

COVID-19 Alert Level 2 – Kua hīkina te rāhui, engari ka herea tonutia: Information for families and whānau

15 May 2020

Tangihanga, kawē/hari mate and marae – a need to adapt our practises during this extraordinary time.

At Alert Level 2, we must continue to maintain a high level of vigilance in order to protect ourselves and in doing so stop and eradicate COVID-19.

Already, iwi and hapū have been adapting tikanga and kawa to keep our people safe. This has also extended to tangihanga.

Marae

At Alert Level 2 marae may choose to reopen.

Marae will need to implement a health and safety plan and other measures.

Tangihanga, kawē/hari mate

Bereaved families and whānau from all cultures and backgrounds will find this time challenging. This makes it even more important that we show each other kindness and caring, manaakitanga and aroha. We have followed a graduated approach to tangihanga - at Alert Level 2 **tangihanga may resume** subject to there being:

- **No more than 50 people present (indoors or outdoors) at any one time**
 - This limit excludes **workers** such as kaikōrero, kaikaranga, members of the clergy and the funeral director
- Indoor gatherings should not last longer than 2 hours
- Provision for personal hygiene and infection prevention
- Provision for control measures such as physical distancing
- Provision for contact tracing records to be kept
- Overnight stays are restricted to close family or whānau pani/kirimate only.

Multiple groups of up to 50 manuhiri are allowed to attend tangihanga. Again, there must be **no more than 50 people present at any one time, excluding** kaikōrero, kaikaranga, members of the clergy and the funeral director.

Each group of up to 50 people, will be considered as 'one cohort' with the expectation they will not interact with any other cohort in or around the premises/venue. Further, **people within each cohort will need to maintain physical distancing, in particular with people in the cohort who are not ordinarily resident with each other.**

The general requirements for no physical contact, including harirū, hongī, kissing, and hugging, remain in place during this alert level – particularly again with people who do not usually live with each other.

Additionally, personal hygiene practices must be followed, and frequently touched surfaces and objects must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant before and after each group comes on.

It is a requirement of the Ministry of Health that prior to any service that has more than 10 people (but less than 50 as per the restrictions), **the service must be registered** with the Ministry of Health at funeralregistration@health.govt.nz. A registration form can be found on the Ministry website [here](#). This registration process provides the Ministry of Health confidence that public health control measures are being adhered to throughout the country. For the purposes of contact tracing, this process also provides the Ministry of Health with a record of where larger gatherings have occurred during Alert Level 2.

Multiple groups of up to 50 are allowed to attend tangihanga in the lead up to the official burial or nehunga. However, the group that attends the service directly before the burial or nehunga must be the same group of 50 that travels from the service with the tūpāpaku to the cemetery or urupā. With the appropriate provisions, this same group of 50 people can be provided with individual portions of food or refreshments, with groupings of no more than 10 people eating together, similar to requirements for commercial food facilities. No alcohol is to be served on the premises. It is important that there is no mixing and mingling between the groups of 10 and the larger group. Physical distancing of 1 metre should be maintained at all times.

A single large gathering for food and refreshments exceeding a 2-hour period is not permitted. It is important that there is no mixing and mingling between the groups of 10 and the larger group. It is important to note that this initial limit of 50 is a temporary measure that will be reviewed in the future.

Under Alert Level 2 travel is permitted but people are encouraged to do it safely. You may still wish to consider burying a tūpāpaku in the region they usually reside in to reduce the risks of your whānau coming into contact with COVID-19.

WHY? Because COVID-19 is now in the community and public gatherings put all our whānau members at risk, especially our kaumātua, pregnant women, whānau who are immune-compromised or have cancer or pre-existing conditions like cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, kidney problems, diabetes or high blood pressure.

Therefore, we must protect people's health and ensure our health system can look after New Zealanders who become sick.

This approach will reduce contact spread of COVID-19 to our kaumātua and our at-risk whānau members. It is the best way to keep our communities safe.

We are regularly updating our advice and guidelines to be accurate, relevant to whānau, and responsive to the changes in our situation.

Getting support

We encourage whānau to use the services of their Police iwi liaison officers, their local 'kaiwhakarite' and their deceased loved one's health providers. Grieving is never easy. If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk with a health professional. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.

Alert Level 2 – kua hīkina te rāhui, engari ka herea tonutia: Official guidelines for tangihanga

What to do when someone dies

Appoint a whānau member to potentially liaise with funeral directors, health providers and/or police.

