



# Volunteering Otago

## **COVID 19 Volunteer Guidelines:**

Thank you for offering your support to your community. We are extremely grateful of your willingness to share your time. It is vital you read and understand the following information and take every precaution to ensure you keep yourself and others safe.

### ***Level 4 update:***

Volunteers working under the direction of an essential service provider are able to continue working following these guidelines combined with their own operational guidelines. Anyone tasked by their Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) team are considered to be an *essential service*. Examples in our area of this include Volunteering Otago, Salvation Army, local food banks, Age Concern, religious support groups, counselling services etc.

*Please check with your volunteer coordinator if you are unsure if your programme is an essential service provider.*

### ***Please read:***

- Do you suspect that you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19?
- Have you travelled outside New Zealand within the last 14 days?
- Have you been unwell in the last 14 days?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions we politely ask you not to volunteer at this time and ask you to visit <https://covid19.govt.nz/> to ensure you are following Ministry of Health Guidelines to keep you and others safe.

## **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a new virus that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus. There are simple steps you can take to protect you, your family and whānau.

## **What are the symptoms?**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a fever (at least 38°C)
- a cough
- shortness of breath.

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19. The symptoms are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as colds and flu.

The following members of our community are more vulnerable to COVID-19:

- those over 70 and/or
- those with a compromised immune system
- others with underlying health conditions.

## How it spreads

Like the flu, COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person. The scientific evidence confirms that COVID-19 is spread by droplets. When an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, they may generate droplets containing the virus. These droplets are too large to stay in the air for long, so they quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

People may get infected by the virus if they touch those surfaces or objects, and then touch their mouth, nose or eyes.

That's why it's really important to use good hygiene, regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands, and use good cough and sneeze etiquette.

Every one of us should practice good hygiene and help reduce the risk of spreading the virus by:

- covering coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or elbow
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- washing hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap and drying them thoroughly:
  - before eating or handling food
  - after using the toilet
  - after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
  - after caring for sick people.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Call Healthline on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) if you have any symptoms and have been recently been overseas or have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19.

## Use of face masks

For most people in the community, personal protection equipment such as face masks are not recommended. However, for people with symptoms of an acute respiratory infection, the World Health Organisation recommends that there may be benefit in wearing a face mask to reduce the spread of infection to other people. If volunteer is asked to support anyone who is unwell safe social distancing will be used to keep volunteers safe, rather than using masks.

If gloves are required to protect you or the individual you are supporting, guidelines on how to use them effectively are provided below.

## Expectations for volunteering:

*You should only volunteer if you can say no to the three questions at the top of this form and are following good hygiene practices above – especially prior to and during your volunteering activity.*

- Be mindful that when supporting those self-isolating they may be at risk of contracting COVID 19 or at risk of carrying it and therefore passing it to you.

- Be mindful that you may be carrying COVID 19
- If delivering groceries, library books, prescriptions or any item to someone in self isolation you should maintain a safe distance (2 meters) from that person.
- If you are delivering to a highly vulnerable household, please drop the goods at their door and text them to advise them the delivery has been made or drop at the agreed time if numbers have not been exchanged.
- Under no circumstances should you enter anyone's house.
- If talking to individuals, please remain outside the house – a minimum of 2 meters away and spend no longer than 15 minutes talking to them.
- To prevent the risk of theft or accusation please do not handle money or bank cards – deliveries and picks ups for people should be pre-paid for whenever possible.
- Please keep any receipts provided and pass them onto the individual with their goods.

### **Protecting yourself:**

- Do not lend money to the beneficiary or offer to buy them things – this is not your role and if you do it once it is hard to say no in the future
- Don't give medication – you never know what they may be allergic to
- Do not transport people as part of your volunteer role – you cannot keep a safe distance and your safety cannot be ensured
- In addition to physical boundaries – please recognise your own personal boundaries
- Think before sharing your phone numbers – we only recommend doing this where a relationship is established to prevent volunteers being contacted by individuals requesting help above and beyond original expectations
- Avoid getting into situations that could be misunderstood – protect yourself
- Think before you say yes – don't feel obligated to say yes to a request of further help
- Remember that the main focus of volunteer support is usually the needs of the other person so don't burden them with your problems or worries
- If you feel unsafe or if someone becomes rude or aggressive please don't enter into a debate with them – please walk away and let call the police if necessary. If you are volunteering through a local community initiative please let them know so they can either complete the task or blacklist the individual
- If you experience any negative comments from other members of the public about you supporting those self-isolating, please simply say you are working under guidelines provided by the government – or your community initiative
- If case of an emergency please call 111 immediately
- If you feel you are unable to fulfil your role you can withdraw or say no at any time without feeling guilty

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is in essence a requirement that volunteers do not discuss the individual, any aspect of their personal circumstances or their family, without the consent of the individual and other than on a need to know basis. The only exception is if the individual discloses that they are being personally harmed or otherwise put at risk or you suspect they need medical or social service support. In this case the volunteer must alert their community initiative or Volunteering Otago who will pass their contacts on to the relevant agencies.

**In addition to the general hygiene guidelines above please follow the following when carrying out your role:**

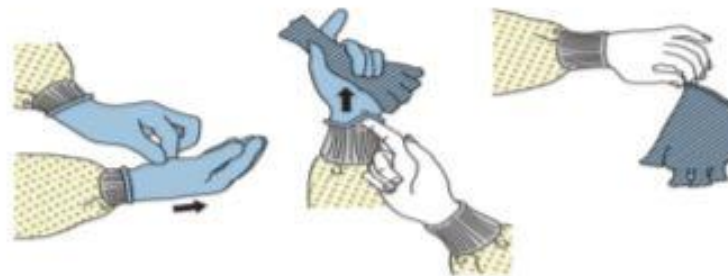
**Handwashing:** To be carried out before every volunteer activity.

1. Before you leave the house, wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds and dry them completely, OR; Use 60% alcohol hand sanitizer, applying it to your palm then rubbing your hands together until they are both completely covered in the gel and then letting them dry. This should take 20 secs.
2. When handling any item, whether you are receiving it from the neighbour-in-need (e.g. a letter to be posted) or dropping it off to them (e.g. a carton of milk): Wash your hands, put on a pair of gloves if provided, finish your task, then remove your gloves following proper glove-removing procedure, and wash your hands again.
3. Don't touch your face at all. If you do touch your face, clean your hands again before continuing your task.

**Glove handling:** *If you are asked to use gloves please follow the following guidelines*

Before putting on your gloves, wash hands. When removing your gloves, please follow the CDC guidelines for glove removal;

1. Treat the outside of the gloves as contaminated (they might be.)
2. If your hands get contaminated during glove removal, immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
3. Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off the first glove.
4. Hold the removed glove in the other still gloved hand.
5. Slide the fingers of your un-gloved hand under the remaining glove at the wrist and peel of the second glove so that it goes over the first glove (similar principle to picking up dog poop!)
6. Discard the gloves in a waste container.
7. As always, wash your hands.



The health information in these guideline is compiled from the official government websites <https://covid19.govt.nz/> and <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Additional information about hand washing and glove handling is kindly provided by Wellington Student Volunteer Army. <https://www.vuwsa.org.nz/sva>