

COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus

Business Continuity Package Advisory

Updated 25 March 2020

A message to all clients

I can appreciate that these are tough and uncertain times for all. As a father of three, I am deeply concerned myself of the virus spread of COVID-19 and wish to advise we have initiated our business continuity plan in response to the announcements from the government.

Please Email your client manager in the first instance

Call volumes are exceptionally high and telecommunications today have struggled to handle the load.

Our details are as follows:

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We are currently transitioning into working remotely from home and all face-to-face meetings are currently suspended. We anticipate being fully operational via remote access by Wednesday morning.

Further information will be released regarding gearing up for 2020 tax and financial year completion in due course.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support over the years and I further ask for your support to continue.

Many of our clients are small business and we are as well.

Together we will get through this and we will do the best we can to support you. Things maybe a little different but we assure you that we will always be on your side.

Stay safe and best wishes

Jason Eade
General Manager

Quick Links

More information can be found through these clickable links:

[Latest Update including essential services defined – NZ Government](#)

[Ministry of Health COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Government COVID-19 Advisory](#)

[Employer COVID-19 Subsidy Information](#)

[Employer COVID-19 Subsidy Application](#)

[Self-Employed COVID-19 Application](#)

[MBIE Business Information](#)

[Accountants Plus COVID-19 Advisory Updates](#)

[Wellington City Council COVID-19 Information](#)

[Metlink Wellington Public Transport – Cash Fares](#)

[Inland Revenue COVID-19 Tax Changes](#)

[Hospitality New Zealand – COVID-19 Tool Kit and Updates](#)

Tax Technical

Wage Subsidy

Discussions with officials have confirmed that the wage subsidy and leave payment should be treated as non-taxable income and non-deductible to the employer. The payments are also exempt from GST.

Payments to employees as a result of subsidies should be treated as normal salary and wages in the hands of employees for tax purposes (with PAYE deductions as normal).

We will continue to provide you with advice on other tax elements on working from home arrangements, strategy, and other tax issues as soon as we have directives issued from Inland Revenue.

Other Tax Provisions

IRD have confirmed that they will not be charging penalty interest on any overdue payments. In addition, there are increases to the provisional tax threshold amounts and IRD are reintroducing the ability to claim depreciation on commercial buildings. Please talk to us about how these will apply to you.

Planning

We advise our clients to establish and begin executing business continuity plans. COVID-19 has already revealed flaws in some continuity planning and there is real uncertainty of what the true effects and variables in the market will be.

We highly recommend reviewing your business continuity plans and are well equipped to assist you if required.

Keep Communicating & Perspective

Every business falls into a particular segment in a value chain. Whether you are a manufacturer of raw materials, a service provider, or an end retailer; you will have some supply chain of some description.

Communicating with your supply chain both suppliers and who you supply to will be crucial to manage misinformation and the associated panic. Also keeping up to date with official information from the government rather than rumours or whispers or a persons opinion piece will also mitigate the information overload we are currently facing.

Keeping Calm and Emotional Well-being

Through consultations with our clients over the phone, we have seen an outstanding amount of courage and calmness. We do realise though that many of you will be potentially suffering from anxiety, depression, or uncertainty.

Xero clients have free access to the Xero Assistance Program which is a free and confidential mental health support program to all New Zealand subscribers – this extends to your employees and families. More information on this can be found [here](#).

The following organisations are also able to help:

Lifeline	0800 543 354
Youthline	0800 376 633
Samaritans	0800 726 666
Suicide Crisis Helpline	0508 828 865
Anxiety New Zealand	0800 269 4389

COVID-19 Action Checklist

The following is a guide of actions that may need to be undertaken by your business in combating the effects of COVID-19. Every business will be different so this is only a guide as we move to Level 4:

