

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I let the Cook Islands Government know that I am a Cook Islands resident wanting to return home?

Please email the following information to the Cook Islands High Commission in Wellington at dhc@cookhicom.org.nz;

- Name and address while in New Zealand
- Passport details
- Itinerary(s) showing dates of arrival into, and intended dates of departure from, New Zealand
- Place of residence in the Cook Islands
- Place of work in the Cook Islands
- Best contact number/email in New Zealand

If you are travelling with others, please also send the required information for each individual that you are travelling with.

When will I be able to return to the Cook Islands?

With respect to managing the movement of Cook Islands residents stranded in New Zealand due to border closures/suspension of the QFT Arrangement, it should be noted that a managed return process cannot commence from regions at Alert Level 4, due to the public health risk to the Cook Islands.

If you are in a region at Alert Level 4 or Alert Level 3, you are required to shelter in place. Should you require assistance while sheltering in place, please contact the Cook Islands High Commission in Wellington at dhc@cookhicom.org.nz for further advice.

If you are sheltering in a region at Alert Level 2 or Alert Level 1, you may be eligible for managed return. Please contact ManagedReturns@cookislands.gov.ck for a copy of the 'Cook Islands Managed Return Application Form' and return the form, with all required attachments, to the same address.

What does Managed Isolation/Quarantine (MIQ) mean?

As part of the Managed Returns process, Te Marae Ora Cook Islands Ministry of Health (TMO) is currently working on finalising the details for managed isolation/ quarantine on arrival in the Cook Islands. If you have been approved for managed return, those plans will be communicated directly to you as appropriate via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration (MFAI).

How do I access financial support while I am in New Zealand?

As a New Zealand Citizen, you may be eligible for an emergency benefit if you meet the necessary criteria. Please call 0800 559 009 to register for emergency assistance.

Pasifika Support is also offering packages to help meet the costs of basic necessities for Pacific Families affected by COVID-19. Please see http://pasifikafutures.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PFL-COVID-19-Whanau-Ora-Support-Partners_01_01.pdf for more information.

If you are in financial distress, please also contact the Cook Islands High Commission in Wellington at dhc@cookhicom.org.nz for referral to your closest support provider.

What does COVID-19 Alert Level 4 in New Zealand mean?

New Zealand's Alert Level 4 is intended to eliminate COVID-19 from within New Zealand.

The following restrictions are in place for Alert Level 4:

- Stay at home in your bubble, other than for essential personal movement.
- Safe recreational activity is allowed in your local area.
- Travel is severely limited.
- All gatherings are cancelled and all public facilities close.

- Businesses close except for essential services, for example, supermarkets, pharmacies, clinics, petrol stations and lifeline utilities.
- Educational facilities close.
- Rationing of supplies and requisitioning of facilities possible.
- Reprioritisation of healthcare services is possible.
- Green grocers, butchers, bakeries, and fishmongers can sell uncooked food items online. All orders legally must be by delivery.

You are encouraged to wear a face covering whenever you leave the house. You legally must wear a face covering:

- on public transport and at departure points, for example airports, train stations and bus stops
- if you are a driver or passenger of a taxi or ride-share vehicle
- when you visit a healthcare facility (other than for a patient)
- inside retail businesses that are still open, such as supermarkets, pharmacies and petrol stations.

More information on New Zealand's Alert Levels, and other New Zealand COVID-19 updates, can be found at <https://covid19.govt.nz/government-actions/covid-19-alert-system/>

What does COVID-19 Alert Level 3 in New Zealand mean?

New Zealand's Alert Level 3 is intended to protect New Zealand and eliminate COVID-19.

The following restrictions are in place for Alert Level 3:

- People must stay within their household bubble whenever they are not at work or school. The bubble can expand to include close family and whānau, caregivers and support isolated people.
- People must keep 2m away from others in public and 1m in schools and workplaces.
- People can travel locally, for example going to work or school, shopping, or getting exercise.
- Travel between regions is restricted, but people can apply for an exemption in special circumstances.
- Gatherings are also restricted and allowed only for weddings, funerals and tangihanga and limited to 10 people. All public venues are closed.
- Staff must work from home if they can, and businesses can only open to the public if they are contactless. Staff must be 1m apart.
- Children and young people must study from home, but can go to school or educational facilities if there is no supervision at home.
- The same rules as for mask wearing at alert level 4 apply to level 3, with masks mandatory for customers and employees when in contact at an operating business or service. This includes travel on public transport, flights and taxis, visiting healthcare or aged care facilities, and attending other essential services and public areas.
- Mask use when outside the home in other areas, especially when unable to maintain a 2m distance, is also encouraged.

More information on New Zealand's Alert Levels, and other New Zealand COVID-19 updates, can be found at <https://covid19.govt.nz/government-actions/covid-19-alert-system/>

What does Alert Level 2 in the Cook Islands mean?

Alert level 2 means COVID-19 is not present in the Cook Islands but there is a case of community transmission in New Zealand.

More information on Alert Level 2, as well as the latest updates regarding the Cook Islands and COVID-19, can be found at www.covid19.gov.ck.

Do I need to get tested for COVID-19?

Under the process for managed return, you will be required to provide MFAI with a copy of your COVID-19 test result obtained within 72 hours prior to the repatriation flight, to be further verified by TMO. Further information on COVID-19

testing arrangements for Cook Islands residents returning under the managed returns plan will be communicated directly with you in the days ahead.

Who is responsible for changing my flights to the Cook Islands?

At present, you are responsible for changing any flights to the Cook Islands. Air New Zealand has advised that due to COVID-19, they are willing to either hold flights in credit, or waive the change fees. It is recommended that you request that your flights be held in credit until such a time that you are able to confirm the date of onwards travel.

What is expected of me when I return to the Cook Islands?

Under the process for managed return, all Cook Islands residents returning to the Cook Islands will undergo a period of at least 7 days of supervised quarantine upon arrival. Further details on this will be advised over the coming days.

I am struggling with Alert Level 4/3 in New Zealand – who can I talk to?

Your emotional and mental health is important. It is normal to feel stressed or lonely when self-isolating, but there are some things you can do to feel better.

Reach out to your usual supports, like family and friends, by phone or online and talk about how you feel. We also recommend sticking to a routine such as having regular mealtimes, bedtimes and exercising.

If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk with a health professional. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.