

UPDATE TO THE SCREEN INDUSTRY COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

October 2021

Due to the recent Delta outbreak in New Zealand and subsequent amendments to government guidelines, the Screen Industry COVID-19 Protocols have been updated as per below. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the Protocols, and do reach out to your regular Health & Safety Officer or the ScreenSafe COVID-19 Group if you have any questions or concerns.

As we have seen from the speed of the recent outbreak, the Delta variant has a shorter incubation period, is more infectious, and the hospitalisation rates are higher. Until vaccination rates are high enough, the government is likely to keep us in higher levels, and for longer, in order to contain any community outbreaks of Delta (or other future variants).

The below changes should be read in context of the ScreenSafe Protocols, which have been updated to incorporate all new government guidance. It is also advisable to check government websites like <https://covid19.govt.nz> for any updated information or advice for each level.

PLEASE NOTE: After 169 days in Auckland (300+ for the South Island) without a community outbreak, complacency was definitely starting to creep into our industry. Please **DO NOT COME TO WORK IF YOU ARE SYMPTOMATIC. AND PLEASE GET TESTED.** If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, **no matter how small**, we recommend you get tested. Testing is a key tool for catching community outbreaks of COVID-19. It also means you are able to go to work and that you do't expose your friends and colleagues to the virus. There are many ways to get tested, and results generally come back within 24-48 hours.

THE KEY UPDATES TO THE PROTOCOLS ARE:

FACE COVERINGS (MASKS)

At Level 2 & 3, face coverings are strongly recommended. And it would be expected that most productions will require them as part of their H&S plan. They are mandated by the MoH for public facing businesses and work.

DELTA / AEROSOL TRANSMISSION

We know a lot more about COVID-19 than we did a year ago. The protocols have had an extensive update on how it is spread, how it affects us and how to protect yourself.

We also know that variants like the Delta variants are mostly spread through the air. So while surface cleaning and good hygiene is still very important, there should now be a bigger focus on face coverings and aerosol spread.

Be aware of situations where the virus is most likely to be spread, particularly for work in Levels 2 and 3:

- Closed spaces with poor ventilation.
- Crowded places with many people nearby.
- Close-contact settings, especially where people have close-range conversations, singing or shouting.



TESTING

The protocols include a new section in regards to testing. It includes information about types of testing, who can do it and where.

Please note that surveillance testing may become more frequently used in our industry. Some of the larger shows are already using this.

VACCINATION

The protocols include a new section about vaccination. The WHO and the Ministry for Health both recommend getting vaccinated against COVID-19 as the best defence for yourself, your family and your colleagues.

MENTAL HEALTH & FINANCIAL SUPPORT

This section has been updated with the latest information. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need help. Or if you think someone needs a hand.

USE OF EXTRAS

Additional information about working with extras. This can be found in the Alert Level Guide and Production Bubble Breakdown sections.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Updated with the latest information in regards to immigration, travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, MIQ quarantine booking, etc.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

Updated with the latest information for regional travel, including testing requirements for those allowed to travel between regions at Levels 3 & 4.

Unless you are an essential news/media worker, general travel to/from Level 3 and 4 regions is NOT permitted for other screen workers. Inter-regional travel is permitted at Levels 1 and 2.

For travel during Level 2, we don't recommend ride-sharing unless you are in a small and regular work bubble with someone. At Level 3, ride-sharing is not allowed.

LEGALS & PRIVACY

We have sought legal advice about what employers can request and ask about in regards to testing and vaccination status. See the "About COVID-19" and "Testing" sections for more info.

Vaccination Status

PCBUs/employers are able to ask about the vaccination status of workers, but cannot compel workers to answer this. Note that, if a worker refuses to declare their vaccination status, a PCBU/employer may then assume that the worker is not vaccinated, although they should advise the worker if they are making that assumption.

If a worker does disclose their vaccination status in response to a request by a PCBU/employer, this is the worker's personal information and should only be used for the purpose for which it was collected.

In some circumstances, following a health and safety risk assessment, certain work/roles can be assessed by the PCBU as needing to be performed by a vaccinated person. To determine whether a role is 'high risk' under a COVID-19 health and safety risk assessment, PCBUs must consider the



likelihood of the worker in the role being exposed to COVID-19 while performing the role, and the potential consequence of that exposure for others.

Please note that some local productions, and likely many overseas ones, may make the assessment that all contracted crew/cast/extras must be vaccinated.

Testing of Workers

Some PCBUs/employers may request regular surveillance testing of workers. However, workers can refuse this testing unless it is required by law (as with inter-regional travel for essential workers at Levels 3 and 4) or if a case-specific health and safety risk assessment has determined that such testing is necessary.

Please discuss with production if you have an issue with testing (most likely this will be saliva testing), keeping in mind that health and safety considerations of your colleagues, and the overall risk to a production, should be at the forefront of these discussions.

PCBUs/employers can only test for diseases and/or substances that workers know they are being tested for.

COVID-19 OFFICER

This is not new, but please note that every production MUST have a named and competent person designated as the production's COVID Officer. This can be your Safety Officer or another person designated by the producer. This person must have in-depth knowledge of the COVID-19 Protocols, but they do not necessarily need to be the same person as the one who holds a First Aid Certificate on the production.

Updated Level 2 and Level 3 Department Guidelines and a few other ScreenSafe COVID-19 documents will be uploaded to the ScreenSafe website over the next few days.

And as always – DO reach out to us or your regular H&S Officer if you have any questions or concerns in regards to the ScreenSafe COVID-19 Protocols.

Thank you to the New Zealand Film Commission for funding the review of these protocols.

Sincerely,

The ScreenSafe COVID-19 Group

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