# HS10 – COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTROLS

*Updated September 2021*

## Context

New Zealand employers are legally required to carry out a risk assessment to identify whether their workers are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as part of their role. This is to ensure the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues, and any people that they interact with as part of their normal work (e.g., clients).

## Engagement

PCBUs are legally required to engage with their workers (and it is best practice) throughout the risk assessment process. This means discussing the hazards, identifying the risks and suitable controls. This does not mean that as an employer you cannot make decisions, you can, but you do need to consult (e.g., all brains on deck).

Put simply:

* High Risk – Can Ask – Can record
* Low Risk – Can’t Ask – No right to know

## Performing a COVID-19 Exposure Risk Assessment

Things you need to consider when performing a risk assessment to identify whether their workers are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as part of their role. When carrying out the risk assessment you must:

* Assess the risk in collaboration with your workers and their representatives.
* Focus on the role and not the worker performing it because you can’t require an individual to be vaccinated.

**Note:** This process is assessing the role’s exposure risk to the virus, and not focusing on an individual’s risk (e.g., do they have any at risk health conditions).

An exposure risk assessment for COVID-19 includes two factors:

1. The likelihood of being exposed to COVID-19 while performing a role; and
2. The potential consequences of that exposure (or risk).

To carry out a risk assessment for exposure to COVID-19 you need to consider two key things about the role:

1. What is the likelihood of a worker or workers being exposed to COVID-19 while performing the role, and
2. What is the potential consequences of that exposure on others (e.g., workplace or community spread).

### ****Identifying the likelihood of COVID-19 exposure****

The first thing you need to consider in your risk assessment is the likelihood that a worker performing the role will be exposed to COVID-19. Examples where they might be a higher risk of exposure include environments where spread of the virus is most likely. E.g.:

* Closed spaces with poor ventilation
* Crowded places with many people nearby
* Close-contact settings, especially where people have close-range conversations, singing or shouting
* Interacting with people or environments that have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 (e.g., working at a COVID-19 Testing Station, Hospital or MIQ facility)

If regular testing isn’t mandatory for the role, but you still think there may be a high likelihood of exposure, the Ministry of Health has information about the [transmission of COVID-19](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Four-work%2Fdiseases-and-conditions%2Fcovid-19-novel-coronavirus%2Fcovid-19-health-advice-public%2Fabout-covid-19&data=04%7C01%7CCraig%40allaboutpeople.co.nz%7C39289cfc66284dd1362208d97d7078d7%7C3d299beccbea450c9ca99819ebd174d2%7C0%7C0%7C637678744283325762%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=PL3gLjtStj6GWCTwjImxIjgHElOHt7cu0Ld4NdnaTCM%3D&reserved=0) that may help you decide this.

### ****Identifying the potential consequences of that exposure on others****

To help you work out potential consequences, you need to consider, does the role involve regular contact with [people who are at high risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Four-work%2Fdiseases-and-conditions%2Fcovid-19-novel-coronavirus%2Fcovid-19-information-specific-audiences%2Fcovid-19-advice-higher-risk-people&data=04%7C01%7CCraig%40allaboutpeople.co.nz%7C39289cfc66284dd1362208d97d7078d7%7C3d299beccbea450c9ca99819ebd174d2%7C0%7C0%7C637678744283335756%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=yClbBZ4sXaLeldpz3MNibPnhvoIaTdESPqxzNov3v9A%3D&reserved=0) (i.e. it can be easily and quickly passed on to at risk people)

### ****Completing the risk assessment****

If there’s a high likelihood that the person performing the role may be exposed to COVID-19 **and** the consequences would be significant for other people, it’s likely the role needs to be performed by a vaccinated person.[[1]](#endnote-1)

If you decide the role needs to be performed by a vaccinated contractor or contractor employee, you’ll need to work through the contract implications/requirements with the contracting company.

