

29 March 2020 – UPDATED

## **MBIE have advised Museums Aotearoa that:**

Businesses carrying out functions that are immediately essential to maintain the necessities of life or critical to safety can remain open under Alert level 4, including any critical suppliers in their supply chains. Specialist expertise that you refer to is allowed provided it is emergency work where the need is immediate and required to maintain human, taonga/exhibits health and safety.

Businesses who provide you with specialist expertise can carry out emergency work as long as it is done in a way that limits the transmission of COVID-19 by taking the following measures:

- minimise, or eliminate if possible, physical interactions amongst staff and with and between customers,
- ensure appropriate health, hygiene and safety measures are in place,
- restrict activity to only what is essential during the Alert 4 period."

## **In addition, MCH have relayed (with MBIE's approval) the following from MBIE:**

Security and maintenance/cleaning may continue on museums/galleries/libraries/archives. These facilities/buildings must NOT be open to the public however and the services must be at a minimum and following the health and safety guidelines:

Services must continue in a way that minimises the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Including:

- minimise, or eliminate if possible, physical interactions among staff and with and between customers
- ensure appropriate health, hygiene and safety measures are in place
- restrict activity to only what is essential during the Alert Level 4 period.

These practices may include:

- limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction between staff, e.g. through physical distancing, split shifts, staggered meal breaks and flexible working arrangements
- limiting, or eliminating if possible, physical interaction with and between customers, eg through online or phone orders, contactless delivery or managed entry (while also avoiding crowding outside), and physical distancing both inside and outside the premises
- hygiene basics of hand washing and sanitisers
- frequent cleaning of premises, especially counters and eftpos terminals, and other high-touch surfaces (cleaning advice is available on the Ministry of Health website)
- protective equipment for staff as appropriate."

## **Kaitiakitanga for taonga and premises during COVID-19 shutdown**

This pānui was shared with MA Members on day 2 of the pandemic Alert Level 4 shutdown.

The first priority for us all has been ensuring that our people - staff, colleagues, whānau and communities - are staying safe and enabled to follow all the official guidance.

### **Security and access to premises**

The next most immediate concern for members is ensuring that our duties as kaitiaki for our taonga and collections continues while we are off site. MA raised this with the 'powers that be'. While we have not had an official statement from the MBIE essential services team - who are no doubt overwhelmed with such requests - we have been in consultation with MCH. We offer the following guidance based on the best advice to date.

#### **1 Use professional security**

If you employ professional security services they are already classed as essential services and can ensure overall security of premises. These people should be tasked with any additional checking/maintenance if possible. However, it is noted that you may also need specialist/trained staff to have access for specific purposes.

#### **2 Identify only essential access requirements**

Noting that museums and galleries are located in premises of all sizes from purpose-built to heritage buildings, there is a range of issues of concern. Specialist expertise and access may be required to, for example:

- check climate control and HVAC systems
- set and check pest control (eg now is prime mice/rats infestation season)
- check for leaks
- set/empty dehumidifiers
- check and care for 'live' exhibits (eg plants, kiwi, tuatara)
- check electrical aspects of exhibits
- ensure collections are stable

#### **3 Parameters for access**

Such activities are only to be considered if they are absolutely critical to the safety and future of the collections, including buildings. If deemed essential, checking and maintenance activities must ensure that:

- they are carried out only by suitably qualified individuals while observing strict physical distancing and hygiene protocols
- the local police are advised by the person in charge to let them know that someone has to go on site
- any person going on site should carry proof of ID and a letter confirming their position, purpose and permission/authorisation from the Director/Chairman of the Board or Committee (including that person's contact details)
- such visits are kept to an absolute minimum (we are expecting weekly for 1 person only unless there are very special circumstances)

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**Museums Aotearoa**