

## COVID19 – COVID PROTECTION FRAMEWORK - UPDATE

1 December 2021

Tēnā koutou

I refer to my memo of 24 November – a copy of which can be found [here](#).

The Government has announced what each region traffic light colour will move to as at 11.59pm on Thursday 2 December 2021, as the whole country moves away from the Covid Alert Level System to the Covid-19 Protection Framework. These colour settings will be reviewed on Monday 13 December and then held that way until 17 January 2022. No region is expected to move to Green until after the 17 January review.

We also have received further guidelines to assist us with how things will operate under the new framework for places of worship. These are attached and more can be found on our [website](#) and here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/traffic-lights/>

I draw attention to particular parts of this Government information and repeat it here.

### Vaccine for staff and volunteers

Workers at ***gatherings (places of worship)*** are only required to be vaccinated when attendees are required to hold a My Vaccine Pass. This means that workers at gatherings that choose to operate within capacity constraints set out in the COVID-19 Protection Framework, without vaccine passes, do not have to be vaccinated.

Workers at gatherings where they must be vaccinated are required to meet the same vaccination timeframes as My Vaccine Pass holders – that is, they must be double vaccinated when the Framework comes into effect at 11:59pm 2 December.

Further - Places of worship must:

- Keep records of their workers' vaccination status.
- If the worker is vaccinated, the record needs to include the name of the vaccine(s) received and the date on which doses were received. This information can be collected through a worker's My COVID Record. A My Vaccine Pass will not be sufficient because it does not include information about type of vaccine received and dates of doses. MBIE will be working with the Privacy Commissioner on guidance for record keeping.

### Gathering vs Event

Under the framework a ***gathering*** is defined as: a group of people who are intermingling.

This does not include people who remain at least 2 metres away from each other so far as is reasonably practical. Services are an example of a gathering.

Under the framework an ***event*** is defined as: any voluntary or for-profit activity

- that takes place at a commercial or private indoor or outdoor premises or a publicly owned premises hired for that purpose,
- that has controlled access of customers or clients via ticketing, fee paying on premises, registration, or other practicable means of controllable entry,
- unless that activity is an outdoor community event or a gathering.

A church conference would be an event, a church or youth camp would be an event. Church services, Small Group weekly meeting, youth group, etc would be a gathering.

Gatherings in a home, including Home Groups, fall under the same rules for other gatherings. There is one exception to how capacity limits are applied - If you are holding a gathering at a house, you only need to adhere to the maximum number limit, regardless of the size of the house.

### **Operating with and without My Vaccine Pass**

A place of worship can switch between activities operating with My Vaccine Passes and operating without My Vaccine Passes as long as;

- spaces are cleaned between groups
- there is no intermingling of the two groups
- spaces being used are ventilated
- high touch surfaces are cleaned between groups.
- It is made clear to all involved (attendees/staff/volunteers) which activities are using My Vaccine Pass and which are not.

Advice on cleaning can be found here [Ministry of Health – cleaning and disinfection advice](#).

Where a vaccine pass is required, places of worship must display posters or signage indicating to attendees that a My Vaccine Pass is required. These can be downloaded here [COVID-19 protection Framework – posters](#)

### **Operating multiple activities in the same venue**

We have received a number of questions about this subject and note - if you have multiple defined spaces in a venue, you can operate multiple activities at once. A defined space is:

- an indoor area that has no direct airflow to another indoor area that is being used.
- or an outdoor area that is separated from other outdoor areas by 2 metres.

Separate spaces must be managed so that groups do not mix entering, leaving, or using the premises, for example, in entrances, exits and toilets.

### **Capacity limits**

Capacity limits do not include workers or volunteers but do include all other people (adults and children) within the 'defined space'. Capacity limits are based on 1 metre distancing. This means the maximum number of people who could occupy the space if each person was 1 metre apart. People do not need to stand 1 metre apart.

### **Serving food and drink**

If you are operating as a **gathering**, you can serve food and drink at green, orange or red. If you are operating as an **event**:

- **At Green:**

- With My Vaccine Pass you can serve food and drink without additional requirements.
- Without My Vaccine Pass, the event attendees must be seated and separated for the service of food and drink.

- **At Orange:**

- With My Vaccine Pass you can serve food and drink without additional requirements.
- Without My Vaccine Pass events cannot operate.

- **At Red:**

- With My Vaccine Pass, the event attendees must be seated and separated for the service of food and drink.
- Without My Vaccine Pass events cannot operate.

### Using My Vaccine Pass and the Verifier App

My Vaccine Pass is an official record of your COVID-19 vaccination, or exemption, status for use within Aotearoa New Zealand. A purple vaccination card or vaccination confirmation letter cannot be used as proof of vaccination status. A negative test result is not a substitute for My Vaccine Pass.

Places of worship operating with My Vaccine Passes are required to check attendees' My Vaccine Pass. The best way to confirm the authenticity of a My Vaccine Pass is a verifier app. Places of worship are not required to check ID but may request it. People under the age of 12 years and 3 months can be admitted without a My Vaccine Pass, even if the place of worship is operating under My Vaccine Pass rules.

### Changes in Government advice

The Government can change advice within the COVID Protection Plan at any point. This will not always result in a public announcement. For example, last week there was a change from the maximum number of people that could attend a gathering under traffic light red from 10 to 25 without a vaccine pass. It is important you regularly check the Covid website <https://covid19.govt.nz> for the most up to date information.

### Lastly - singing

We have received questions related to singing – and other types of performance. Advice is that singing, choirs and other performance can take place at any traffic light setting.

"Na, ma te Atua, nana nei te tumanako, e whakaki koutou ki te hari katoa, ki te rangimarie, i runga i te whakapono, kia hua ai to koutou tumanako, i runga i te kaha o te Wairua Tapu" ... "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)



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