

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Supporting New Zealand's Infrastructure Resilience in Adverse Events

PANDEMIC RESPONSE - INFRASTRUCTURE - INTERNAL BOUNDARIES

Facilitating Continued Infrastructure Services and Supplies While Protecting Health Imperatives in New Zealand

Introduction

As part of New Zealand's response to a serious pandemic, a decision may be taken to restrict the movement of people by imposing internal boundaries. Many infrastructure providers (including transport operators) are concerned about how they would operate in this situation.

Two issues arise: how to meet the needs of

- **operators of transmission and distribution networks** who might need to cross boundaries for maintenance and the like (these networks include electricity lines, telecommunication lines, radio transmission towers, gas pipelines and similar assets)
- **transport operators**, particularly in road and rail, who need to cross boundaries for transport / delivery of goods

Crossings may be sought from "pandemic-affected areas" to "pandemic-free areas", or vice versa.

Background

MED understands that

- Internal boundaries would be considered in a severe pandemic. Introduction would depend on how serious the virus is, how easy it might be to maintain boundaries given geographic characteristics etc.
 - Internal boundaries would also be logistically difficult to impose and maintain
- A decision to implement internal boundaries would most likely be taken at the national level, but local Medical Officers of Health may also have powers (the possibility of a local decision therefore cannot be discounted)

- Implications / trade-offs etc (such as implications for secure infrastructure and transport services) would be taken into account in the decision

Operators of Transmission and Distribution Networks

The Ministry of Health advises that

- network operators are expected to plan for, and use their best endeavours at the time to implement, arrangements to enable service continuity without crossing internal boundaries
- where necessary to ensure continuity of service and where alternative arrangements are not available, temporary access into pandemic-affected areas may be permitted subject to thresholds, qualifications and restrictions set out below
- temporary exits from pandemic-affected areas into pandemic-free areas is unlikely to be permitted other than in extreme emergency situations, also covered below.

Temporary Access into Pandemic-Affected Areas

Temporary access into pandemic-affected areas may be permitted subject to the following tests, qualifications and conditions.

Thresholds

- necessity that boundary be crossed to meet a situation that may significantly compromise infrastructure service continuity
- the need cannot be met by another resource already in the pandemic-affected area

Qualifications

- the person wishing to make the crossing is a bona fide representative or agent¹ of
 - a Lifeline Utility as defined in Schedule 1 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, including agents of those Lifeline Utilities
 - Solid Energy New Zealand Ltd
 - Airways Corporation of New Zealand Ltd
 - Maritime New Zealand
 - Another entity providing similar essential services (as agreed by the local Medical Officer of Health)
- the person carries identification establishing that relationship

¹ The term “agent” includes contractors.

Conditions

- the person is
 - aware of the risks involved
 - aware of places and situations to be avoided
 - when travelling within the pandemic-affected area, equipped with adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and similar supplies and is aware of how to use them
- Note: it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that staff likely to be required to enter pandemic-affected areas are adequately aware of the risks and how to manage them. Attachment 1 sets out some guidelines.
- the person reports to the local Public Health Service after re-entering the pandemic-free area where travel originated
 - the person complies with any other reasonable requirements imposed by health authorities at the time

The network operator should also advise the office of the relevant Medical Officer of Health of contact details of a person within their organisation who can be contacted to verify identification of the person crossing the boundary, and the purpose any journeys. This information should be advised in advance of the crossing (it is suggested that the advice be provided when areas affected by the pandemic have become clear).²

Temporary Access from Pandemic-Affected Areas into Pandemic-Free Areas

Temporary access from pandemic-affected areas into pandemic-free areas will not be permitted other than in extreme emergency situations. Any requests will need to be considered by the relevant Medical Officer of Health at the time. A very high threshold and very stringent conditions can be expected. As an example, full use of PPEs will be required.

Transport Operators

Drivers of land transport vehicles (e.g. trucks, trains) should vacate their cabs and the like, with replacement staff taking over when boundaries are reached. Hard surfaces in cabs should be wiped to a clean and dry condition by drivers vacating cabs, and again by the replacement drivers. Cab doors should be left open in the intervening period to allow maximum ventilation. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that drivers are appropriately trained.

In other situations, i.e. where drivers are to transit through territory where the pandemic is active, it is proposed that entry be permitted subject to the following tests and conditions.

² Medical Officers of Health are located within regional Public Health Services. Contact details are available from District Health Boards.

Thresholds

- necessity that boundary be crossed to transport goods that are important for the continued good performance of commerce or society in general

Conditions

- the driver is
 - aware of the risks involved
 - aware of places and situations to be avoided
 - when travelling within an affected area, equipped with adequate PPEs and similar supplies and aware of how to use them

Note: it should be the responsibility of the employer to ensure that staff likely to be required to make boundary crossings are adequately aware of the risks and how to manage them.

Attachment 1 sets out some guidelines that may help.

- the person reports to the local Public Health Service after re-entering the area where travel originated
- stoppages are kept to a minimum
- the person complies with any other reasonable requirements imposed by health authorities at the time

Ministry of Economic Development
February 2008

GUIDELINES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK AND TRANSPORT STAFF ENTERING PANDEMIC-AFFECTED AREAS

As part of a response to a serious pandemic, a decision may be taken to restrict the movement of people by imposing internal boundaries. Limited arrangements for entering pandemic-affected areas are available where necessary to promote continued availability of essential goods and services. These guidelines are to be taken into account by staff on any occasions in which such crossings may be required.

If you are ill (or suspect that you are ill) with influenza or any other infectious respiratory illness, do not cross any internal boundary

If you are well and a need arises to enter a pandemic-affected area

- Space yourself from other people as much as practicable
- Minimise the use of vehicle ventilation
- Have Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) available and use this equipment when you are in the proximity of other people
- Avoid touching hard surfaces in locations used by others as much as practicable
 - Always practice effective hand hygiene before, or after, using public facilities
- Always cover coughs and sneezes
 - Always cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, ideally with a tissue
 - Dispose of the tissue immediately in an appropriate container
 - Wash or cleanse your hands (alcohol hand gel can be used to cleanse hands if soap and water are not available).
 - Always wash or cleanse your hands before touching your face, or eating, drinking, or smoking.

Further information and advice about protecting yourself and others can be found on the Ministry of Health website at www.moh.govt.nz, or at 0800 286 358, or write to Pandemic Planning, Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013, Wellington.