



COVID-19 Update and what it means for PowerNet

Today's Government announcement

The Government announced today that they are extending the current Alert Level 4 situation to at least the end of next Tuesday, 24 August 2021. This announcement is not surprising and PowerNet's leadership team have planned for this situation.

What are we planning to do?

As advised in the Team Bulletin issued on Wednesday, 17 August, PowerNet will be returning to an operating state of business-as-usual for the most part on Monday, 23 August 2021. A significant amount of planning and preparation has been undertaken to achieve this. Thank you to all those involved; there has been an incredible amount of teamwork to have us so well prepared.

This will mean operational teams will be maintaining network assets and responding to unplanned outages. Some of the work to be undertaken will result in planned outages proceeding, these outages have already been notified to customers. We are aware that this may cause some disruption for customers who are at home when they would normally be at work or children at school. We have reviewed the notified planned outages and in the most part, we are proceeding with them.

For our office-based teams, they will be working from home as they have been since Wednesday this week. There are some exceptions where team members have to work at one of our offices due to their type of work. This is managed through their leader and the requirements of the COVID-19 Control Framework are being followed, especially relating to PPE and social distancing.

System Control has been segregated at the Racecourse Road building from any other activity in the building. The back-up control room at Tuai Street (Transpower building) will be operational next week as well.

Why are we taking this approach?

Firstly, through the planning and assessments that have been undertaken, we believe we can safely return to a business-as-usual operating state following the measures set out in our Covid-19 Control Framework.

Returning to this operating state is in the best long-term interests of our customers and the network assets. Electricity supply is an essential service and our operating state needs to reflect this. Cancelling and deferring network maintenance has the risk of having additional adverse impacts and increased unplanned outages. Remaining committed to properly maintaining network assets will ensure Safe, Efficient and Reliable Power to our Communities, and this is in the best long-term interests of our customers.

It is likely that as New Zealand transitions over time to some acceptance of COVID-19 being in the community, we will continue to move up and down through Alert Levels depending on the situation. We need to have in place a long-term approach to manage this situation, which matches our need to operate and maintain the asset base. Continually stopping and starting work on assets is not an effective strategy to reduce unplanned outages and improve public safety.

How do we go about this?

We have in place a well-defined Covid-19 Control Framework. It has been reviewed this week and there are some minor refinements made. Your leader will outline these changes. I encourage you to again familiarise yourself with the Framework. It is attached.

Providing we follow the Framework, we can appropriately manage workplace and public health and safety risks. Updates are also being made to Risk Mentor to assist with this. If you have any ideas to improve the Framework, please advise your leader. It has been continually improving since it was developed over a year ago – your improvement suggestions in the past have resulted in further refinements.

Public communication is underway with our customers to advise them of PowerNet's operational approach from Monday. This includes print, radio, social media and direct mail drops. We are doing as much as we can to communicate with our customers, so they understand why we continue to provide a fault response and will be continuing to maintain and upgrade our networks.



All PowerNet employees briefing planned

An all of business Zoom call is planned for Tuesday, 24 August at 4pm. The Zoom link will be provided to all work email addresses and can be forwarded to private email addresses, if required. This will provide a further update for you and is deliberately timed after our return to business as usual on Monday.

Since Wednesday this week, there have been daily Leader Briefings to assist communication to and from teams. These will continue as well.

Thank you

Thank you very much for your understanding and assistance over this time. It is a period of increased uncertainty and we appreciate it does create additional stress. Please look after yourself, your family members and your team mates. If you need any assistance, please reach out to your leader or Psychological First Aid (PFA) Support (0800 710 240). OCP, our Employee Assistance Programme provider is also available (0800 377 990 or online at www.ocp.co.nz).

The Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor the developments over the weekend and review our position if required.

Take care team.

Jason Franklin
Chief Executive
20 August 2021

Attachment: CE-PRS-0001 – COVID-19 Control Framework (Version #10)