



## Guidelines for breweries operating as an essential business

### “Essential business”

- On 23 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced that New Zealand’s COVID-19 Alert Level will be raised to Alert Level 4 on 25 March 2020 for a period of at least four weeks.
- Additional restrictions imposed in Alert Level 4 include:
  - o People instructed to stay at home
  - o Travel severely limited
  - o Businesses closed except for essential businesses and lifeline utilities
  - o Food production operations are classified as “essential businesses”

The Government has confirmed that you are considered an “essential business” or “essential service” if you are:

- Any entity involved in the packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products, whether for domestic consumption or export.
- Any entity involved in the supply, delivery, distribution and sale of food, beverage and other key consumer goods essential for maintaining the wellbeing of people.  
This means Supermarkets and grocery stores will be open and as suppliers of beverage to these stores, breweries and their manufacturing activities (suppliers and distribution) can continue to operate.
- This means essential hop harvest workers, brewery staff, trucking, bottling and related workers may continue to work. Cellar doors, restaurants, etc, must close.
- However, all exempted businesses **must be accepted for registration** with the Government, and will be expected to prove that they can protect their workers and the public from COVID-19.
- Registration is through the Ministry of Primary industry (MPI) website who are asking businesses to be registered by 5:00pm on Friday 27 March 2020
- Compliance will be checked, and defaulting businesses will be closed.

### Registration for essential business

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) now needs assurances from industries and businesses that their processes protect workers and the public by limiting interactions and reducing the potential spread of COVID-19. Registration can be made [here](#)

There are a couple of simple questions brewers can ask themselves before registering:

1. Do you have five or fewer people (including the owner) working at each business site?
2. Can you achieve social distancing measures between staff in your workplace, including travelling, to and from work?
  - o If you answer YES to both of those questions, then you do not need to fill in the form.
  - o If you answered NO to either of these questions, you MUST fill in the form.
  - o If in doubt, fill in the form.



The registration for a business will require answering 11 questions. Below is a sample of responses that the Brewers Association considers likely to meet these requirements in order to guarantee low risk of COVID-19 transmission. Not all of these measures will be applicable to your business or situation. Please adapt these to your business when completing the form. You will need to respond to the questionnaire with honest answers of how your business meets the requirements

### **1. How do your production processes protect your workers and the public by reducing the potential spread of COVID-19?**

Multiple factors in brewing create an environment that makes it difficult for human pathogens to survive, including the inherent antimicrobial properties of ingredients (such as hops in beer), pH, alcohol and the processing methods used in the manufacture of alcoholic beverages. However, breweries will adhere to existing food safety measures and extended application of health and safety activities such as:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
  - Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol or a fresh solution of 0.5% hydrogen peroxide and water or bleach solution.
  - If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
  - Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
  - Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
  - Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
  - Direct employees to visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands webpage for more information.
- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
  - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
  - Breweries have a variety of sanitizers on hand, but the sanitizers used in beer production are not appropriate for hand sanitation the Brewers Association recommends:
    - The use of commercial wet-wipes and antibacterial sanitizers in personal activities.
    - Frequent spraying and cleaning with expendable paper towels.
    - Disposable gloves should be used.
    - Within the beer manufacturing and canning/bottling areas, existing safety operating procedures should be followed, and traditional cleaning/sanitizing cycles should be used, employing peracetic acid or other appropriate brewery sanitizers.
  - Handling of bottles and packaging will be minimised. Palletised packaged goods will be subject to a minimum “stand down” period of 24 hours prior to dispatch in order to minimise the risk of contaminants surviving on the bottle or outer packaging.



## **2. How are you ensuring that workers and others at work are observing social distancing to and from work, during work and during rest breaks?**

