

Working with staff and volunteers

Given the challenges most organisations are currently facing, staff and volunteers will be looking for clear guidance and regular communication. As we move through the alert levels, a well-managed response will build trust and enable your organisation to emerge quicker and stronger from the crisis. Below are some key considerations for leading your people through the current situation.

Communication

It's crucial to be transparent and to listen to concerns. Here are some tips for communicating with staff and volunteers in a challenging environment.

- Hold regular meetings. If you have people working remotely, communication tools such as Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams make it possible to engage with your key people. In times of uncertainty employees like to hear updates directly from leaders, it can help bring reassurance and clarity on the organisations approach to dealing with the current situation.
- Be honest and informative. People will look to leaders in an organisation for guidance. Without regular information they may try to fill in the gaps of their information leading to speculation and rumors. Use trusted sources to inform your decisions, such as Government websites, like <https://covid19.govt.nz/>, public health organisations or your local chamber of commerce.
- Plan - It's ok to not to know the answer to everything but you do need a plan – tell people what you are doing and who is involved, and most importantly listen and give the team an opportunity to ask questions.
- Ensure that messaging is consistent and if you're making changes to the guidance, communicate those changes and make it clear where updated information is available.

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Government wage subsidy scheme

The Government's Wage Subsidy Scheme supports employers and their staff to maintain an employment connection and ensure an income for affected employees, even if the employee is unable to actually work any hours.

The Wage Subsidy Scheme supports employers adversely affected by COVID-19, so that they can continue to pay their employees, and supports workers to ensure they continue to receive an income, and stay connected to their employer, even if they are unable to work.

To be eligible for the wage subsidy businesses must declare that they:

- have had a 30% revenue drop attributable to COVID-19
- will retain named employees for at least the duration of the grant (12 weeks)
- will pay named employees, at a minimum:
 - for any work they do at their normal rates
 - at least 80% of income where reasonably possible (for employees working reduced hours while self-isolating)
 - the full subsidy received for each named employee, except where person's income is normally less than the subsidy amount, in which case they can be paid their normal salary.

For more information and how to apply for the wage subsidy [click here](#).

Remote working

There are a number of challenges that employees working remotely will encounter. Here are some tips to help ensure you and your team members can work effectively from home.

- Create your workspace – It's important to find a place at home where you can work productively and stay focused on your job. Managing distractions at home can be a challenging task but not impossible.
- Make sure you have the right systems in place – Working remotely requires the right technology and software to do the job including adequate cyber-security measures to ensure the protection of customer information and other confidential data.

- Communicate regularly – Ensure that you and your team engage on a regular basis by providing multiple channels to communicate as different people prefer to communicate in different ways. Tools such as email, chat and video calls help connect everyone and boost productivity;
 - Skype (<https://www.skype.com/en/>)
 - Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>)
 - Workplace and Workplace Chat by Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/workplace>)
- Structure your day and prioritise your work – If you are used to a certain structure when you are at work, make sure you continue with that when you are at home as much as possible. Plan your tasks for the day and set your working hours to maintain your productivity levels.
- Take a break – Allow yourself to take a break every now and then to refresh your mind and body. Try setting an alarm to get up and stretch and move to a different area of the house away from your laptop and email.
- Keep up more casual communication habits - If you normally catch up with other staff for a coffee before your morning meeting at work, jump onto your video meeting early to catch-up with everyone remotely. If you normally chat with your co-worker first thing in the morning, do the same remotely by phone or chat. Try to follow the same rituals and habits to maintain relationships and a sense of normality.

The well-being of the team

During times of high stress and uncertainty the well-being of the team becomes even more important. Here are some ideas around how to connect and communicate:

- Reach Out – Ask about their current situation and how their family are doing. If possible, provide them with additional support as needed.
- Be Transparent – Individuals may be concerned about losing their jobs and what the future may hold. Be honest and realistic while updating them.
- Two-way communication – Actively listen to your staff and volunteers feedback and suggestions. Share relevant and critical information regularly. Encourage input around new ideas, you might be surprised what new a novel ideas come up to help the club or facility move forward.
- Keep track of changing needs – Some individuals may require extra financial and/or psychological help. Try to do your best to understand the changing needs and assist them throughout the crisis.

