

# COVID-19 Protection Framework retired, NZ moves forward with certainty

12 Sep 2022

The most recent health advice now tells us that with the lowest cases and hospitalisations since February, we are in a good position to move forward.

The COVID-19 Protection Framework, also known as the traffic light system, will be removed from 11:59pm tonight, Monday 12 September, so all New Zealanders can continue to move forward with certainty.

It is time to safely turn the page on our COVID-19 management, and live without the extraordinary measures we have previously used.

Today marks a milestone in our response. Finally, rather than feeling that COVID dictates what happens to us, our lives, and our futures, we take back control.

For the first time in 2 years we can approach summer with the much-needed certainty New Zealanders and business need, helping to drive greater economic activity critical to our economic recovery.

## Key points

- The COVID-19 Protection Framework ends at 11:59pm Monday 12 September.
- All mask-wearing requirements removed, except in healthcare and aged care facilities.
- Only people who test positive with COVID-19 need to isolate for 7 days. Household Contacts no longer need to.
- All Government vaccine mandates will end in 2 weeks on 26 September.
- Removal of all vaccination requirements for incoming travellers and aircrew.
- Support for business and workers to continue through leave support payments
- All New Zealanders aged 65 and over, and Māori and Pacific peoples aged 50 and over, to have automatic access to COVID antivirals if they test positive

## Turning the page on COVID-19 management

The most recent health advice now tells us that with the lowest cases and hospitalisations since February, our population well vaccinated, and expanded access to antiviral medicines, New Zealand is in a position to move forward.

You will no longer be required by Government to wear a mask anywhere, except in healthcare settings like hospitals, GPs and aged residential care facilities.

Some places, such as workplaces, special events, or marae may ask you to wear a mask, but this will be at their discretion and no longer a Government requirement. Please respect those who choose to keep wearing masks as a form of protection.

All remaining Government vaccine mandates will end in 2 weeks on 26 September. It will now be an employer's discretion as to whether they require their workforce to be vaccinated.

Vaccination requirements for all travellers arriving into New Zealand including aircrew also ends. the requirement to test on day 0/1 and 5/6 will now just be encouraged.

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## Isolation to remain

Our 7-day isolation period for COVID cases will remain.

However, the 7-day isolation period will now only be required for those who test positive for COVID-19. Their Household Contacts will only be asked to undertake a daily rapid antigen test (RAT) test before going about their life as normal.

In short, we now move on to a simple 2 requirements system of masks in healthcare settings and 7 days isolation for positive cases only.

## Greater access to antivirals

The Government has also made an additional purchase of 40,000 more antiviral medicine courses, expected to enter New Zealand in the next few days.

We are giving greater access to antiviral medicines for New Zealanders, and have secured agreements that provide a significant boost to our supply for the long term.

So now, anyone over the age of 65, and Māori and Pacific people over the age of 50, or anyone who meets Pharmac requirements, can access the treatment in the early stages of contracting the virus.

This means more than double the number of New Zealanders will be able to access these medicines if they need them than previously.

There is no question – thousands of lives have been saved by the efforts of Kiwis. Be it iwi and Māori health providers, Pacifica organisations, aged care providers, businesses or the sacrifices of New Zealanders separated from loved ones, everyone played a part.

## More information

From Tuesday we will now move to weekly COVID-19 reporting, similar to Australia.

The current rolling 7-day average of hospitalisations is 241, the lowest since February and down from 273 this time last week. There are 225 current hospitalisations. There have been a total of 1,950 deaths — a 7-day rolling average of 5.

People visiting the following healthcare settings will be required to wear a mask:

- primary care
- urgent care
- hospitals
- pharmacies
- aged residential care
- disability-related residential care.

The requirement excludes counselling, mental health and addiction services.

[Wearing a face mask](#)



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