- During work hours brewery processes will be designed around ensuring staff do not break the distancing rules. All staff will be obliged to ensure and record via a daily register or sign in on how they did not break the distancing rules outside of work hours.
- For large breweries all staff are required to send a photo record of their daily routine outside of work hours to the Covid-19 Manager. For small breweries all staff are required to report to their manager at the start of the shift.
- Staff attendance, start and stop times will be recorded should this be required for case tracking
- Start and knock-off times for workers are being staggered to ensure that separate teams and shifts do not meet.
- Alternate teams (see question 6) running operations i.e. Red and Blue teams on alternate days or shifts
- No socialising or congregating by employees between changing shifts. When clocking out, move quickly offsite or into their separate accommodation area.
- Rest breaks are staggered (to reduce number of workers in any one place), and workers are encouraged to take them outside, while observing distancing rules (and coloured team separation rules) wherever they are. For large operators separate areas or tables will be designated for separate teams shifts.
- Break room table/chair surfaces are cleaned before and after each break. Cleaning times documented and audited.
- Changes to implement social distancing, may include:
  - educating employees on keeping minimum distances and refraining from physical contact
  - ceasing the use of large-group, "town hall" meetings
  - replicating meetings multiple times to have smaller groups attend, and physically spacing people out in the meeting rooms
  - eliminating routine shift hand-off meetings that are not critical, or limiting these to just particular persons as critically needed
  - creating new shifts (nights or weekends) to help separate the workforce and give employees scheduling options that may help them manage new family obligations with kids home from school
  - zoning the factory and prohibiting employees from wandering into zones where they do not need to be to perform their jobs



### 3. What personal hygiene steps have you put in place for workers to reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?

- For large breweries (eg over 20 staff) each brewery site has a dedicated Covid-19 Manager with absolute authority over any procedures involving staff or potential staff interactions. For smaller operations a senior staff member will assume that role.
- Records will be kept for each person working in the brewery including living arrangements and all people that person comes in close contact with
- Management will relentlessly champion a culture of absolute compliance and violation of compliance rules will result in disciplinary procedures
- Rigorously screening essential visitors and limiting their movement in the facility
- Training employees on self-responsibility behaviours (and refreshing the training regularly). These behaviours include:
  - respiratory etiquette
  - handwashing
  - using hand sanitizers
  - refraining from physical contact
  - prohibiting the sharing of utensils, cups, beverages, etc.
  - social distancing
- Each shift begins with a daily pre-shift (outdoors where possible) briefing emphasising:
  - Critical importance of personal hygiene (keep 2m distance; cover cough/sneezes; frequent handwashing and equipment sanitising; not touching your mouth, nose or eyes.)
  - Reminder of the other workplace practices and of their critical importance to protect worker and community health
  - “Essential business” operation is a privilege, and ours to lose. Mandatory compliance with all “essential business” rules are required; any non-compliance will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter. Staff in will be sent home immediately to self isolate.
- Posting reminder signs of these behaviours in many conspicuous locations in the workplace
- Staggering crews so that an outbreak can perhaps be better isolated such that, after cleaning, the factory can run with unaffected crews e.g: Monday through Wednesday crews; Thursday through Saturday crews; deep cleanings to be performed on Sundays.
- Identifying key personnel without whom the brewery cannot operate (e.g., boiler operators, wastewater treatment engineers, lead electricians or maintenance mechanics, etc.) Creating schedules, procedures, and any other steps to isolate these personnel from each other and the rest of the workforce to try to minimize exposures
- Beefing up cross-training, if that can be done with acceptable distancing, to prepare for more absences



- Increasing the frequency and depth of sanitizing efforts, and letting employees see them happen to reinforce sanitizing behaviours and engender confidence in the safety of the workplace. Examples might include:
  - having break rooms cleaned repeatedly all day (perhaps after each lunch group)
  - providing sanitary wipes throughout the facility and training employees on using them constantly to clean high-touch surfaces
- We regularly disinfect all surfaces in commonly used areas (office/break rooms/tables /benchtops /toilet/ door handles/ screens). For large breweries disinfection times are digitally recorded and emailed to the Covid-19 Manager for audit.
- Internal doors, where fire safety rules allow, are wedged open to minimise touching common areas.
- Any meals provided to staff will be prepared and served under MoH guidelines. [Staff canteen has staggered meal service. ] [Each team has a designated table.] [Effective cleaning protocols are in place for cutlery and crockery]. [Microwavable, sealed prepared meals may be used if available]
- Workers are provided spray bottles with sanitiser solution and/or soap and water and must use them regularly.
- Sharing of tools is avoided wherever possible; where not possible shared tools are required to be sanitised after using a sanitiser spray, methylated spirits, anti-viral wipes, a fresh 0.5% hydrogen peroxide/water solution, or a bleach solution.
- Gloves are disposed of or disinfected, as appropriate, post-use. All tools are disinfected post-use.
- Equipment and machinery (eg bins; trays; vehicle cabs, steering wheels and door handles) is regularly disinfected (frequency depends on use rate, but always when a different worker uses it) using a sanitizer spray, methylated spirits, anti-viral wipes or a bleach solution. This must include at a minimum sanitization between shifts.
- Where two drivers need to use the same vehicle whether it be a ute or a forklift, the cab will be sanitised between drivers. If the air-conditioning cannot be sanitised it will be disabled.
- All written records to be converted to digital eg. where previously load information was recorded information on written forms that were handed over (eg truck drivers), photos of the form (which remains with the person who completed it) will be sent
- Workers asked to keep work clothes separate from your home clothes and wash them frequently. A dedicated and approved laundry service.

