

Emergency food services as an essential service

Based on the list of essential services released by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the delivery of emergency food services (food banks, food rescue, food bag deliveries, soup kitchens, etc.) is considered an essential service. Follow these health guidelines if your organisation will be delivering emergency food services while New Zealand is at COVID-19 alert level 3 or 4. Please contact Wellington City Council Emergency Services line (04 801 3683) if you have any questions.

Health guidelines for delivering emergency food services

In order to keep our communities healthy and protected, it is vital that emergency food providers practice the following protocol informed by the Ministry of Public Health, and other best practice recommendations. Please read this entire document before engaging in the delivery of emergency food services.

1. All emergency food providers must be well and show no symptoms of COVID-19. Common symptoms include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath/trouble breathing, persistent pressure in the chest, and/or bluish lips or face in severe cases.
2. Emergency food providers must avoid person to person contact and maintain distance of at least two metres apart.
3. Ensure that your distribution practices avoid direct contact with clients as much as possible. If delivering food, leave the food parcels outside of homes or at a designated drop off location. If food is being collected, only allow one person at a time into your facility to collect food and avoid any direct contact.
4. Ensure surfaces that are frequently touched – such as kitchen areas, chairs, and doorknobs – are cleaned frequently and thoroughly after each use with disinfectant.
5. Ensure there are appropriate handwashing facilities or readily available alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol). Have lined containers available for the safe disposal of paper towels.
6. When preparing food for clients, a face mask (N95 preferred) and gloves must be worn at all times. Eye protective equipment and hooded coveralls are recommended.
Read below for advice on the use of Personal Protective Equipment.
7. For those delivering food, face masks and gloves must be worn. Eye protection is recommended. **Read below for advice on the use of Personal Protective Equipment.**
8. Read the below information to understand COVID-19 and best health practices.

COVID-19 background information: Coronaviruses are a large and diverse family of viruses which include some known to cause illness in animals and humans, including the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). Common symptoms include fever, dry cough, shortness of breath/trouble breathing, persistent pressure in the chest, and bluish lips or face in severe cases.

Incubation period: Provisionally, the incubation period (when the virus is developing) is considered to be from 1-14 days (commonly 3 to 7 days).

Mode of transmission: Transmission is considered to occur primarily through respiratory droplets and secretions. Transmission is likely to occur through virus contact with mucus or eye secretion, either by direct exposure or by transfer on contaminated hands.

Period of Communicability: Provisionally, the period of communicability (when infection can spread) is considered to commence 48 hours before onset of symptoms and continue until the individual is fully well again (must be cleared by a medical professional).

Personal Protective Equipment use

Avoid touching eyes, face, and adjusting mask when wearing Personal Protective Equipment.

How to wear a mask:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) if unavailable.
2. Place mask over nose, mouth, and chin.
3. Fit flexible nose piece over nose bridge.
4. Secure on head with ties or elastic.
5. Adjust to fit – secure on your head, fitting snugly around your face with no gaps.
6. Avoid touching or adjusting your mask during use.

How to remove a mask:

7. Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol).
8. Avoid touching the front of the mask.
9. If the mask has ties, untie the bottom then top tie.
10. Remove from face.
11. Discard and do not use again.
12. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) immediately after mask has been removed.

Glove use:

1. Wash hands thoroughly with warm soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol).
2. Pick up gloves from the wrist-end. Avoid touching the outside of the gloves.
3. Do not touch eyes, face, or cough into gloves.
4. When removing gloves, avoid touching the outside of the glove and dispose.
5. Discard and do not use again.
6. Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with greater than either 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) immediately after gloves has been removed.

More information

For everything you need to know about COVID-19, go to: www.covid19.govt.nz

Got a question?

Please call the Wellington City Council Emergency Services line (04 801 3683).