

COVID-19 Protection Framework Update

Further to Team Bulletin #2 from January, outlining PowerNet's response to New Zealand moving to the Red Traffic Light Setting, the PowerNet Leadership Team have continued planning for a community outbreak within the Southern region.

With Omicron cases now confirmed in Southland and Otago communities we need to take some different precautions for the safety of both office and field based employees, to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 cases in our workforce, and to ensure we can continue to provide Safe, Efficient and Reliable power to communities. Detail related to these precautions is below.

[Our COVID-19 Protection Framework – Traffic Light System has been updated and is attached.](#)

Changes from the previous version:

- Reflects Red Traffic Light protocols only - the Orange and Green requirements have been removed to simplify the content down to one page;
- Depot/Office – Work Continues – but employees should now work from home unless otherwise agreed by their leader and SLT member;
- Field - Contact Tracing – Risk Mentor Forms to be used. Daily syncing of IT devices required;
- Field Face Coverings – Changed from mandatory to recommended;
 - Note: 1.5m distancing applies. If a member of a team is uncomfortable not wearing a mask, agreement is to be reached within the team.

For those who printed the documents previously, or have them located in staffrooms please replace them with this updated version to avoid confusion.

Work will continue

We are a 'Critical Service' under the Government's recently released [Close Contact Exemption Scheme](#). The Government has introduced this scheme to enable Critical Services to continue to operate when COVID-19 case numbers increase, as they are critical to keeping New Zealand functioning.

In line with the emphasis on preserving critical services, we have made the decision that regardless if an employee is deemed a Critical Worker or not, if they can work from home they should commence doing so from tomorrow. This enables us to reduce the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 to employees who cannot work from home, and helps us to preserve critical functions as COVID-19 spreads in the community. This will be for an initial four week period and will be reviewed. We are updating the Request to Work from Home form so it can be completed on-line and will workflow through to the leader and SLT member to approve. The form includes important prompts to manage any Health and Safety risks, and data privacy considerations related to working from home. The updated form will be communicated by the end of this week.

Employees who need to complete their work from a depot, office or field environment, as they cannot work from home, will continue to work from their workplace following our COVID-19 Protection Framework protocols.

If you have any questions, please discuss with your SLT member in the first instance.

Rapid Antigen Testing

PowerNet has applied for the Government's Close Contact Exemption Scheme Critical Services Register which becomes relevant at Phase Two of the Government's Red Traffic Light setting.

Being on the Close Contact Exemption Scheme Critical Services Register allows 'Critical Workers' who are vaccinated and asymptomatic close contacts of a positive COVID-19 case, to continue to come to work, with certain protocols in place. The exemption is only for attendance at a workplace.

The requirement under this scheme is for employees identified as Critical Workers to undergo a daily Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and follow guidelines consistent with those set out in our COVID-19 Protection Framework and work instructions. The daily RAT test result must be negative. Where the RAT test result is positive or the person becomes symptomatic, the person has to return to isolation and undergo PCR testing.

PowerNet have a large number of RAT tests on order, and these are expected at the end of February / beginning of March.

We will be consult with employees about the use of RAT tests both as part of the Close Contact Exemption Scheme, and for routine monitoring of employees who are regularly working from a PowerNet depot or office shortly.

Reminders and further information

- If you have [symptoms](#) such as a cough or runny nose, please contact your GP or Healthline on 0800 358 343.
- If you have had your booster please forward a copy of your updated My Vaccine Passport to COVID-19 Enquiries covid19enquiries@powernet.co.nz
- Masks must have ear loops or head attachment
- Visitors on a PowerNet site – for essential business only. All visitors must scan in using the QR code, show their PowerNet host their current vaccine pass, 1.5m distancing must be maintained, with meetings held in bookable meeting rooms only and mask wearing is required at all times, including during the meeting.
 - Reception to be informed of visitors at offices prior to their arrival
- In anticipation of a positive case of COVID-19 in our workplace we are investigating a more efficient means for employees to advise any '[close contact](#)' interactions. More information will follow on this shortly.

Attached and linked

1. [CE-FRW-001 - COVID-19 Protection Framework - Traffic Light System](#)

Thank you to the leaders for their input in updating the framework to an easy to read one page document. If you have any questions, please direct them to your leader or Senior Leader.

Stay safe.

Jason Franklin
Chief Executive
14 February 2022