

# Plan now for post-lockdown - industry groups

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*Eamon Rood* - Thu, 16 Apr 2020

Mines and quarries should use the next week to prepare for any change in the Covid-19 alert level status, industry groups recommend.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern outlined today what moving from Level 4 lockdown to Level 3 will entail, including that businesses without a customer-facing component could resume operations.

Aggregate and Quarry CEO Wayne Scott says with it looking likely that come Monday Cabinet will confirm a shift to Level 3 from the following Thursday 23 April, quarries and mines need to use the time to plan their reopening.



“We are not yet out of the woods with this virus and Government has strict requirements for those who are able to resume work, similar to those who’ve continued working,” says Scott, who also heads the extractives health and safety council, MinEx.

“As the PM says, it will be a shift from Essential to Safe businesses.”

## Clarification welcome

Minerals association Straterra says extractive companies will find the Prime Minister’s clarification on what to expect under Alert Level 3 useful for post-lockdown planning.

“The government’s intention to move to a safety or risk-based approach under Level 3 is most welcome,” says Straterra CEO Chris Baker.

“Operations such as coal and gold exports and alluvial gold can now plan for operations, once we know when Level 3 will apply and, of course, subject to safety compliance.

“Most mining companies already have those processes in place and for those smaller operations that don’t, MinEx has developed the protocols and these are on our [web site](#).”

Templates are also available from the AQA and the assessment tool available on WorkSafe’s website.

“If anyone needs assistance, they can call us,” Scott says.

## Planning parameters

Extractives sites will need a Covid-19 management plan to protect against the spread of Covid-19, applying to employees, contractors and their employees, visitors, suppliers and customers.

Each site will also require a ‘Covid Controller’ to do a risk assessment, identify virus-related hazards and responses, and assume responsibility for ventilation, disinfection, distribution of personal protective equipment, communication and training.

“It is also important to ensure changes to the site are in place such as signs, secure offices, extra sanitary provisions, adequate provision of PPE etc. prior to re-opening your site,” Scott says.

Workers will need to be rostered to return to work at different times to help manage social distancing of two metres away from other people, including in lunchrooms and offices. Workers or workmates, contractors and visitors will be required to complete a health status questionnaire prior to starting work on each shift.

“All workers have to be trained about your site’s Covid-19 management plan and there will be workplace inspections to ensure it’s being followed effectively. I’d trust most in our sector will do the right thing so we can nail this virus.”

## Pre-existing hazards

Scott reminds operators that as sites reopen Covid-19 is not the only health and safety risk.

“Just because we are focused on beating a pandemic doesn’t mean all the other risks disappear. We all have to be conscious that the usual array of risks such as those presented by slips, trips, falls, vehicle and machinery accidents, very much remain.

“In fact, our risk profile will very likely increase because of the demands of Covid-19. I strongly advise site managers and staff to re-start slowly and be very aware that our new risk doesn’t displace those that hurt and maim people.”