



HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

COVID-19 Management Plan

FOREST & BIRD COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

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Approved by Chief Executive Nicola Toki

Signed:

Version	Date	Author
Draft 1	10/08/2022	DT
v2 – staff feedback	07/09/2022	DT
v3 – amendment following government rule change	13/09/2022	DT

Introduction

This plan replaces the previous 'Pandemic Response Plan' and the Vaccination Status & Forest & Bird Activities Policy'. This plan will apply to all Forest & Bird staff, volunteers and contractors.

The protocols in this plan are guided by public health advice, WorkSafe advice, Forest & Bird COVID-19 workplace risk assessment and Forest & Bird COVID-19 activity risk analysis.

This plan, the Forest & Bird COVID-19 workplace risk assessment and the Forest & Bird COVID-19 activity risk analysis will all be reviewed and updated at least six monthly (from date of implementation). Reviews will occur sooner if significant changes to the New Zealand COVID-19 context occur such as a new more transmissible or severe variant arriving in New Zealand or a change to the COVID-19 Protection Framework, other than level change.

Forest & Bird Operating Framework

Forest & Bird is no longer operating under the 4 Tier pandemic response plan. Instead, our work approvals and controls will largely mirror public health advice guidance.

The most common personal control for COVID-19 is mask use. This link describes the recommendations around mask use <https://covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/keep-up-healthy-habits/face-masks/wearing-a-face-mask/>

Forest & Bird's H&S plan and hazard controls are based on this public health advice.

Where our risk assessment determines that we should set controls that exceed the public health guidance these are outlined below.

Vaccination Requirements

There are no longer any mandatory requirements for Forest & Bird staff, volunteers or contractors to be vaccinated to carry out any work activities.

In the case of contractors, if specific activity assessments deem it necessary that the work be undertaken by a vaccinated person then this requirement could be included in the contract. Please seek further advice from p.barnett@forestandbird.org.nz or d.toogood@forestandbird.org.nz before proceeding with a specific risk assessment. Any requirements for contractors to be vaccinated must be approved by the Chief Executive.

Some third parties that we interact with may still require proof of vaccination to work with them or visit their premises, in which case please discuss with your manager how this would be dealt with. This could involve reconsideration of whether the work must be done or how it will be achieved. Options could include conducting meetings virtually or assigning the work to a staff member who is able and comfortable to provide proof of vaccination.

Forest & Bird still strongly encourages that everyone is fully vaccinated and boosted, in line with public health advice, and will support all staff to be vaccinated including providing paid work time to staff to get vaccinated or boosted.

What work can be undertaken?

All activity types are now approved for all Forest & Bird staff, volunteers and contractors to undertake. Note that this permission only relates to COVID-19 risk, other risk management controls may be required for your work. Additional controls for specific roles and activities are covered below. In all other cases the controls required by the current public health advice or regulations are the only control requirements relating to COVID-19 risk.

At-Risk Forest & Bird workers

For any staff, volunteers or contractors that are considered 'at-risk' controls additional to those noted in this plan may be appropriate. These controls will depend on the nature of the 'at-risk' status for individuals so are not detailed in this plan. Determining whether an individual is 'at-risk' and what that risk means is up to the individual. For clarity on how an 'at-risk' individual is defined and some guidance on what that might mean for you please check out who has [greater risk of severe illness](#).

If you decide that you are 'at-risk' and that you would like more controls in place to protect you at work please discuss this immediately with your manager (for staff), activity organiser or Branch committee member (for volunteers) or contract supervisor (for contractors).

Guidance for anyone approached by an individual about their 'at-risk' status: These conversations are a private medical matter and should only be discussed with the individual. Any additional controls that are appropriate should be agreed and implemented. If further advice is required on what controls might be available or how to implement them, please contact (in confidence and without naming the individual) either:

- p.barnett@forestandbird.org.nz or d.toogood@forestandbird.org.nz

Forest & Bird offices

Forest & Bird office premises are open and you can work in the office if you choose to. Visitors, anyone who is not a F&B staff member, volunteer or contractor even if normally based at another location, are permitted both as arranged appointments and walk ins. Normal processes around signing visitors on to premises apply. Meetings with people external to F&B are able to be hosted at F&B offices.

Use of masks is recommended but not required.

Working from home

Staff who are not already in a formal work from home arrangement may continue to work from home if they want to and it is appropriate to the requirements of Forest & Bird, or if they are considered an 'at-risk' individual. This guidance covers a lot of people and should only be used to consider how an individual's risk from the severity of COVID-19 infection may be increased by other factors.