Below are examples of the type of work roles that could be considered High and Low Risk

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example HIGH RISK Activities** | **Example LOW RISK Activities** |
| ***Consider the likely risk of exposure to COVID-19 when working in any of these workplaces*** |
| MIQ | Retail (assuming there are very good PPE and isolation protocols in place) |
| Healthcare | Residential trades |
| Aged Care | Business to Business |
| International Travel for work | Transport |
| International Freight  | Domestic travel |

## Risk Assessment Process

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COVID 19 RISK ASSESSMENT**  | **YES** | **NO** | **N/A** |
| Have you identified any hazards or risk associated with the work being undertaken relating to COVID 19 Exposure? | □ | □ | □ |
| Does the work you do fall into the High-Risk category?(See Risk Assessment Table – circle areas that apply) | □ | □ | □ |
| *At this point consider things like who is your customer base, are they a higher-than-normal risk of transmitting to you? (e.g., working in an MIQ facility), and you work with other clients who are a high-risk group where if you passed it to them, it would have a significant impact (e.g., working in aged care as a contractor/supplier)* |
| **HIGH RISK**  |
| If you do fall into the High-Risk category and based on Likelihood, Exposure and Consequences you are required to collect information on Worker Vaccinations. Have you engaged with workers to undertake this? | □ | □ | □ |
| If workers refuse to disclose this information are alternate duties available? | □ | □ | □ |
| * If alternate duties are available, exposure is low and vaccination information is not required. Resolve any potential issues and agree on any proposed changes to be implemented around alternate duties
* If no alternate duties are available, exposure risk is high, and Vaccination of your Workers is required – make sure you discuss and issues.
	+ High Risk – Can Ask – Can record
	+ Only record when both Vaccinations have been administrated
 |
| **Note:*** Based on your risk assessment you are entitled to ask, record and provide this information externally where required e.g., to your clients on the vaccination status of your workers
* If no alternative duties are available and the work you do is deemed high risk then you need to seek employment advice (non-disclosure assumes person is unvaccinated)
 |
| **LOW RISK**  |
| * If you do fall into the Low-Risk category you are not required, or permitted, to obtain information about the vaccination status of your Workers unless consent is given
* If your Workers provide this information to you voluntarily this is seen as consent to record. You can’t ask nor do you have a right to record without this voluntary consent
* An email provided to you with a photo of the workers vaccination card is considered to be consent
 |
| **DECLARATION** Based on this Risk Assessment we believe the work we do is considered **High Risk | Low Risk (circle)** |
| **Date:** |  | **Name:** |  |
| **Company name:** |  | **Signature** |  |

## Risk Assessment Notes

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| Insert any notes to validate your risk assessment. E.g., identified hazards, level of risk, discussion points with staff etc. |

## COVID 19 WORKPLACE CONTROLS

Below are the recommended controls to be in the workplace to assist with managing exposure to or transmission of COVID-19.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **COVID 19 workplace controls**  |  |  |
| *Check all that apply (this assumes Alert level 1)* | **YES** | **NO** | **N/A** |
| Contact tracing – Have & promote use of QR codes and Bluetooth on | □ | □ | □ |
| Processes around Hygiene and Cleaning  | □ | □ | □ |
| Process for Managing reported symptoms  | □ | □ | □ |
| Process for Managing a positive notification | □ | □ | □ |
| Suitable PPE available (Face coverings, gloves) | □ | □ | □ |
| Identifying at risk employees and clients | □ | □ | □ |
| *Other controls (please list)* |  |  |  |

1. We acknowledge that [no vaccine is 100 percent effective](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.health.govt.nz%2Four-work%2Fdiseases-and-conditions%2Fcovid-19-novel-coronavirus%2Fcovid-19-health-advice-public%2Fabout-covid-19%2Fcovid-19-about-delta-variant&data=04%7C01%7CCraig%40allaboutpeople.co.nz%7C39289cfc66284dd1362208d97d7078d7%7C3d299beccbea450c9ca99819ebd174d2%7C0%7C0%7C637678744283335756%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=8Z2RRrJintYhC4Bk61ykqDR9U7hB9dqafxW3cU%2B%2Bf%2FQ%3D&reserved=0), and there is some chance a vaccinated worker may become infected with COVID-19 and may transmit the virus to other people. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)