



## Coronavirus: Government Alert Level 4 Update

**Team,**

PowerNet are a strong and resilient team who look out for each other and our communities. This has become even more evident over the past few weeks. I have been proud of how you have co-operated in helping maintain stringent hygiene practices, physical distancing and the professional approach you have taken to approaching work flexibly and being open to working differently.

We now have field team members who are focused on faults, and other field team members who are identifying ways to work differently. We have a system control team who have similar plans and contingencies in place. The majority of our functional and support staff are now equipped with the IT infrastructure to enable them to continue to work from home. All these efforts are critical to ensuring we comply with the intent of the Governments Level 4 requirements and continue to maintain safe, efficient and reliable power as a Lifeline Utility in our community.

I know the last few weeks have been challenging for everyone. I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for this and also your future support as we keep each other safe.

Please read the following as it contains important information as we head into this challenging time.

### **Letter confirming you are a Lifeline Utility / Essential Service employee**

You should have recently received a letter from your leader confirming you are an employee of PowerNet, and may travel on PowerNet business in order to maintain an EDB service to Southland and Otago. If you have not received this please contact your leader.

It is likely you may need to produce this letter when requested by authorities (military or police) when travelling for work purposes during the lock down period. Please take a photo of the letter or keep a copy of it with you at all times.

### **Workplace access**

Access to depots and offices should be restricted to fault staff and system control. Others in critical roles can access these location by exception, following sign in / out protocols. These protocols are in place for contact tracing purposes and to ensure we're following the intent of the 'lock down' as much as possible.

For Racecourse Road and the Lockwood Building, swipe card data will be reviewed periodically over the lock down period.

### **Security**

We need to be extra vigilant during the lock down period, when our worksites will routinely be unstaffed. Please ensure buildings, yards etc are locked before you leave to ensure critical equipment and supplies needed during the lock down period, are available when needed.

### Flu like symptoms

Anyone having these symptoms should self – isolate / work from home as a precaution and contact their leader. The leader is to contact the COVID-19 Manager, Faye McLeod, 027 809 3464.

I have **attached** some Ministry of Health guidance outlining protocols to be followed should you have exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

### Performance Reviews

Performance Reviews are to continue via phone call / skype but there will be some relaxation of the otherwise tight timeframe.

We are investigating moving the performance review cycle to 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 to provide some relief during this period. If we move to this cycle it would also alleviate workload pressure points at year end. Further information will follow on this point.

### Ongoing communication

Communication is going to be more challenging during the lock down period. We want to keep you informed as much as possible. The SLT are currently working on a weekly 'Information sheet' which is designed with this purpose in mind. This will be posted on the Intranet and PowerNet webpage. Keep an eye out for this.

If you have received eTxt communications from PowerNet please reply "Yes", confirming we have your correct mobile number. If you have not received an eTxt from PowerNet recently, please contact Kathryn McCoy on 0272 321 4576 or [kmccoy@powernet.co.nz](mailto:kmccoy@powernet.co.nz) confirming your name and mobile number.

### Payroll

The lockdown has necessitated a few changes in payroll. These changes are necessary to ensure our Payroll service continues to operate effectively, when performed primarily from home.

- Printed payslips will be held and distributed once the lock down period is lifted – this is because payroll will be run from home where ready access to a commercial printer is not available. We also anticipate restrictions with physically transporting payslips during the lock down period.
- Payslips can be made available **by exception**. These will need to be requested by emailing Denise Sullivan, Payroll and HR Systems Coordinator ([dsullivan@powernet.co.nz](mailto:dsullivan@powernet.co.nz))
- We will be working on the assumption that office staff are working from home unless their leader approves leave in IMS Online ("C19L\_\_\_\_\_Covid-19 Leave" in the IMS Online drop down menu).
- If you are unable to perform work from home, Covid-19 Leave should be entered into IMS by either team member or leader (and must be approved by the leader).
- Covid-19 Leave, will appear on your payslip. We expect this will be a combination of the Government COVID-19 Wage subsidy of \$585.80 per employee PLUS special paid leave from PowerNet, to the value of the standard fortnight pay. We may need to review this approach if the Level 4 restriction extends beyond the initial four week period.



### **Wage subsidy**

We are currently investigating what support is available to PowerNet under the Governments COVID-19 Wage Subsidy scheme. PowerNet's revenue is expected to reduce by at least 30% due to the reduction in planned network work. If we are eligible to claim under this scheme, we will be in contact with you confirming our application and seeking your consent to use your date of name, date of birth, IRD number and employment type (part-time/full-time). The wage subsidy scheme would go some way to supporting PowerNet continuing to pay our staff during this challenging time. I will provide further information to you on this when I can.

### **Support**

The four week minimum 'lock down' period is going to be challenging for all of us at times, both professionally and personally. It will test our resilience and require patience and perseverance. Please make a concerted effort to check in on each other. A simple "Are you okay" can make a large difference to your workmates and family members.

Throughout this period PowerNet's normal support services will continue to be available to you. I encourage you to make use of them.

- OCP (0800 377 990) is available to you and your direct family members free of charge
- PFA – details of our Psychological First Aid programme are attached. PFA is in place to support all staff and their family and whanau.

### **Wrap up**

I am confident we have the team to navigate our way through the coming weeks safely. We have strong values, and will look out for one another.

Take care of yourselves and your family members. If you have questions over the coming weeks, please direct these to your leader in the first instance. If you are unable to contact your leader please approach your Manager once Removed (MOR), who is your leader's leader.

I expect to be in contact regularly over the next four weeks with further updates as they become available.

Jason Franklin  
**Chief Executive**  
25 March 2020