All staff that carry out remote work (such as work from home) must have a written agreement to do so with their Group Manager or the Chief Executive. A written agreement can include an employment agreement where Forest & Bird requires a staff member to work from home or any arrangement where the staff member has requested that they work from home either all or part of their hours on a regular basis. Formalising the flexible working arrangement will ensure that any H&S risks relating to this type of work are addressed appropriately and that both staff and management have clear expectations of what this sort of work entails.

Working indoors but away from F&B offices

Indoor work applies to any form of work, gathering or meeting including with people external to Forest & Bird. Forest & Bird staff and volunteers should follow Forest & Bird requirements or those of the venue or their hosts if those requirements exceed Forest & Bird's own.

General controls to reduce transmission

Staying home when sick is a very effective control measure to prevent spreading of any illness in the workplace – all staff, volunteers and contractors must stay away from work when they feel sick. Staff can take paid sick leave, if they have run out of their sick leave entitlement they must talk with their GM or the CE to discuss options.

Where a staff member is in self isolation but are not themselves sick (i.e. because they are deemed a household contact of a positive COVID-19 case) then they can take sick leave to care for a dependent if that is appropriate or work from home if able. If neither of those two is possible then they must discuss their situation with their GM or the CE immediately.

Masks continue to be an effective infection protection mechanism. Forest & Bird encourages and supports all staff, volunteers or contractors to wear them as a personal choice.

Some activities or roles (as noted below) require the use of masks. In these situations, masks of the appropriate grade will be provided by Forest & Bird as a Personal Protective Equipment item.

The exception to this is for staff in an office or indoor workspace, that is their normal place of work, who may choose to wear a mask. In these situations, staff are expected to provide their own masks (of any grade) as they do currently.

Where our risk assessment or legislation states that masks are required for use then the grade of mask provided by Forest & Bird will be the N95 grade (also known as P2 or KN95)

In the situations noted below if a mask grade is specified then that is the grade that must be used. If no grade is specified, and in all other circumstances including personal choice to wear a mask, any grade of mask including re-useable masks is acceptable.

Ventilation and CO₂ sensors – Forest & Bird offices are able to be ventilated either actively (mechanical ventilation or filtering system) or passively (opening windows/doors). However, it is difficult to judge how effective this ventilation currently is. More work is being done to ensure adequate ventilation of our commonly used indoor spaces, including assessing ventilation systems. This work may also include the installation of CO₂ sensors as a proxy for air quality if deemed appropriate.

Roles and activities requiring additional controls

- Where any activity requires staff, volunteers or contractors to travel on public transport (or public transport like situations such as a chartered bus for a Branch event) as part of their work then they must wear a mask for the duration of that travel.
- Any Forest & Bird staff, volunteer or contractor traveling internationally on Forest & Bird business must adhere to any government mandates existing at the time including those of governments in countries they are traveling to or transiting through. These requirements could include mandatory vaccinations, surveillance testing and entry/re-entry isolation periods. These requirements must be discussed and agreed on a case by case basis with the CE before any travel booking is made. When a staff member is in the company of externals; in an airplane, public transport or transiting through busy areas like airports then they must use an N95 mask in addition to any other required controls of the country they are in.
- For any work where it is known that the person or people Forest & Bird staff, volunteers or contractors will interact with is considered to be 'at-risk' and the activity might be expected to heighten the infection risk to these 'at-risk' people over what they might expect to encounter in the community then you must consider the need to do the work and whether it can be done safely. **It is important to note that this only applies to 'at-risk' people who are not Forest & Bird staff, volunteers or contractors.** If it cannot be done safely then the hierarchy of controls to be considered and implemented as appropriate is:
 - Do not do the work. Consider cancelling outright or deferring until the COVID-19 context improves. This option would be selected if there was no way to reduce the risk to the 'at-risk' people and if the activity would put them at heightened risk than generally being in the community.
 - Develop an alternative way of doing the work to provide additional protections, such as doing it remotely/virtually, increased physical distancing or limitations on interaction time, to the at-risk individual/s. This option would be selected if the activity heightened the COVID-19 infection risk for 'at-risk' people beyond what they would expect being in the community. for advice on how to do this contact either:
 - p.barnett@forestandbird.org.nz or d.toogood@forestandbird.org.nz

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- As a minimum use N95 grade masks during the interaction and observe 2m physical distancing where possible. This option would be selected if you still had concerns at the risk being presented to 'at-risk' people after other controls such as being outdoors and spending less than 15mins in close proximity to 'at-risk' people are implemented. Note that in this situation masks can be worn by the 'at-risk' people, or the Forest & Bird staff, volunteers or contractors, or all people participating in the activity.

Exceptions

The Chief Executive can approve any legal exceptions to this management plan if they believe they have reasonable justification, and the risks can be adequately managed. Reasonable justification will be at their sole discretion.