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## **Trucks need freedom of movement**

As New Zealand enters a lockdown, all essential goods required to ride it out will come on the back of a truck, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

“It is imperative that both central and local government are clear on the definition of essential services so that trucks can stay on the road delivering much needed supplies at this critical time,” Leggett says.

“To do that trucks will require both freedom of movement and access to providers of all the services that keep them on the road, such as, tyres, fuel, and parts.

“Truck drivers and those who support them will be working through an unprecedented environment and there needs to be clarity around the rules that will govern them.

“As we rapidly gear up for these major changes to our way of life, for an unknown period of time, we believe good crisis management would involve collaboration so that all of this can be sorted at the start, instead of trial and error with incremental changes being required.

“People are managing a lot of stress and at such times, clear rules, processes and communication are vital. We can’t have trucks getting stuck at literal road blocks if they are carrying supplies that could make the difference between life and death.

“Trucks will be carrying both domestic and export goods and at this time where the Government is bleeding money, keeping our export routes clear is more important than ever. Wine, meat and kiwifruit seasons are in full swing.

“We also need to be sure the Government is planning for safety in the supply chain as we go into the pandemic level 4. In Australia, the police have been engaged in providing assurance to the transport industry through security.

“The road freight industry is reminding central and local government of the importance of freight that starts with a truck, but involves a complex web of support services down to somewhere for drivers to safely stop and rest.

“We will be talking to Government throughout this pandemic to ensure road freight has the support required so that people don’t have to stress about having vital supplies as they go into lockdown.”

**For more information contact:  
Josie Vidal, RTF manager communications & government relations  
Mob: 022 092 9353**

### **About Road Transport Forum New Zealand (RTF)**

RTF provides unified national representation for several regional trucking associations. RTF members include Road Transport Association NZ, National Road Carriers, and NZ Trucking Association. The affiliated representation of the RTF is about 3,000 individual road transport companies which in turn, operate 16-18,000 trucks involved in road freight transport, as well as companies that provide services allied to road freight transport.

The road freight transport industry employs 32,868 people (2.0% of the workforce), has a gross annual turnover of \$6 billion, and transports 93% of the total tonnes of freight moved in New Zealand.