#### **4. What existing, or additional personal protective equipment could you introduce that would reduce the likelihood of virus spread at work?**

- Workers have their own, individually named PPE supplied by the employer/provided by the employee and up to the minimum safety standards. This is disposed of or disinfected (as appropriate) daily or after each shift.



**5. What steps are you taking to limit access to your workplaces apart from essential workers?**

- Non-essential staff and visitors are forbidden from entering the site (signage on all entrances) without express permission of the designated COVID-19 manager
- Permission only given if the presence of the person on site is considered essential, and a health questionnaire has been completed for that person.
- To the extent possible, the timing of visit must be arranged to occur at a time when least risk to others is presented.

**6. How are you isolating staff, or parts of your workplace, so that virus spread would be contained should it occur?**

- Non-essential personnel have been required to stay home.
- Essential personnel have been split into separate teams with functions spread amongst teams.
  - o Each team wears a colour vest or other visible identifier (Red / Green / Blue) so they are immediately identifiable. COVID-19 Manager must avoid having contact with multiple teams.
  - o Each team's prime focus is on avoiding any member of a different team becoming a "close contact" so that if any individual were to become COVID-19 positive and the question were "who at work have you come into close contact with" the answer would only be "my Red team";
  - o Teams use separate vehicles, have breaks and lunch at different times from other teams, and in different places.
  - o Similar separation is in place between day and night shift personnel
- In the brewery, teams are physically separated from each other, and members within a team have significantly increased the normal separation between them when working or moving around the brewery premises.
- Equipment is assigned to be used by specific shift staff only and all control surfaces sanitised between operator usage.

**7. What arrangements have you put in place for staff to report any illness and remove themselves from work?**

- Asking for self-identification through regular surveys or interviews.
- We have instituted temperature-screening of employees upon entering work
- All workers have been advised that any staff member feeling at all unwell, for any reason, should stay home, and report to the COVID-19 manager by phone to a specified number.
- Workers are encouraged to pay careful attention to their wellbeing and that of their colleagues at work, and any worker member feeling unwell while at work must leave the site immediately and inform the COVID-19 manager by phone.
- The COVID-19 manager is responsible for follow-up and ensuring that ongoing support is being provided for the worker



- Any workers who call in sick will be paid sick leave (regardless of entitlements).

**8. What arrangement have you put in place for staff to report any suspected exposure to COVID-19?**

- Staff sign in each day with a declaration confirming non-exposure
- All staff have ability to directly via phone/email/skype contact COVID-19 manager outside business hours to inform him/her of exposure
- exclude the employee suspected of exposure for a minimum of 14 days and/or require medical clearance before allowing the employee to return

**9. What actions would you take should a staff member be suspected of or confirmed as having COVID-19?**

- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) must notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow Government isolation guideline and not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and self-isolate at home
- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19. The fellow employees should then self-isolate and monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Investigate the employee's schedule and work location to determine with whom the employee interacted.
- Employers may also consider instituting a policy informing employees that if they are confirmed to have COVID-19, they will be requested to provide a list of other employees with whom they had close contact during the last 14 days.

**10. How do you ensure that staff at particular risk of COVID-19 identify themselves and are isolated from work?**

- Workers over 70 required to stay home
- Workers required to disclose any underlying health conditions that make them higher risk asked to self-identify and stay home.
- Workers living with vulnerable relatives/family may also need to stay home



**11. How will you ensure that your workers observe 'stay at home' rules at the conclusion of each working day?**

- Checklist at shift start that team members all obeyed the rules (pressure to comply from management and peers for the whole team's benefit).
- Could require workers to email employer Google map verification (time date screen shot texted to log); or providing internet/cellphone data.