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## Entering Phase 2 of managing COVID-19

### Purpose

The purpose of this Advisory is to provide further information to members about the Government's announcement yesterday that from 11.59pm on Tuesday 15 February, New Zealand will enter Phase 2 of the Omicron Public Health Response.

### Changes associated with Phase 2

The isolation and quarantine periods will be:

- Cases: Isolate for 10 days
- Household contacts of a case: Isolate until case completes 10 days. Test on day 3 and day 8
- Close contacts who are not household contacts: Isolate for seven days. Test on day 5. There is extra support in place for health and critical workforces, via the Close Contact Exemption Scheme

You can find out more about Phase 2 [here](#).

### Changes to testing and the Close Contact Exemption Scheme (early return to work)

- Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) may be used in addition to PCR testing for symptomatic people and close contacts. If a positive RAT result is given then PCR testing will be undertaken to confirm the diagnosis.
- The Close Contact Exemption Scheme begins for registered critical businesses (please note you will need a RealMe account to apply). This scheme is voluntary and allows workers at registered critical businesses who are vaccinated, asymptomatic and close contacts of a Covid-19 case to return to work, provided they return a negative rapid antigen test before starting work each day they have been asked to isolate.
- To support the daily testing, RATs will be supplied through the public health system with locations to pick up the testing kits to be made available on the Healthpoint [website](#).

When collecting RATs, workers will need to provide the following:

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- Critical Services Register Letter
- Critical Worker Authorisation Letter
- Workplace ID (if applicable)
- Personal ID (e.g. Vaccine Pass)
- Text message confirming you are a close contact
- Your RATs order number.

Once a worker has their RATs under the scheme, they are to be used to clear them to return to work for each of the days they are required to work while still being considered a close contact. They must remain asymptomatic, test themselves each work day/shift, record their results, and update their employer of their test result before attending work.

Participating in this scheme will only clear workers to go to work and return to their place of isolation – not to go anywhere else like the supermarket, petrol station, or a relative/friend's place.

If at any point the worker receives a positive test or become symptomatic they must return to isolation and get a PCR test, meaning they will be unable to attend the workplace.

### **Participating in the Close Contact Exemption Scheme**

To be eligible for this, businesses must apply in advance to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to be part of this scheme. The scheme is voluntary.

Applications are open through the government's business connect portal. You will need both a RealMe and a Business Connect account.

More information is available [here](#).

Register [here](#).

Transporting New Zealand is continuing to seek information on the situation for businesses that choose not to register with the close contact isolation exemption scheme; don't meet the criteria; and/or are rejected by MBIE's selection process.

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