

## **Covid-19 Safe Practices Protocol for Independent Fruit and Vegetable Stores**

The operation of independent fresh fruit and vegetable stores (hereafter termed independent stores) in New Zealand provides consumers with essential access to a wide range of local fresh fruit and vegetables - often at more economical prices than supermarkets.

To maintain adequate access to a supply of affordable fresh fruit and vegetables for all New Zealanders it is critical that both supermarkets and independent stores are able to operate, if they are able to demonstrate they can do so using Covid-19 safe practices.

The below protocol is developed specifically to retailers of fresh fruit and vegetables who conduct their business through operation of an independent store. The protocol does not apply to sale of fresh fruit and vegetables in any other way.

The protocol outlines how independent stores can operate safely at Covid-19 alert level 3 to prevent the spread of the virus. Independent stores are committed to operating stringent safe practices that other essential services are using, with emphasis on minimising interaction between staff, suppliers and consumers by practicing social distancing, hygiene and cleaning regimes.

Each independent store will need to abide by relevant alert level 3 self-accreditation requirements prescribed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and develop their own Covid-19 Safe Practices Management Plan, based on this protocol, specifically outlining how they will manage transmission risk at their store. Each store's Covid-19 Safe Practices Management Plan will be subject to verification by officials to ensure compliance with safe practices.

In addition to Covid-19 safe practices independent stores will operate fulfilling all other health and safety obligations as set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

### **General physical distancing**

- Minimise interaction between staff e.g. through physical distancing, split shifts and staggered meal breaks.
- Minimise interaction with customers e.g. through online or phone orders, contactless delivery, or managed entry using monitored physical distancing to maintain the 2m rule.
- Minimise interaction with suppliers by making prior arrangements with them for coordinating the delivery and pick up of any goods.
- Staff, customers and supplier physical distancing will be managed using safe practices both inside and outside the store.

### **Staff and management and safety**

- Non-essential personnel and workers who are in the higher risk Covid-19 category (underlying health conditions or over 70 years of age) are required to stay home.
- Management will provide a staff briefing/training before reopening their store outlining the mandatory safe practices that are to be followed. Any staff non-compliance of safe practices that places others at risk should be treated as a serious matter. In the first instance retraining will apply, followed by disciplinary actions for further breaches.
- Management will have daily discussions with staff on the importance, and necessity of Covid-19 safe practices at work and will check on staff wellbeing and health each day.
- Management will maintain records of all staff work days and hours.
- Management will actively monitor staff to ensure they are following agreed safe practices.
- Management will allocate staff to their own section or workstation at the store, with no mixing.
- Staff are not to socialise or congregate between changing shifts.

- Stagger staff breaks and in staff rooms, remove some chairs and/or tables and spread the remaining out to ensure physical distancing.
- Most staff will not require PPE to stay safe at work if they are following good hygiene practices, however if stores have access to a supply of PPE it is recommended they adopt use as a precautionary measure.
- Good hygiene practices are used at all times. Hand sanitizer and/or soap is easily accessible and available for all staff, including official Ministry of Health instructions on how and when to wash your hands, including arrival at work, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose, before eating and before going home.
- Good respiratory hygiene practices are used at all times, including sneeze and cough etiquette, and wiping down surfaces as per the cleaning schedule.
- If any staff member becomes unwell (either at home or while at work) and develops symptoms of COVID-19 like a cough, fever, shortness of breath, sneezing or a runny nose, they should not be at work, and should contact their doctor or call Healthline (0800 358 5453) and immediately self-isolate. Management must immediately notify their District Health Board and follow instructions.
- In the event an employee tests positive for Covid-19, stores should have a detailed sanitisation plan.

### **Supplier management**

- Where possible, delivery of fresh fruit and vegetables should be made on pallets and unloaded by store staff, with suppliers remaining in their vehicle. If delivery of smaller quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables are made, the store should have an unloading policy that prevents staff and suppliers from interacting or handling the same unloading equipment.
- Management will maintain records of any suppliers entering the premises.
- Signs should be erected at the property entry point that state that no supplier can enter without making an appointment by phone or email. All side and roller doors must stay closed and when open for a supplier pick up or delivery they will be supervised.
- Only suppliers who are recognised as essential by the government will be granted permission to enter the premises. To the extent possible, the timing of visits must be arranged to occur at a time when least risk to others is presented.
- Suppliers are not to use store facilities, they are only permitted to pick up or make a delivery.

### **Customer management**

- A staff member will be placed outside the store supervising customers queuing/entering/exiting and explaining the safe practices that are to be followed in the store.
- Clear signage is located at the store entrance and windows regarding the store's safe practices.
- Restrict store entry numbers relative to the size of the store to maintain physical distancing e.g. one customer per 50sqm of retail operating space.
- Hand sanitiser is provided to customers on entry and exit of the store.
- Contactless payments are highly recommended, at a single point of sale in the store.
- Where a cash payment is the only option for customers the store should have additional safe practices for processing payments, including additional sanitation procedures following each transaction, including use of hand sanitiser and sanitising payment equipment.

### **Store management**

- Rearrange the store and create a one-way walkway for staff and customers around the store. Indicate the walkway with tape by placing boundaries and arrows on the floor.

- A customer queuing area should be established outside the store, it should be clearly split into zones 2 meters apart, by placing tape or chalk lines on the ground.
- A customer queuing area should be established inside the store if necessary, it should be clearly split into zones 2 meters apart, by placing tape or chalk lines on the ground.
- Perspex screens should be erected at the point of sale where possible, if not possible customers are asked to wait for their order to be finalised before moving to a designated point where contactless payment is processed.
  - o Any screen must be fixed in place, made of materials approved for use in the workplace and be durable and able to be regularly cleaned (for both Covid-19 and food safety purposes).
- Any store baskets or trolley handles should be sanitised between uses.

### **Cleaning**

- A checklist is in place with a schedule of when cleaning needs to occur and who is responsible.
- Disinfect all surfaces in the lunchroom and surfaces in and out of the toilets including taps, handbasins and door knobs. There should also be regular cleaning on high touch surfaces including all counters and lids.

**If independent stores are unable to operate in the manner of risk minimisation outlined in this protocol they should stay closed, unless you're operating in a contactless manner.**