

Tuesday 9 November 2021

Te Manatū Waka, Ministry of Transport
PO Box 3175
Wellington 6140

For distribution to relevant stakeholders –

To whom it may concern,

Update in the changes for shorter stays in managed isolation followed by people self-isolating at home for 3 days

I am writing to advise you of the recent changes approved by Ministers on 28 October 2021 in which they agreed to shorter stays in a managed isolation facility (MIF) for people, and the ability for them to self-isolate until receipt of a negative day 9 COVID-19 test result. These changes are effective from 14 November 2021 for those arriving by air from outside Aotearoa New Zealand.

The length of stay for people in managed isolation will reduce from 14 days (336 hours) to 7 days (168 hours) followed by a period of self-isolation until individuals return a negative day 9 test before they are able to exit self-isolation (usually around 3 days of self-isolation in total).

People will be required to travel to their home or accommodation and be expected to stay there until they receive a negative day 9 test result. Private transportation (i.e. self-driving, or if necessary, being picked up by whānau or friends) will be strongly recommended. However, if this is not available, they will be permitted to use public transportation (e.g. taxis, buses or domestic flights) to travel to their place of self-isolation.

Returnees will be advised to take the fastest and most direct route to their place of self-isolation, and will not be permitted to stop at public venues (e.g. supermarkets) or visit people along the way.

There are a range of factors and measures in place that mitigate the public health risk associated with these peoples' travel on public transport to their place of self-isolation. These measures include:

- The overall positivity rate among returnees is low – around 2 or 3 active cases are identified per 1000 returnees. The vast majority of these cases – likely more than 80% - are identified by day 7 and moved to appropriate quarantine facilities.
- Returnees will have tested negative for COVID-19 at multiple points during their stay, including on around 6 of their stay in a MIF. If their final nasopharyngeal PCR test result taken in the facility is not available by the time they are due to

depart, they will be required to return a negative Rapid Antigen Test result to provide added assurance that they pose a low public health risk while travelling to their place of self-isolation;

- Most travellers report being fully or partially vaccinated against COVID-19;
- All travellers will complete a final health check prior to leaving the MIQ facility to ensure they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms;
- Returnees will be required to follow the rules relating to wearing face coverings while on public transport, as well as for the duration of their travel to their place of self-isolation (e.g. throughout domestic terminals). They will also be required to follow the usual public health advice around maintaining physical distancing where possible and performing regular hand hygiene.

As a result, we consider that there is a low risk to public health by these travellers using your services while travelling to their place of self-isolation.

The Ministry of Health is developing guidance for self-isolation that will cover the requirements for self-isolation, including transport and travel requirements. This guidance will also include clear guidance around the expectation when traveling on any sort of public transport. This guidance will be shared with returnees at multiple points prior to their travel (e.g. on public websites), as well as during their stay in a MIF. We will share this guidance with you as soon as it is available.

Thank you again for all the hard work that you and your staff are doing to ensure that the movement of goods and people continue in these unprecedented times.

Ngā mihi,



Dr Caroline McElnay
Director of Public Health
Office of the Director of Public Health
Ministry of Health