the closure (such as building maintenance, pipe leak, a pest infestation) preventing you from hygienically preparing and handling any open (unwrapped) food.

## 3. Check the condition of the services and equipment

Make sure that services, facilities and equipment are fully functioning. Have power and water supplies to the building been damaged or turned off during the COVID-19 response, and have they been restored? If any services cannot be used, have you made adequate provision for:

electricity

gas

drinking water supply (see also 9 below)

disposing of waste water

toilets

hand-washing with clean water, soap, towels

disposing of rubbish

cooking, refrigerating and freezing food.

#### **4. Is refrigerated food OK? If in doubt, throw it out!**

Have fridges been damaged or without power?  
Have contents been contaminated?

Check how long fridges were without power.

If power was off for less than 24 hours and fridges were not opened during the power cut, contents must be checked but should be ok. If fridges were opened during the power cut (other than to add ice to help keep contents cool) potentially hazardous food should be thrown away.

If power was off for more than 24 hours potentially hazardous food should be thrown away.

DO NOT USE ANY FOOD beyond its Use-By date.  
Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or use as pig food.

All opened ready-to-eat food such as processed meats, should be discarded, even if it is within the Use-By date. Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or use as pig food.

#### **5. Is frozen food OK? If in doubt, throw it out!**

Have freezers been damaged or without power?  
Have contents been contaminated?

Check how long freezers were without power

If a freezer was full, power was off for less than 4 days and the freezer was not opened during the power cut and there is no evidence of thawing, contents should be ok to use.

If power was off for more than 4 days, or the freezer was not full, or there is any evidence that contents have thawed, or thawed and refrozen, then DO NOT USE THE FOOD. Throw it out. And don't feed it to pets or send for pig food.

#### **6. Check all other food**

Check for any signs of pest infestation. Carry out pest control before opening.

Throw out food damaged by pests. Throw out food in damaged packaging that exposes food.

Clean premises before opening

#### **7. Cleaning and sanitising**

Clean food packaging, if required, before opening it.

Check all stocks of food packaging materials are clean (e.g. takeaway containers).

Clean all food areas and clean and sanitise food surfaces, utensils and equipment.

Clean customer areas and clean and sanitise crockery and cutlery etc.

#### **8. Before re-opening**

Check with your suppliers – can they provide the food/brands you usually use? If not, check substituted food/brands enable you to make safe and suitable food. Do you need to change the ways you process and handle food? Do substituted foods contain unexpected ingredients allergens?

Make sure staff know what to do and understand how your business will be operating when COVID-19 Level 4 restrictions have been lifted.

## 9. Water

If you know of a water supply issue near your business confirm with your supplier it is OK to use the water. Follow Ministry of Health guidance for flushing the system through at: [www.health.govt.nz/](http://www.health.govt.nz/).

Don't forget to flush plumbed-in equipment (e.g. ice machines, coffee machines, slush-ice makers, post mix guns, self-service soft drink machines and some water coolers).

Keep hand washing facilities stocked with soap and a supply of clean towels so people can practice good hand hygiene.

## 10. Are your staff available and do your staff know what to do?

Make sure your staff are available to work under COVID Level 3.

Make sure everyone knows what they must do to produce safe and suitable food after lockdown. Train any new or replacement staff before they start work. Remind everyone of sickness policies, and the importance of keeping hands, food preparation surfaces, and food equipment clean, even more so at this time. If in any doubt about what you should do, contact your food safety verifier.

## 11. Registration & Verification

Check that your plan or programme to trade in food is still correctly registered. If in doubt, contact your Registration Authority (MPI or your local council).

Check when your next verification is due. Please note that depending on the COVID-19 level, your verification may need to be completed using technology, like Skype. Any questions, please contact your verifier for advice.

For more COVID-19 food safety information and updates, visit [www.mpi.govt.nz/coronavirus-and-food-safety](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/coronavirus-and-food-safety)  
Where businesses want to take extra measures to protect their staff and customers, they should do so in line with Ministry of Health advice on social distancing and limiting the spread of the virus – contact the Healthline team on 0800 358 5453, visit [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz), or the all of Government COVID-19 website [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz).