

## **Important message to contractors operating on orchard**

Covid-19 requires significant changes in how we continue to operate. While the kiwifruit harvest is considered an essential business, Registration with MPI is required. I must reiterate the importance registering and of the protocols to be followed which allow us to operate under Level 4 of the COVID-19 alert system. The seriousness of these protocols must be understood by everybody. To be deemed an essential business is not something that we take lightly and everyone in the industry has a very important responsibility to hold these protocols to the highest regard to ensure that our status is not revoked. All growers and orchard contractors must review the information provided and complete Registration by this Friday to be allowed to operate.

As part of operating under enhanced restrictions during Covid-19 Level 4, MPI is requiring essential businesses to register with them and to provide information on the systems they have in place to ensure that they protect their workers and help prevent the spread of the virus.

NZKGI and Zespri have been in discussions with MPI to determine if they will accept existing Zespri registration and compliance systems as an alternative to direct registration with MPI. Unfortunately, this is not possible as MPI requires information that Zespri systems do not currently hold.

This means that kiwifruit essential businesses will need to register directly with MPI by 5 pm on Friday 27 March.

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/covid-19-essential-primary-sector-service-registration/>

Growers and contractors who have five or less people on the orchard (including the owner) and can maintain social distancing at all times are exempt from the requirement to register. However, growers must ensure that any contractors, including picking contractors or orchard managers, have sufficient protocols in place to manage the risk to their own staff when on they are on site. These protocols must meet Government guidelines.

It is important to note that Government has made it clear that it would revoke our right to operate if we can't adequately protect workers. It is a privilege to be able to continue to operate and we must meet the Governments requirements in order to continue to do so. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that you, your contractors and any other service providers are doing what is required. MPI will be undertaking compliance activities and will revoke the right to operate if businesses are operating when not registered or are not meeting the requirements of registration.

The registration process requires submission of information on how the business is managing the risk of Covid-19 transmission. NZKGI and Zespri have worked together to establish a Kiwifruit Orchard Guideline for Minimising Spread of COVID-19. We believe this is a strong starting point for any grower considering how they can meet Government requirements. The guideline is available on the industry website and on canopy.

We suggest that for each of the questions asked in the registration process, you may wish to provide reference to the Guideline, and if required alter the guideline based on your own specific situation.

## **Registration**

All businesses wishing to operate during Covid-19 Level 4 as an essential businesses must register with MPI by 5 pm on Friday 27 March.

You can continue operating in the interim provided you are meeting all of the safe practices required. Registration is free at:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/covid-19-essential-primary-sector-service-registration/>

If you need assistance to complete the registration form, please contact Zespri 0800 155 355 or contact your employer.

Zespri-Pre-Harvest Team