

27 March 2020

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KiwiRail

**Covid Risk for Kiwirail Operations Teams  
(including Locomotive Engineers double manning, infrastructure travelling to sites)**

Thank you for asking me to comment on this issue and discuss whether personal protective equipment is necessary in the operational work environment.

I would not see this as a hazardous environment but acknowledge that it is a vital part of maintaining KiwiRail's part of the supply chain.

I am not of the opinion that PPE is necessary but would strongly support the Ministry of Health's recommendations around hygiene measures and distancing.

I would suggest:

- Ensure that workers and visitors (cleaners, technicians etc) are in good health, that is confirm to the manager:
  - Have no symptoms compatible with an upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) such as fever (shiver and shakes), sore throat, cough and/or runny nose.
  - Have completed any self isolation requirements
  - Are not considered "vulnerable" people, that is do not have underlying serious illness that might dampen their defences and symptom complex.
- Follow distancing and hygiene procedures including:
  - Wiping down (with spray sanitisers or wipes) desks and food/eating surfaces, tools/equipment i.e. gas monitors, door handles and control surfaces - buttons, levers etc. (safely dispose of these).
  - Wiping down before and after use/working in the cab or driving a vehicle.
  - If staff are concerned (and the above measures are in place) gloves (while they wipe down surfaces on starting a shift) would be reasonable (but need safe disposal into a sealable bag for later removal).
- In the absence of social crowding or community contact respiratory protection (masks) will not be necessary.
  - The only need for PPE would arise if an infected person has spent time spitting and coughing in the room/cab.
  - If this occurs I suggest:
    - The cab/room is decontaminated (high level/deep clean).
    - The ventilation is increased as above for 12 hours.
    - I would then consider the cab/room safe to re-enter.
- Due to the potential for social crowding or community contact in situations such as **double manning a cab or vehicle – additional precautions include:**
  - Wipe down before and after another person enters the cab or vehicle. Maintain as much of the appropriate distance as is possible.
  - Use P2/N95 masks (*safe to re-use if not dampened or wet*).

- Travelling in cars together: I recommend against this, unless a larger vehicle i.e. van or Hi-Rail vehicle.
- Either 2 cars, single occupancy or 1 larger vehicle (with ventilation or open windows) driver at front with second person at back (one driver for the trip or if two, wipe down before etc.)
- Follow good personal hygiene procedures including:
  - No eating or drinking when cab has two people.
  - NO SMOKING.
- Increase the ventilation rates of the environment
  - Ventilate loco and vehicle cabs (*I am assuming there is some sort of ventilation system in the cabs*)
  - *If no mechanical ventilation* - running the loco for 20 minutes with windows open would ensure a good number of air changes within the cab.
  - There is good evidence from Tb control in the healthcare environment that 6 air changes per hour significantly lowers Tb transmission to healthcare workers.
    - I acknowledge the much smaller size of the COVID virus but fast air turn over doesn't allow these pathogens to keep on circulating
- KiwiRail consider:
  - Sending home workers with URTI symptoms
  - If there is some concern amongst staff you can measure temperature (*screen crew members (possibly record their temperature and exclude if > 37.9 degrees C)*)
    - External temperature measurement devices are available but symptoms of shivering or shaking, feeling cold (apart from when in increased ventilation) should mean the person self isolates and gets tested via the GP.
    - Avoiding recirculation is recommended (not necessarily a common practice in NZ).

Please contact me if anything requires clarification

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