Actions Required	Steps to be considered
Non-Essential Services Companies	
Provide regular updates to all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed or delegated person to provide updates to staff on updating employees relating to COVID-19. • Ensure employees contact details are up-to-date. • Inform your employees of what wage/salary payments they can expect to receive during the Level 4 period. (Check that you are meeting your requirements for the Government Grant of trying to pay at least 80% of salaries and to keep people employed, also check that you are in line with the requirements of any individual or collective employment agreements). • You can negotiate with your employees around whether they would like to take annual leave now. If you wish to direct your employees to take annual leave you must give 14 days' notice.
Provide information on how to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease and reduce the risk of the virus spreading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid close contact with people suffering acute respiratory infection. • Wash hands frequently, especially after contact with ill people or their environment. • If you have symptoms of respiratory infection you should practice cough etiquette of maintaining distance, regular washing of hands, and covering coughs or sneezes with disposable tissues.
Create a database of staff with pre-existing medical conditions that put them at higher risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask employees to provide this information to a senior authority in the business and remind delegated authorities the importance of privacy. • High risk conditions include anyone with a weakened immune or respiratory system, diabetes, transplant recipients, or heart disease.
Have all employees update their personal contact details and emergency contact details on your personal employee database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should include their current address, phone number and emergency contact details (an alternate person to contact if we can't get hold of you).

<p>Ensure that all employees who have a work laptop have this with them prior to close of business Wednesday 25 March 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the work place will need to be prevented once the Level 4 restrictions are in place.
<p>Ensure that you have checked that your workplace will be safe to be unattended for at least 4 weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps like clearing the fridges, ensuring the alarm system is working and switching off all non-essential appliances at the wall to reduce fire risk.
<p>Consider alternative options for employees who do not have a work laptop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can advise on reputable ICT companies who maybe able to assist. • We advise doing this early to avoid being stuck in the queue, as ICT companies will be at full capacity.
<p>Ensure that all employees can work from home effectively</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the ability to access IT services from home such as VPN and server access. • Check employees have internet at home or a cell phone that can provide an internet connection. • Provide contact details to employees as to who they can contact if they have technical issues in connecting from home. • Provide information to employees as to what tasks they are expected to complete from home, the hours they are to be available and the total hours they are expected to work each week during Level 4. • Check if you need a time recording system to allow you to track employee work time. We can provide information on online time tracking solutions.
<p>Ensure staff have a good understanding of Microsoft Teams/Skype (whatever software your workplace uses for internal communication). Ensure they also have this software downloaded onto their smart phones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and receive regular telephone calls. • Initiate Chat sessions with our peers or groups of peers. • Make digital (Internet) based audio or video calls. • Run collaborative multi-party meetings, to both internal and external parties. • Share documents and information via Teams site; • Having access to the above via your smartphone will ensure you have immediate access to any updates.

Essential Services Companies	
Look at ways to reduce staff contact with the public and themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you complete more shifts in a day to reduce the amount of staff on? • Ensure that the same staff work the same shifts to reduce contact with others. • Consider putting into place barriers to ensure contact with the public is 2m or more. • Consider the need for PPE for front facing staff. • Can deliveries be completed in a contactless way? • Can some staff complete some or all of their work from home? • Reduce the amount of people that each staff member comes in contact with.
Talk to staff to assess those who have underlying conditions who would not be appropriate for front line work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to redeploy these staff to alternative positions rather than front facing roles.
Ensure your office is fully equipped with hand sanitiser, sanitising wipes, tissues and face masks for employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitiser stations at the entrance to the office and other locations. • Advise employees of these locations. • Consider having sanitising wipes in staff rooms, employee desks, tissues for personal use. • Having the office cleaned.
Provide information on how to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease and reduce the risk of the virus spreading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid close contact with people suffering acute respiratory infection. • Wash hands frequently, especially after contact with ill people or their environment. • If you have symptoms of respiratory infection you should practice cough etiquette of maintaining distance, regular washing of hands, and covering coughs or sneezes with disposable tissues.
Check with the Ministry responsible for your essential service for guidance on operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Essential service is overseen by a Ministry check with them for specific guidance on operating in your industry. https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/essential-services-list.pdf