



20 April 2020

Alert level change opens up more freight, but delay disappointing

More freight will be able to move and more businesses get back to work with the Government's announced move to Alert Level 3 on Tuesday 28 April, Road Transport Forum (RTF) chief executive Nick Leggett says.

"While today's announcement is welcome, we are disappointed businesses have to wait another week to get going," Leggett says. "It isn't just 'two business days', as many businesses in New Zealand operate seven days.

"There is also not much clarity on the Level 3 process for business planning, as the announcement only refers to a two week period before review by Cabinet on 11 May. What happens then? Business preparation is important, particularly around receipt of goods for businesses to be able to open and managing staff numbers.

"Like many businesses, particularly the small and medium sized businesses, road freight transport has suffered under the Alert Level 4 lockdown. Some of those businesses may not recover, and unfortunately, that will mean hardship for the business owners and the workers they will have to let go. The longer the lockdown, the more businesses that will fold and the more people that will be left unemployed.

"While there are still considerable restrictions under Level 3, and we urge all road freight transport operators to be mindful of those, this change means forestry, wood processors, construction, manufacturers, contactless retail and home removal companies can mostly get back to work, which will mean a lot of freight moving.

"Unfortunately, forestry, wood processing and manufacturing have all suffered from not being able to export their goods, with other countries, where there were not such restrictions, swooping in and taking their markets.

"Hopefully those industries can get back up and running quickly, and continue to prove the superiority of New Zealand products in our export markets. We are going to need healthy exports across the board to help our economy recover.

"The lockdown experience has shown how absolutely essential road freight transport is. It has also shown how complex the logistics of moving freight around New Zealand and the world are. Disrupting just one link in the chain can have massive flow on effects and lots of negative unintended consequences. For

this reason, we believe no matter what the emergency situation is, road freight transport should be allowed to get through.

“Operating in the Covid-19 world requires some significant changes to the way businesses operate, and for that reason, we have issued guidance, including protocols, for road freight transport businesses to operate under Level 3 and beyond.”

Guidance and protocols specific to the road freight transport industry are available [here](#).

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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.