**Covid-19 Prevention & Response Policy for Accounting Solutions Ltd**

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| **SUMMARY STATEMENT** |
| In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease, called Covid-19 or SARS-CoV-2 in Hubei Province, China, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On 12 March, they declared it a Global Pandemic. In response to this outbreak, please read this Prevention & Response Policy to help minimise the impact of infection for our team, customers, suppliers and the wider community.  **For up to date information on infection, death and recovery rates per country click here:** <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> |
| **Symptoms of Covid-19.**  The symptoms for Covid-19 include:   * Coughing / shortness of breath   Many infected people experience a relatively mild infection, ranging from cold and flu-like symptoms to feeling like they have the actual flu.  Mild to moderate infections are taking about two weeks to recover from. About 20% of infected people experience a much more serious infection, requiring hospitalisation for several weeks.  Current data suggests the fatality rate rises as you get older and is higher in those with underlying health conditions.   * Fever (≥ 38°C) * Tiredness * Body aches * Runny nose * Sore throat * Looking obviously unwell * Feeling confused / disorientated * Diarrhoea |
| **How Covid-19 spreads.**  Covid-19 spreads in a similar way to the flu. When someone who has it coughs or exhales, they release droplets of infected fluid. Most droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects, i.e. desks and computers. People could catch Covid-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.  Most persons infected with Covid-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age; people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes and heart or lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness. |
| **Travel considerations.**  All non-urgent travel will be cancelled or postponed in accordance with Government recommendations and to follow Government recommendations through-out the different Alert Levels we are in.  If/when travelling is safe to do so (according to the Government), there is no pressure for any team members to be at an airport or on a plane if they’re uncomfortable with this mode of travel. If you have upcoming work-related travel and do not feel comfortable travelling, please let your manager know as soon as possible. Consider your personal health status and seek advice, e.g. from our government’s travel recommendations website - [safetravel.govt.nz/](https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/)  When travelling, wash hands regularly, take & use hand sanitiser regularly, and advise authorities if you’re feeling unwell.  Also, where possible minimise the use of other public transport, i.e. opt for a taxi over more crowded options. |
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| **PREVENTION STRATEGIES** | |
| **Everyday workplace sickness prevention methods.**  There are many common sense, low-cost measures that will help prevent the spread of infections in our workplace, such as colds, flu and stomach bugs, and the spread of Covid-19. The below measures are best practice regardless of Covid-19 and should be implemented immediately (if not already):   * Stay at home if you are sick (don’t return to work until you’ve been symptom free for at least 24 hours) * Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into your elbow / down your shirt * Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry thoroughly * Frequently clean surfaces and objects | |
| **Everyday wellness methods.**  Home hygiene is ritual and not to expose your work colleagues to bugs.  Looking after yourself, this is your responsibility and duty of care. Here are some highly recommended immune boosters and helps prevent catching illnesses, from the Heatlh Organisation:   * Eat healthy, five vegetables & fruit servicing’s per day * Reduce saturated fats and sugar * Reduce alcohol * Stop smoking * Exercise for a minimum of 30 minutes per day (even if this is a walk) * Get eight hours sleep a night * Follow the Governments Alert Level for hygiene, exposure to others, distancing & recommendations per Alert Level requirements * Drink plenty of water, reduce caffeine intake especially after lunch, reduce sugary drinks * Take vitamins, minerals, herbs and wellbeing supplements, especially through winter and upon seasonal changes * Get an annual flu vaccination * Work out the best way for you that helps relieve stress, some suggestions are: mediation, yoga, walks in nature, exercise, crafts, being with friends that listen, support and encourage you, painting, time with your pet, time with your family doing fun and/or relaxing activities | |