- Māori communities, iwi, hapū and whānau are being encouraged to establish local 'kaiwhakarite' or people who can assist whānau during this time as well. You may wish to contact your 'kaiwhakarite' to seek advice. Get in touch with your iwi and hapū organisations, marae, local social services provider or local Civil Defence Emergency Management Centre to see if a 'kaiwhakarite' has already been established.

Contact the deceased's health provider (GP, Hauora, PHO).

- **If your loved one has died from a known health issue**, this will be critical information for the funeral director – your loved one's health provider will liaise directly with the funeral director (once appointed) to pass on the necessary information.
- **If your loved one has died from COVID-19**, it will be critical for the health provider to support you with information on what to do next.
- **If your loved one has died from an unknown cause**, a post-mortem may need to be undertaken. Your health provider will assist you in the first instance and the Police may need to be contacted, who will then facilitate this process. They will liaise directly with your appointed whānau member.

Get in touch with a local funeral director

A registered funeral director should be engaged to carry out the functions of care and preparation of the deceased and may assist with transportation, burial or cremation and service arrangements of a deceased person in New Zealand.

If you are unsure about funeral directors, work with your local Police iwi liaison officer, 'kaiwhakarite', tribal authority, health provider and/or local Civil Defence Emergency Management Centre to identify someone suitable. Once you have secured the services of a funeral director, be prepared:

- If the funeral director encounters high levels of anxiety, distress or confrontational behaviour due to the restrictions we are all under, they will contact the local Police for assistance
- **They may uplift your loved one wearing personal protective equipment** including masks, gloves, protective clothing etc. – this may be daunting for whānau, especially young ones
- Their preference is for **one appointed whānau member to facilitate arrangements** including paperwork – this may need to be done remotely or at least using strict physical distancing measures
- **Whānau members are allowed to dress the tūpāpaku** – however this must be carried out in the presence of an embalmer/funeral director who will give direction to anyone present on the correct requirements. Activities such as hongi, kissing, washing or touching the body should not occur before, during or after the dressing and/or viewings

- Multiple viewings, whether kīrimate, whānau-pani, whānau whānui or friends are allowed to take place under Alert Level 2 at funeral homes:
 - **Only a maximum of up to 50 people at any one time** may view the tūpāpaku, excluding kaikōrero, kaikaranga, members of the clergy, and the funeral director
 - Each group of up to 50 people, will be considered as 'one cohort' with the expectation that they will not interact with people in any other cohort in or around the premises/venue. Further, people within each cohort should maintain physical distancing, in particular with people in the cohort who are not ordinarily resident with each other
 - It is a requirement of the Ministry of Health that prior to any service that has more than 10 people (but less than 50 as per the restrictions), the service must be registered with the Ministry of Health at funeralregistration@health.govt.nz. A registration form can be found on the Ministry website [here](#). This registration process provides the Ministry of Health confidence that public health control measures are being adhered to throughout the country. For the purposes of contact tracing, this process also provides the Ministry of Health with a record of where larger gatherings have occurred during Alert Level 2
 - Strict physical distancing protocols should be followed and activities such as hongi, kissing, hugging and touching each other and/or the tūpāpaku should not take place
 - Funeral directors will have health and safety plans including their requirements for such things as physical distancing, hygiene and the like which should be shared with family and whānau as well as being displayed clearly for people to view prior to entering the funeral home
- **Tūpāpaku may be taken home to lie in state** if whānau wish to take them.
 - Whānau will need to think about this option carefully as personal hygiene and infection prevention, control measures and contact tracing measures must still be enacted in keeping the kīrimate, whānau-pani and those visiting to pay their respects safe and healthy.
 - Whānau are strongly encouraged to come up with a plan to manage people movements, hygiene and infection prevention including physical separation (especially in relation to people who are not part of the immediate whānau).
- **Only a maximum of up to 50 people will be allowed to go to the cemetery, urupā or crematorium** alongside the tūpāpaku.
 - Again, this limit of up to 50 people excludes kaikōrero, kaikaranga, members of the clergy, and the funeral director.
 - The group that attends the service directly before the burial or nehunga must be the same group of 50 that travels from the service with the tūpāpaku to the cemetery or urupā.
 - Funeral directors will need to contact their local authorities to check if they have any restrictions or requirements in place for any public crematoria or cemeteries under their management.
 - Similarly, whānau will need to make contact with their marae/urupā contacts to check if they have any restrictions or requirements in place.
- Whānau should also appoint someone to support funeral directors in ensuring messages around limits on attendance numbers, personal hygiene, infection prevention, control and contact tracing measures are understood and complied with.
- **This does not preclude whānau from electing to have their loved one placed in storage (refrigerated) for later burial or cremation**, if this facility is available locally, until we are past the current Alert Level 2. You can discuss this option with the funeral director if you wish.
- The **limit of up to 50 people attending a viewing or burial at any one time is a temporary measure** that will be reviewed in the future. This initial limit may be increased if it is deemed safe to do so.