- Show flexibility – Some of your people will be able to invest extra time and effort while others may find it difficult. Make sure you and the team get some time out to manage stress and burnout.
- Celebrate – Take some time to celebrate the efforts and wins. No matter how small, the club or facility have achieved.
- Use key people – If you're in a leadership position, you may feel you are solely responsible for your staff/volunteers wellbeing. Share the load. Other key people can help you support the team. Your wellbeing is just as important.
- When possible you or your key people can arrange informal sessions through the likes of Zoom or Skype, with the staff and volunteers so they can listen and support each other.

For more information on resilient organisation practices [click here](#).

Personal well-being

As a club leader, your well-being is important to the moral and confidence of the team. Below are a few key tips to keep you in the best position to support your golf club or facility.

- Talk to People - Share your feelings and thoughts with someone you trust outside of the club environment.
- Watch your media diet – Take a break from following the news and social media.
- Focus on relationships – Connect with those that make you feel safe, loved, and connected.
- Get the facts – Seek Covid-19 information only once or twice a day. Get the facts from reliable sources like [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)
- Do what makes you feel good – Looking after your mind, body, soul, and family is vital during this time. It can be easy to become overworked.
- Stick to routines – It may sound dull but routine is good for our mental health. Try to sleep and wake up at the same time, eat at regular times. This will help to manage your days and adjust when life gets back to normal.
- Pace yourself – This could be more of a marathon rather than a sprint. Ensure that you don't burn yourself out and take time out.
- Focus on what matters – Concentrate on what you can control and what matters.

For more information on health and wellbeing please [click here](#).

Changing employee working arrangements

Even though these are unprecedented times, regular employment law applies to all employment relationships. There may be significant changes within the club or facility and with that in mind there are legal requirements around this.

- Deal with each other in good faith – Employers and employees must discuss in good faith the implications of COVID-19 on their working arrangements.
- Where changes to current working arrangements are proposed by an employer, there are specific good faith requirements and consultation that must be followed.

For information and guidance on workforce adjustments please [click here](#).

Managing employee leave

Employers and employees need to work together during this challenging time, and this means that normal obligations to keep in regular contact and to act in good faith are more important than ever. Regular employment law applies to all employment relationships - regardless of the circumstances that we find ourselves in.

It can be difficult to navigate a complex and rapidly changing situation such as the current one. One of the current challenges for businesses is working out employee entitlements to leave. All businesses, including those using the Wage Subsidy Scheme:

- must follow legal requirements when making decisions about leave.
- cannot unlawfully require or compel employees to use their leave entitlements.
- should seek first to reach agreement with an employee in good faith on what approach will be taken regarding leave.

Please visit <https://covid19.ema.co.nz/webinar/> to view the Employers and Manufacturers Association's (EMA) Q&A webinar on managing employee leave. For further information about leave and pay entitlements during COVID-19, please [click here](#).

Changing employee hours of work

Generally, if an employment agreement has the employee's hours of work, then an employer can't change them without the employee's agreement. If the employment agreement says that an employer can change the hours of work, the employer must still act fairly and reasonably before they do.

In some situations (such as genuine financial, commercial or economic problems, or genuine restructuring of the business), cutting back on an employee's hours may be put forward as an alternative to redundancy. In these situations the employer must follow the usual process for organisational change, which includes giving the employee a fair opportunity to consider and respond to the proposed change.

For more information please [click here](#).

Redundancy

If your club or facility is looking at redundancy options, the first consideration should be to apply for the Wage Subsidy to support and keep workers employed where possible. This information can be found [here](#).

For further information on redundancy please [click here](#).

For any other employment related question around COVID-19 [click here](#).

Covid-19 Advisory Fund

New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, through the Regional Business Partner Network, have set up an advisory fund for businesses that is used to get business advisors to help organisations through the current situation.

The process is as follows:

- Register your club or facility at <https://www.regionalbusinesspartners.co.nz/>
- An advisor will contact the club or facility within 48 hours to discuss what is best for you.
- The advisor will bill the club or facility with the club or facility being able to have access of up to \$2000 funding from the Regional Business Partner Network (for organisations with up to 50 staff)