| **Pandemic flu and Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs).**  When a new flu virus spreads, causing illness worldwide, it’s called pandemic flu. Because a pandemic flu virus is new, the human population has little or no immunity against it, allowing it to spread quickly worldwide.  NPIs are among the best ways of controlling pandemic flu when vaccines are not yet available; these are actions, apart from getting vaccinated or taking medicine, that people can take to help slow the spread of illnesses and include important social distancing measures. | |
| **NPIs to undertake for Covid-19 at work (Alert Level 1 & 2).**  **When to self-isolate at home - notify manager and work from home:**   1. If you develop symptoms of a cold or flu, even if they are very mild. Team members can work from home if demonstrating mild symptoms and feel up to working. 2. If you have had close contact with another person who has symptoms (i.e. a spouse). 3. If you’ve been advised by a public official due to potential exposure to an infected person (e.g. after travelling or attending a public event where it transpires someone with Covid-19 was also in attendance).   **Changes in daily operations:**   1. Working from home, as per above. We advise you to consider your home ‘office’ set-up for Alert Level 1 and 2 to ensure you have internet, a computer, and ideally an additional screen, to enable the continuation of working from home. This has already been determined for Level 3 & 4. 2. Potentially postponing non-important work travel (see Travel Considerations section above). 3. Potentially postponing or modifying work-related events (those bigger than 100 pax., follow Government guidelines at all times). 4. Reduced in-person meetings. Ensure you remain 1m away from others or a shield between each other and use online meetings where possible.   **Reduced physical interactions:**   1. Avoid handshakes, hugs and physical contact with friends and colleagues for the time being. 2. Elbow or foot bumps are currently trending: [this great video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfzGZ1fo4GI&feature=youtu.be). 3. Our desks are more than 1m apart, please ensure you remain 1m apart at all times. 4. Follow Government guidelines at all times and this depends on what Alert Level the country is at.   **Increased cleaning measures:**  We’ve purchased specialist hand sanitiser, disposable cleaning wipes and microbe shield spray for extra cleaning measures. **Please ensure the following practices are implemented:**   1. Keep your individual workstation clean and hygienicbyregularly wiping down surfaces and objects, e.g. desks, keyboards, phones, computer mice, etc. at least twice a day.   Office cleaning measures:   1. Wiping down door and cupboard handles, copiers, shared surfaces. 2. Air room and swipe down meeting room (table, pens (or giveaway), keyboard, mouse after each meeting) 3. No sitting at or touching other member's work stations. 4. No touching other members stationery items on their desk (ie pens, stapler, etc) 5. Always wash your hands before eating food and try not to touch your face. 6. Use hand sanitiser in the absence of soap and water. 7. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. 8. Tea towels and hand towels are changed twice daily. 9. While in Alert Level 2, 3 & 4 paper towels will be used where possible.   **A note on facemasks:** Masks prevent unwell people from spreading droplets. These should be worn by health professionals or unwell people (who in theory should either be in isolation or in hospital being treated by health professionals). | |
| **NPIs to undertake for Covid-19 at the Office (Alert Level 3 & 4)**  At the Governments Alert Level 3 and Level 4, we will work from home unless you are unproductive and/or finding it too difficult to work from home. Notify your manager first to ensure the office has been cleaned thoroughly.  If working from the Office, then while at work follow the guidelines above with *NPIs to undertake for Covid-19 at work.*  While working from home, your normal employment continues and what is expected as your role, responsibilities & KPI’s continues as normal. Please talk with your manager if you find these challenging or unachievable and these can be altered for your current circumstances.  Please watch your work habits and desk setup to avoid strains, with plenty of breaks and movement to continue your wellness, energy levels, and emotions. Ensure you do not work too many extra hours and you continue to look after yourself. | |