Other important information

COVID-19 is contagious – caring for a tūpāpaku

This applies when loved ones have died from COVID-19 at home or in a private residence and relates to the time period immediately after.

- Where possible, try to minimise contact with the deceased loved one to prevent COVID-19 spread.
- It will be very hard, but to help stop the spread COVID-19, we cannot allow any others to come into contact with the deceased or those who have been in isolation with them..
- If your loved one has died from COVID-19 then it will be critical for the Health Provider to support you with information on what to do next.

If your loved one passes away in hospital

- You may be able to view them at a safe distance before and after their death, but only if the hospital is allowing access to their buildings. Remote viewing may be available via technology.
- You will not be permitted to touch, wash and/or dress your loved one's body at the hospital.
- The hospital will transfer your loved one to its mortuary, and then into your funeral director's care.

If your loved one passes away at home

- Whānau touching, washing and/or dressing of your loved one's body poses a significant health risk and is strongly advised against.
- The funeral director will transfer your loved one to their facilities.

If your loved one passes away overseas

- People who die overseas can be repatriated to New Zealand provided the funeral director meets the international requirements. The funeral director will know what paperwork is required for customs and biosecurity.

Transporting tūpāpaku between regions

- Tūpāpaku can be transported between regions, either using registered funerals directors or private transport in a safe way.
- Similarly, whānau may escort the tūpāpaku inter-regionally to bury the tūpāpaku.
- Up to 50 people will be allowed to go to the cemetery along with the tūpāpaku. Whānau are encouraged to make contact with their marae/urupā contacts to check if they have any restrictions or requirements in place.
- Again, this limit of 50 excludes kaikōrero, kaikaranga, members of the clergy, and the funeral director.

Travel for tangihanga, kawē/hari mate

- Under Alert Level 2 travel people can travel but are encouraged to do so in a safe way.
- Travelling between regions to attend a funeral, tangihanga or kawē/hari mate of a friend or family member is permitted. You do not have to apply for an exemption to travel inter-regionally to attend a funeral, tangihanga or kawē/hari mate.

Protecting friends and whānau

- Anyone who is unwell or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test should stay at home and not attend public gatherings at tangihanga, burials, cremations, kawē/hari mate, memorial services, processions, receptions and social gatherings, both indoors and outdoors.

- People at higher risk of illness from COVID-19 must also stay home. This includes kaumātua, pregnant women, whānau who are immune-compromised or have cancer or pre-existing conditions like cardiovascular disease, respiratory issues, kidney problems, diabetes or high blood pressure.

Role of marae

- Marae may choose to reopen during Alert Level 2.
- Marae will need to implement a Health and Safety Plan and other measures.

Burial at urupā

- Whānau may opt to have their loved one buried at their whānau urupā.
- Whānau will need to contact their marae/urupā contact persons to make the urupā arrangements. Marae can assist with making these arrangements.
- The group that attends the service directly before the burial or nehunga must be the same group of 50 that travels from the service with the tūpāpaku to the cemetery or urupā.

Role of funeral directors

- All funeral directors have been asked to follow a strict set of guidelines and will abide by these.
- Funeral directors will liaise with local councils to ensure that any local authority rules are followed.
- Funeral directors may have other restrictions in place depending on their own health and safety plans. They will let you know what these are.

Honouring your loved one

- You may engage the services of a priest, minister, celebrant, kaikōrero/kaikaranga or other to conduct karakia, poroporoakī, and mihi at the funeral home, marae and/or urupā. However, strict physical distancing and hygiene protocols must be followed.
- Funeral directors may be able to assist or you may be able to utilise technology to assist.
- You may choose to livestream your time at the marae, funeral home, private residence, cemetery and/or urupā to include whānau and friends who were not in attendance physically.
- Once we recover from this pandemic, your whānau may want to come together to honour your loved one. If your whānau member was cremated, you may want to bury their ashes at a whānau urupā. If they were buried immediately, you may choose to hold a service at the burial grounds. These are only some of the ways you may choose to remember your lost loved one.