

Remote Verification Check Sheet – Primary Sector Essential Business COVID-19

Site ID	
Business Name	
Date of phone conversation	

Background

Remote verification is being scheduled for businesses that are normally verified by VS. You need to be prepared to spend some time listening to the concerns of the business and expressing empathy – everyone is in a difficult position at the moment. Business are most likely to be wanting to “do the right thing”. Go in with the mind-set that you are looking for how the business meets the requirements, rather than looking for faults. Ask the person representing the business to show you how they are meeting the requirements. This can be done in a friendly, conversational way rather than as a formal interrogation.

The verification questions are listed below in bold, with guidance in italics underneath. Please document your observations as you work through the verification.

Completing the phone interview – use the following questions as a guideline for your conversation with the business representative. The expectation is exception reporting - you do not need to record comments in the box at the bottom of the page if the outcome is Acceptable.

1. Introduction

Introduce yourself and the reason for your call.

Introduction script:

“Hi, I’m xxx from the Ministry for Primary Industries. I’m ringing you because you have a regular verification programme with Verification Services and may be an essential business. We’re trying to support the essential businesses by confirming that everyone’s doing the right thing to keep NZ running and everybody safe. I would like to have a discussion with you about the processes and procedures you have introduced to protect your workers and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Firstly, can I confirm what your job position is within the business?”

2. Tell me about your business and what you do?

Aim is to establish the nature of the business that is still operating and whether it is essential under the primary sector or not. Essential businesses are:

Primary industries, including food and beverage production and processing

Lead agency: Ministry for Primary Industries

- Any entity involved in the packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products, whether for domestic consumption or export
- Any entity involved in relevant support services, such as food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services, food safety and biosecurity functions
- Any entity providing veterinary services
- Any entity whose closure would jeopardise the maintenance of animal health or welfare standards (including the short-term survival of a species).

3. Are you still operating?

If no, check whether the business plans to remain closed for the duration of the level 4 alert. If the business will be closed, discontinue the phone interview.

4. As part of your business operations do you have any face to face interactions with people outside the work force e.g. public, people from other essential businesses

If the answer to 4 is no, move to 6, If yes, move to 5

5. What types of things are you doing differently to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 for your staff from these interactions?

Expect actions to ensure physical distance is maintained with the public and external workers, sanitation of surfaces and equipment, regular handwashing etc.

Explore whether the operator is keeping a register of visitors, which could help in the event of needing to trace contacts if a visitor has COVID-19 or QR code

6. How are you achieving physical distancing between workers to avoid potential spread?

2 metres separation ideally. Confirm at least 1 m between workers and no less than 2m for other staff. Where less than 2 metres, question what other controls are in place e.g. protective clothing, gloves and masks if appropriate (see Science paper) – MUST not be less than 1 metre.

How does this apply to work breaks?

Changing rooms?

Transport to and from work?

Only essential staff present, working from home where possible?

7. What additional personal hygiene measures have you implemented since we have moved to COVID alert level 4?

Handwashing more often and more rigorous 20 secs, use of sanitisers, modifying coughing and sneezing behaviours.

8. What protective clothing and equipment PPE do you have in place at your business?

Note that MoH guidelines indicate that normal PPE should be used. May expect additional PPE if physical distancing less than 2 metres.

9. How are you making sure people at risk from exposure to COVID are excluded from the work place?

At risk people include:

- **Those over 70:** Older people often have underlying health issues, including respiratory issues that make them more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- **People with medical conditions:** Underlying medical conditions can make you more vulnerable to COVID-19. In particular, people with respiratory conditions, such as COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), heart conditions, high blood pressure, kidney problems and diabetes.
- **People undergoing a treatment for cancer and blood conditions:** As treatments for cancer and blood conditions affect people's immune systems, this makes them more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- **Pregnant women:** Health experts do not yet know if pregnant women are impacted by COVID-19 in the same way as other people. However, pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk from some infections.
- **People without easy access to healthcare**

10. How are you making sure people who are sick are excluded from the work place?

Expect the operator has spoken to staff and/or has a policy for people to stay home if unwell.

Follow instruction of MoH should any COVID-19 cases occur in workers.

Concluding the phone interview

Thank the business representative for their time.

If the interview has identified areas of concern, explain to the operator what aspects you are concerned about. If the verification requires follow up, agree on a time & date to call back to discuss what has been done to resolve the issues.

VERIFICATION OUTCOME:

(Record in the spreadsheet)

Outcome:

ACCEPTABLE, ACCEPTABLE WITH ISSUES, FOLLOW UP RECOMMENDED

Outcome guidance:

Acceptable

- The business is operating in accordance with the COVID distancing requirements and is confirmed to be a primary sector essential service business OR
- The business is not operating and does not intend to do so during the level 4 alert OR
- The business has already been verified so this is a duplicate call

Acceptable with issues

The business is operating in substantial compliance with COVID distancing requirements and is confirmed to be an essential service business. Any departures from the distancing requirements are of a minor nature that do not indicate a health risk to workers or the public. The operator has been notified of issues identified and provided guidance to resolve these issues. *Guidance information is to be provided electronically where possible.*

Follow up recommended

- The interview has identified some concerns that the business is not operating according to COVID distancing requirements, and issues identified may present a risk to workers or the public OR
- The business is deemed to be primary sector but clearly not an essential service business OR
- The verification cannot be completed because:
 - you are unable to contact the business after multiple attempts
 - the business representative has English as a second language and you cannot communicate effectively or
 - the business refuses the verification.

The operator has been notified of issues identified, provided guidance to resolve these issues and advised that the business will be referred back to the central coordination centre for further follow up which may include a follow up phone call or an onsite audit.

Comments - Verification Issues Summary:

Where the outcome is Acceptable with Issues or Follow up Recommended, record the outcome and any **brief** comments.