| **Emotional wellbeing & staying well.**  Mental health and staying mentally well is important, for example its like putting the oxygen mask on yourself first before you can help anyone else. Some suggestions of what is available through Accounting Solutions:  Visit: [xap@xero.com](mailto:xap@xero.com) (on line one on one help with mental health specialist via Xero subscription of Accounting Solutions for free, & confidential).  The Xero Assistance Programme (XAP) pilot provides [free and confidential](https://www.xero.com/nz/about/social-and-environmental-impact/business-support/xero-assistance-programme/faq/) mental health support  to all starter, standard and premium plan subscribers in New Zealand, and their employees and families. Expertly run by their global provider Benestar, a world leader in mental health services, XAP gives Xero customers access to face-to-face, telephone, live chat or online counselling, in a way that suits them.  For more information, email [xap@xero.com](mailto:xap@xero.com) Webinars and articles on Xero Assistance Program:Take care of your wellbeingThe stress response and resilienceMaintain connection & performance in virtual teamsBuild positive wellbeing habitsManage your energy levels during times of change  * During times of change, it can be difficult to find your new 'normal', and your wellbeing can often take a back seat. Explore how to use your unique strengths to increase energy, and how to harness the power of positive emotions. #xro-mrktg   Heads Up also have a brilliant website <https://www.headsup.org.au/> and wellbeing plan using the [Beyond Blue Wellbeing Plan template](https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/resources/personal-wellbeing-plan-external-template.docx?sfvrsn=9b5c214d_4)  John Kirwan’s new APP was released (April 2020), [www.mentemia.com](http://www.mentemia.com)  Employer Advocacy Program (EPA) an annual subscription that allows employees to talk with trained Counselors and Psychologists at any stage. | |
| **NPIs for at home.**  **There are many NPIs you and your family can implement at home**.  These range from simple common-sense measures, to being prepared in case you’re required to self-isolate and/or schools and other public spaces are closed.   1. **Try not to touch public surfaces with your fingers.**  Where possible, use knuckles rather than fingertips to flick light switches or press lift buttons, etc. Open push doors with your hips or elbows rather than your hands. Elbows can open many door handles. Using your sleeve is better than opening a door with a bare hand. 2. **Practice good cough and sneeze etiquette.** Cover your mouth with the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing unexpectedly.  If you’re sick, then you should have disposable tissues handy and/or be at home. 3. **Be prepared to cancel your attendance at large social events or avoid crowded public places.**  If you have minor cold symptoms, avoid such events. 4. **Mind how you talk about Covid-19**.  It’s important to talk about Covid-19 with your family (and children) to relay preventive measures and minimise anxiety. Read this for more on [how to speak to children](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html). Read [this resource](https://www.epi-win.com/sites/epiwin/files/content/attachments/2020-02-24/COVID19%20Stigma%20Guide%2024022020_1.pdf) on how to avoid stigmatising people with the virus. 5. **Make sure you are getting your news from trustworthy, reliable sources**.  If following the news is making you anxious, take a break from it. Find accurate and reputable advice from the government’s dedicated [website](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus) 6. **Think about how you could lower your risk of contracting Covid-19 while still supporting the economy.**  Online shopping is our friend! Consider using PayWave when shopping instore and carrying sanitiser in public for when handwashing is not possible, (Alert Level 1,2 & 3).   **If you travel, be prepared to self-isolate for 2-3 weeks when you return home. Always follow the rules of what alert level we are at.** | |
| **Self-isolation guidelines**  You will need to be prepared to stay at home for 2-3 weeks if you are exposed to someone with Covid-19, are diagnosed with it yourself or are instructed to due to recent travel.  **As part of this, ideally you should have enough food and supplies to keep you and your family going.**  Plan to have a well-stocked pantry and freezer with plenty of food (including pet food) and cleaning and sanitary items to help prevent the spread if someone in your home develops Covid-19.  **Non-perishable items may include:**   * Rice, pasta, cereals, grains, beans, tinned food (such as beans, tuna, fruit, and vegetables), dried nuts and fruit, UHT milk, oil, and flavourings for some of your preferred ‘pantry’ dinners. Consider your preferred ‘pantry’ dinner menu when shopping * Pre-cooked meals which you can freeze, along with raw meat, vegetables and bread * For morale, include treat food such as lollies, chocolate, and most importantly, beer and wine… * Soap, cleaning and sanitary products, hand sanitiser, laundry detergent, tissues   If you live alone, establish an isolation contact or contacts who you’ll be able to reach out to regularly in the event you need to self-isolate. Ideally, this person should be ‘on the outside’ and should be able to deliver supplies to your front door.  **Please stock up gradually and responsibly. Do not panic buy. Online grocery shopping is now widely available!** | |
