

# COVID-19 Short-Term Absence Payment

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*At the time of writing there is a community outbreak of COVID-19 in the Auckland region. Therefore, things are moving quickly and we recommend that you check that the information below is still current before relying on it.*

The COVID-19 Short-Term Absence Payment is available for both businesses and self-employed people to help pay workers who are unable to work from home while they are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test.

The payment is available to apply for from 9 February 2021.

Businesses can apply if they've been advised that their employee, or a self-employed person is:

- staying home while waiting for COVID-19 test result, in accordance with public health guidance;
- a parent or caregiver of a dependant who is staying home while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, and the dependant needs support to do so safely; or
- a household member or secondary contact of someone who is a close contact of a person with COVID-19, and has been recommended to stay home while waiting for the close contact's COVID-19 test results.

The COVID-19 test must have been taken on or after 9 February 2021. You can make an application up to eight weeks after the test.

Those who have been identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 will be advised to self-isolate and get tested – they may be eligible for the [COVID-19 Leave Support Scheme](#) instead.

## **Application criteria for businesses and self employed**

- When applying for the COVID-19 Short -Term Absence Payment, your business must not be receiving any of the following payments for the same employee:
  - Any COVID-19 Wage Subsidy; or
  - Leave Support Scheme payments.
- Your business must be registered and operating within New Zealand.
- Your workers must be legally working in New Zealand.
- You must have had a conversation with your worker.

## ***Conversation with your employee***

You must:

- discuss an application with your employees before making it;

- check that the date of the COVID-19 test was within the last eight weeks, but no earlier than 9 February 2021;
- get their consent to the relevant points outlined in the declaration;
- acknowledge that they need to stay home in accordance with public health guidance; and
- confirm that they cannot work from home and therefore have to miss work to stay at home while waiting on test results.

### **Who is NOT eligible to apply**

If your business is a state sector organisation, you will generally not be eligible for the COVID-19 Short-Term Relief Payment. This includes:

- Government agencies;
- Crown entities;
- schools; and
- tertiary education institutes.

State sector organisations do not include local Government, kindergartens, Early Childhood Centres and health and disability facilities or services receiving Government funding. State sector organisations should contact their monitoring agency if they wish to discuss an exception to become eligible for this payment.

Workers will also not be eligible for the payment if:

- they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms and are involved in routine testing in their workplace;
- they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms and have not been notified through contract tracing to stay home in accordance with public health guidance;
- they are returning international air crew;
- they are currently overseas;
- they are staying in isolation management facilities; or
- they are an employee of a State Sector organisation.

### **Payment rates**

The payment is a one-off amount of \$350 for each eligible worker while they are staying home waiting for test results. This is the same for part-time and full-time workers.

You can apply for this only once, for each eligible worker, in a 30-day period (unless a doctor or health official tells the worker to get another test).

### **How to apply**

You can apply online – the various application forms are linked to [here](#). Which form you complete depends on whether you have employees or not.

As part of the application process you will be asked to declare that you meet the criteria and to agree to the obligations for the use of the Leave Support Scheme payment. All payments will be subject to audits and reviews. The declaration can be found [here](#).

**See also:**

[\*Work and Income: COVID-19 Short-Term Absence Payment\*](#)