



HPSNZ Guidance – COVID-19 Alert Level 3

September 2021

This document provides guidance to NSOs with regards to training for high performance athletes at Alert Level 3. The current Alert Levels for each region can be found [here](#).

NSOs are responsible and accountable for applying the Government’s guidelines on the COVID-19 Alert Levels to their own environments. NSOs determine what operational measures can be implemented to ensure general principles of physical distancing, contact tracing and hygiene protocols are adhered to. Restrictions regarding the size of the isolation “bubble”, travel (international and domestic), gatherings, workplaces, public venues and specific activity risk will also influence decision making.

It is important to understand that Alert Level 3 does not represent a full return to training. Training will have to be significantly modified in light of applicable restrictions.

This guidance sets out, for regions at Alert Level 3:

1. Applicable Public Health Measures;
2. Underlying principles of this guidance;
3. What HPSNZ support will be available;
4. Key considerations for NSOs; and
5. HPSNZ Wellbeing guidance.

Public Health Measures:

In all circumstances, the following public health measures should be observed.

- People must work from home unless that is not possible.
- People should stay home in their bubble other than for essential movement which may include going to work.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres outside home including on public transport, or 1 metre in controlled environments like workplaces.
- Face coverings must be worn on public transport and when visiting essential services, and are otherwise highly recommended
- People must stay within their immediate household bubble but can expand this to reconnect with close family/whānau, or bring in caregivers or support isolated people.
- Businesses can open premises, but cannot physically interact with customers.

- Gatherings of up to 10 people are only allowed for wedding services, funerals and tangihanga.
- If sick, stay home.
- Inter-regional travel is highly limited.
- People at high risk of severe illness such as older people and those with existing medical conditions are encouraged to stay at home where possible, and take additional precautions when leaving home.

Underlying principles of HPSNZ guidance

In developing this Guidance, HPSNZ is led by the [COVID-19 Public Health Order](#) issued by the New Zealand Government which restricts what can and can't be done at Alert Level 3.

Unlike community sport (where the guidelines are set out [here](#)), where a controlled workplace can be established, training can commence at a professional / national elite level. Preparations for these workplaces to resume operation must be made in accordance with WorkSafe's requirements and in consultation with staff and elite athletes, who are considered "workers" for the purposes of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. As such, training should be managed in accordance with the restrictions and requirements in the Health Order relating to "workers" and "workplaces". A COVID-19 Health and Safety plan must be in place and acceptable to all parties participating.

Risk of injury and illness should be factored into decisions regarding the return to activity volumes, intensity and technical requirements. Beware that returning to pre-isolation training levels too quickly may leave athletes more prone to injury. Also, from a wellbeing perspective, note that Alert Levels that significantly restrict movement are not considered an equal substitute for an off-season from a mental recovery and reset perspective. While people might have worked on their physical base, cognitively and emotionally the restrictions on movement, separation from loved ones, and increased health hypervigilance will require time to recover from. **HPSNZ Support**

- Performance Health services will be delivered via tele-health consultations.
- APS Staff (S&C, Nutrition, Physiology, PTA, Psychology, Athlete Life) will be working from home and available for remote support only.
- Ongoing support is available remotely from regular HPSNZ contacts: PTLs, HPCCs, HPAD, Leadership etc
- Remote wellbeing support is available from regular Athlete Life, Psychology and Coaching team contacts.
- Decisions on the appropriateness of training sessions (e.g. indoor or outdoors, athletes, coaches, staff numbers, health considerations) at Alert Level 3 should be a consultative process between NSO performance and medical staff.

HPSNZ Guidance on training, coaching and facilities/equipment for HP Athletes:

Contact sport and team training sessions are not permitted at Alert Level 3 due to the restrictions on group gatherings and the inability to ensure compliance with Covid-19 Alert Level 3 requirements.

The majority of training at Alert Level 3 should still take place at home. Athletes can also exercise outdoors individually or with their regular household members. Coaching that can take place remotely, must continue to take place remotely.

Should an NSO consider that training with coaches and/or training at an indoor facility/gym is required, then the NSO should satisfy itself that such training can occur in compliance with Alert Level 3 requirements. In exploring this, the NSO should:

1. Consult those involved (i.e. both athletes and coaches) to understand their concerns and priorities with regards to training;
2. Implement a system for checking in on and recording the presence, health and wellbeing of your people prior to/at training;
3. Implement processes to minimise travel of athletes and coaches and mitigate the risks of spreading Covid-19 if travel is required. Remember that at Alert Level 3, travel is restricted and only allowed for permitted movement in your local area;
4. Implement processes to enable compliance with physical distancing rules so far as reasonably practicable;
5. Implement good personal hygiene practices, which may include provision of hand washing facilities, hand-sanitisers and face-masks;
6. Implement regular cleaning and disinfecting practices for equipment and/or facilities. Consider carefully the necessity and availability of kitchen, bathroom and toilet facilities in this regard; and
7. Engage those involved (i.e. individual athletes and coaches) with regards to the Health & Safety Plan, and the protocols and systems that will be in place.

HPSNZ will work with NSOs to ensure that appropriate Alert Level 3 requirements and restrictions are met for HPSNZ facilities and gyms, in accordance with the considerations above. Individuals may be required to comply with additional HPSNZ measures when accessing HPNSZ facilities.

HPSNZ Wellbeing Guidance

- Consider how you keep your people's wellbeing at the forefront of your thinking and decision- making during these times.
- Connect with staff and athletes with similar frequency as you did pre-COVID-19. Video chats are preferable - seeing people's faces is important.
- Seek to understand how your people and their whānau are.
- Communicate a clear process for athletes and staff to raise concerns, ask questions and access support.
- Engage with your own support network and know who you would reach out to if you were struggling.
- Consider how you, personally, are reacting to the multiple changes and how these reactions are impacting your response to others.
- Refer to this [HPSNZ Wellbeing Link](#) for specific wellbeing advice.