| **Self-isolation do’s and don’ts**  **Do’s**  Separate yourself from the people you live with, where possible avoid being in the same room at once   * Only allow people who live with you to visit and stay * Stay in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened * Ask friends, family members or delivery services to carry out errands for you * Pre-register for online grocery shopping so you’re familiar with the service * Make sure you tell delivery drivers to leave items outside for collection if you order online * Clean toilets and bathrooms regularly * Consider a bathroom rota if you have a single bathroom; the isolated person using the facilities last, before thoroughly cleaning the bathroom themselves * Use separate towels from anyone else in the household * Wash crockery and utensils thoroughly with soap and water; ideally in the dishwasher * Stay away from your pets - if unavoidable, wash your hands before and after contact   **Don’ts:**   * Invite visitors to your home or allow visitors to enter * Go to work, school or public areas * Use public transport, e.g. buses, trains, tubes or taxis * Share dishes, glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, etc. with other people in your home | |
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| **IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19** | |
| **When to raise an alarm:**  If you or a close family member has a temperate of 38°C or higher, or is experiencing one or more of the following symptoms, DO NOT GO OUT IN PUBLIC (or attend work), instead call a health professional: | |
| * Coughing / Shortness of breath * Fever (≥ 38°C) * Tiredness * Body aches * Runny nose | * Sore throat * Looking obviously unwell * Feeling confused / disorientated * Diarrhoea |
| **Freephone Health Line: 0800 611 116** **or call your doctor.**  Do not present yourself at a medical centre until you’ve been given advice to do so. If you’ve been outside of the country, be sure to mention this.  **This is critical; we can’t afford for healthcare workers to be in isolation due to unnecessary exposure to Covid-19.** | |
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| **COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA** | |
| **Client communications via email and our social channels will be required if we make changes to operations that will directly affect them, i.e. if an event is postponed.**  In the event of a change that requires notifying our clients, The Accounting Solutions team must be advised first. All communications should be handled by the receptionist. | |
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| **FREE ANNUAL FLU VACCINATION** | |
| Whilst the annual flu vaccination will not protect you from Covid-19, it has been labelled by health professionals as having ‘a very important indirect effect’ on the potential impact of Covid-19.  **The reasons being:**   * The more people immunised against the flu (and the less people affected by the flu), the more public resources available to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak * Reducing the number of people who contract the flu reduces the number of people who will exhibit flu like symptoms, requiring both the need for Covid-19 testing (tests are limited) and disruptive self-isolation   As responsible employers we offer this optional flu vaccination each year free of charge, simply take the work petty cash or submit a receipt to the Accounts Payable administrator for reimbursement. | |
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| **IMPORTANT REAL-TIME INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19** | |
| Regularly view the below website to stay up to date with the latest advice about Covid-19  <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus> | |
| **CLIENTS PROTECTION REGARDING COVID-19** | |
| There is a Contact Tracing Form that tracks:   1. Every employee’s movement and involvement with other people throughout the working day 2. Every person who enters the building and details of their association with COVID-19, 3. Employees are encouraged to have a Contact Tracing Form for at home as well and encourage the entire family to fill this out daily, this helps give awareness & responsibility to the family and the negative effects this can flow through to their family members employment and colleagues. 4. This is to be completed by clients and suppliers that come into contact with anyone from this Company.   Clients are to be notified the day before to ensure they are aware of our COVID-19 policies before coming onto their premises or them visiting the Office. We are to update them on all employee status with regards to COVID-19 and how we are abiding by Health & Safety standards.  Clients are to also comply with the Contact Tracing Form and answer the appropriate questions to keep our employees and the Company safe. | |
| **SUPPLIERS & OUR PROTECTION REGARDING COVID-19** | |
| The Contact Tracing Form must be filled out by all suppliers coming to the building and employees visiting supplier sites. | |
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| **Disclaimer:** This policy is subject to change, pending updates in recommendations from our Government. It has been created specifically for employees of Accounting Solutions Ltd. | |