



## AREC COVID-19 RESPONSE 15 OCTOBER 2021



### AREC Response to COVID-19 – Update Oct 2021

As you are all aware, New Zealand is moving through a series of lock-down issues as our nation responds to the evolving COVID-19 Delta situation. We need to be mindful of the following:

- **AREC is an essential service when deploying on operations such as a SAROP**
- **Our member's health and safety must be paramount otherwise we become part of the problem, not part of a solution; On that basis older and health-compromised members should not deploy (see guidance below).**
- **We must all ensure that Government guidelines are followed.**
- **We need to consider alternative ways of working – remote comms, computer aided solutions, etc.**
- **We must follow and be advised by the key messages that have been issued to the Public**
- **Be kind**
- **As an essential service we must all get vaccinated to lessen the risk of catching Covid and getting seriously ill or becoming a spreader. Police and other agencies are currently preparing their long-term policies on this subject.**
- **Wear a proper surgical mask and wash hands regularly with soap and water or if not readily available, use appropriate alcohol based handwash.**

#### **AREC is an essential service**

Police, Search & Rescue and Civil Defence may call upon us to assist.

If you need to travel, only do so if you have received a written request via email or txt.

When responding wear your AREC or agency clothing / hi-vis (if you have it) and take your AREC membership card. If you are stopped, or your need to travel is questioned, briefly and clearly explain why you are travelling, show the email or txt requesting your attendance and have the contact number of the agency or AREC representative requesting your response if verification is required.

Under no circumstances are we to turn up “just in case”.

#### **AREC member's health and safety is paramount; older and health-compromised members should not deploy:**

Please remember that your own safety is paramount. Please get vaccinated as soon as possible and ensure you have both doses as recommended.

Those of us over 70, or over 60 with significant medical issues, should not respond operationally to a SAROP unless fully vaccinated and with the prior approval of the District Manager.

Those who have significant health issues, especially respiratory disease such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), congestive heart failure, are currently on immunosuppressive drugs, or live with people who could be at risk, should not deploy for the good of everyone.

**AREC Meetings & training:** Note that AREC meetings and training are not necessarily “essential” and are to be postponed whilst we are in lock-down level 3 or 4. Two exceptions would be training in a SAREX type situation or to ensure field skills are maintained and maintenance and testing of SAROP related equipment.

However, where possible, please continue to meet by radio net or online. This will test our ability to operate remotely, and regular contact is good for engagement, mental health and well-being. Lastly, our on-going contacts confirm that our members are okay.



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### **Covid-19 Delta Variant significantly more contagious:**

The Covid-19 Delta Variant circulating now has been proven to be significantly more contagious, easy to catch and pass on. It is spread by airborne transmission which means in Public you must maintain physical distancing and wearing a good quality surgical mask is most important. The cloth masks previously acceptable in 2020 are either impermeable with too much bypass airflow around the sides, or a too permeable and will not stop the ingress of viral particles.

### **Ensure that Government guidelines are followed**

There is excellent advice available on Government web sites to guide us how to stay safe (<https://covid19.govt.nz/>).

Key things to note are:

- Don't interact with others outside of your household (bubble) unless absolutely necessary
- Keep at least 2 metres away from other people
- Wash and sanitise your hands regularly – wipe-down surfaces and equipment before and after use.

### **Consider alternative ways of working**

One of the great things we offer is innovation. Many of you have well-equipped shacks with supporting IT. This is the perfect time to consider how you can support tasks from home through running the radios and using SARTrack and on-line collaboration tools to connect in with other members, the responding agency, or IMT.

A reminder that Amateur radio equipment cannot be used on commercial frequencies however AREC has access to some commercial gear that can be loaned out. Contact your group leader for more information.

### **Key messages for the Public**

A number of outdoor agencies have created a document urging people to recreate responsibly and not put our emergency and rescue services at unnecessary risk. A copy is available on the main page at <https://arec.nz>. Advise others to read this information to help us all stay safe.

### **Be kind**

Most importantly, we are all in this together. Restrictions can be frustrating but remember that we all have a duty to keep ourselves and each other safe. Be patient and be kind. As a nation and as an organisation we will pull through this.

### **Queries?**

If you have any questions or are unsure about anything please send an email to the AREC Health Safety and Wellbeing Advisor at [HSW@arec.nz](mailto:HSW@arec.nz) or the AREC CEO at [CEO@arec.nz](mailto:CEO@arec.nz)

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**Amateur Radio Emergency Communications**

<https://arec.nz> and <https://arec.today>