

Reviewing COVID-19 policies and vaccination requirements.

Step 1

Communicate early with your people

Because this topic has recently been in the news, many people are wondering whether their organisation is considering changes to their COVID-19 policies or vaccination requirements. There might be mixed feelings about this – some people will be pleased with the idea of restrictions easing, while others might be feeling quite anxious.

Being open and communicative with your people will be important throughout this process. If you are intending to review your COVID-19 policies or vaccination requirements, discuss this with your people early so they are better prepared for possible changes.

Step 2

Consider your health and safety risk assessments

New Zealand's COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving. This means all organisations should be undertaking regular risk assessments to understand the risk presented to their workers by COVID-19 and how this risk might be managed.

If an organisation is reviewing its COVID-19 policies or vaccination requirements, completing a robust risk assessment will be essential (this might mean carrying out a new risk assessment, or reviewing an existing one). A key focus of the risk assessment will be considering whether workers are at greater risk of being exposed to COVID-19 at work than they would be in the community – this will help you decide whether your COVID-19 policy terms or vaccination requirements are justified.

Different working environments and roles will have varying levels of risk, so it's important to avoid a 'blanket' approach and consider each role type separately.

Step 3

Talk to your people about any changes you are proposing to make

Any organisation considering changes to their COVID-19 policy or vaccination requirements should remember that, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, organisations must involve their workers in workplace health and safety.

We suggest meeting with your people to clearly explain the changes you are proposing, and the reasons for these proposed changes (including the details of your risk assessment). Let your people know that they will have an opportunity to give feedback or ask questions before you make a final decision on the proposed changes.

Step 4

Allow your people a chance to provide feedback

Allow your people a reasonable amount of time to consider the changes you have proposed to your COVID-19 policy or vaccination requirements and to provide feedback. This could include questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Step 5

Share your final decision on any changes you will be making

After you have considered the feedback provided by your people, you should share your final decision. This should include a response to the feedback you have received, an explanation of the next steps and when these changes will take effect.