



COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 Risk Assessment

On 6 April 2022, we consulted on an update to our COVID-19 Risk Assessment. As a reminder, key updates to the existing risk assessment included:

- Omicron, a more transmissible lower severity variant, has become predominant;
- Community transmission has become more prevalent in the Southern region;
- We now have Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) as a new tool in our toolkit; and
- WorkSafe have recently released updated [guidance](#) following the Government's announcement about easing COVID-19 restrictions and narrowing of vaccine mandates to health disability, aged care, corrections and border workforces.

Feedback received from employees as part of the consultation process was mostly in favour of the updated risk assessment. General feedback received was the use of Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) for routine monitoring has been a positive step to help with the early detection of COVID-19. Additional feedback was also received recommending PowerNet revise its position with respect to our Vaccination Policy, following the recently released WorkSafe guidance and a change to the Governments position easing COVID-19 restrictions and the use of vaccine mandates.

After receiving feedback as part of the risk assessment consultation process, the updated Risk Assessment is now confirmed. The SLT and the COVID-19 Working Group have also reviewed a number of our COVID-19 control measures, to ensure they remain fit for purpose with Omicron now the predominant COVID-19 variant and community transmission of COVID now widespread in the Southern region. These proposed changes are summarised below.

Proposed changes

1. **Vaccination Policy** – PowerNet would remove the requirement to maintain a My Vaccine Pass and our COVID-19 Vaccination Policy would be suspended until further notice. Note that it is possible should we have new variants of COVID-19 in future, the Vaccination Policy may need to be reactivated following a consultation process. Unvaccinated employees currently participating in the Unvaccinated Employee Trial, under section 11 of our Vaccination Policy would return to work as normal.



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2. **Protection Framework** – our protection framework has been updated to reflect the Orange traffic light setting. Removing the requirement for people accessing a PowerNet managed worksite to present a My Vaccine Pass, but maintaining other controls such as routine RAT testing, mask wearing, and social distancing.
3. **Working from the workplace** - those employees who have been working from home to enable us to minimise congestion in office/depot environments, would return to their office/depot workplace from Monday, 2 May 2022.
4. **Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) procedure** – this procedure will be updated to apply to all employees (not critical workers only) from Monday, 2 May 2022. Prior to entering the workplace a RAT test is to be taken with a negative result.

RAT tests are to be taken every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. PowerNet has a sufficient stock of RAT tests and will provide employees training on how to complete a RAT. Please refer to the online information;

- [RAT PowerPoint: \(linked and attached\):](#)

5. **Review** – The above changes would apply from 2 May 2022, and would be reviewed in four weeks' time, on 30 May 2022. The situation will be monitored on a regular basis during this period.

The transition back to office/depots

As outlined above, from Monday, 2 May 2022 employees will transition back to the office/depot if they have been working from home. Prior to coming back, please ensure you have a negative RAT test.

For employees who do not have their first set of RAT kits, these can be collected from reception at the Racecourse Road and Balclutha offices. To obtain further RAT test kits, please order these through the Nintex app or access the online form ([RAT order form](#)) on the intranet.

If you are planning to collect your first RAT kit on Monday 2 May, please get them from reception, take the test in your car, and enter your workplace, once the RAT test is negative.

Feedback

We welcome feedback from employees on these proposed changes before they are confirmed. If you have feedback, please present that in writing to covid19enquiries@powernet.co.nz by 4pm on Friday 29 April 2022.

The final decision with respect to these proposed changes will be confirmed late Friday.



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Support and looking out for each other

It is clear from feedback received when we introduced the Vaccine Policy and the various iterations of our COVID-19 Protection Frameworks that everyone appreciates the impact these changes have on our employees and our business. We respect different people have different views.

It is important to recognise the impacts of COVID-19 are not behind us. As a business COVID continues to present considerable health and safety challenges and requires us to work differently to deliver safe, efficient and reliable power to our communities. At this time, it is important all staff are respectful of the genuinely held views of others and that everyone is supported.

If you have any questions or concerns please speak to you leader in the first instance. Other support options include OCP (0800 377 990) and PFA (0800 710 240).

Thank you for your continued support.

Jason Franklin
Chief Executive
28 April 2022

Attachments

- [CE-FRW-0001 – COVID-19 Protection Framework – Traffic Light System](#)
- [RAT PowerPoint](#)
- [RAT Promapp](#)