

Minimum wage increases 1 April 2022

The new minimum wage rates, before tax, are:

- Adult – \$21.20 an hour (up from \$20.00)
- Starting-out – \$16.96 per hour (up from \$16.00)
- Training – \$16.96 per hour (up from \$16.00)

Changes to the Covid-19 traffic light system

The traffic light system was changed and simplified on Friday 25 March. New Zealand remains at red, and the next review is on 4 April, when each area's colour will be reassessed.

My Vaccine Pass

From 11:59pm on 4 April 2022, there will be no requirement to use My Vaccine Pass. Until then, the current restrictions remain where My Vaccine Pass is not used. From 5 April the new capacity limits will apply to everyone.

Businesses will still be able to use the system, if they would like to, after 4 April.

At Red

From 11:59pm on Friday 25 March:

- There will be no limits for outdoor activities, such as gatherings and events, and food and drink businesses. My Vaccine Passes must be used until 11:59pm on 4 April.
- There will be a 200-person limit for indoor gatherings and events — My Vaccine Passes must be used until 11:59pm on 4 April.
- If My Vaccine Passes are not used, the gathering limits remain unchanged.
- You do not need to wear a face mask outdoors.
- Other face mask rules remain unchanged — face masks are still required in most indoor settings.
- There is no requirement to scan in or for a business to display a QR code poster or have mandatory record keeping.

At Orange

- There will be no limit for outdoor gatherings.
- There will be no limit for indoor gatherings.
- You do not need to wear a face mask outdoors.
- Other face mask rules remain unchanged.
- There is no requirement to scan in or for a business to display a QR code poster or have mandatory record keeping.

At Green

- There will be no restrictions.

- We encourage you to keep up good health behaviours.
- There is no requirement to scan in or for a business to display a QR code poster or have mandatory record keeping.

Worker vaccine mandates

From 11:59pm on 4 April 2022, some government vaccine mandates for workers will be removed.

Workers that will still be covered by a government vaccine mandate include:

- health and disability sector workers
- prison staff
- border and MIQ workers.

Vaccine mandates remain in place for these sectors because workers in these areas have a high level of contact with people at risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19. For border workers, there is a high risk of exposure to new variants.

Businesses will be able to voluntarily introduce workforce vaccination requirements if appropriate to the workforce.

Source [Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

Reopening the New Zealand border

The international border is reopening in 5 phases for eligible travellers to enter New Zealand.

Step 1 — from Sunday 27 February, 11.59 pm

The border opened to New Zealanders and other eligible travellers coming from Australia to travel here and self-isolate on arrival.

If you arrive on or after Wednesday 2 March, 11.59 pm, you can enter without needing to isolate.

This means you can enter New Zealand if you:

- are an NZ citizen, resident or otherwise eligible to enter NZ while the border is restricted
- meet vaccination requirements
- have spent the previous 14 days in Australia or NZ
- have had the pre-departure tests you need.

Step 2 — from Friday 4 March, 11.59 pm

The border opened to New Zealanders and other eligible travellers coming from anywhere in the world. You do not need to self-isolate when you arrive. This means you can travel to New Zealand isolation-free if you:

- are eligible to enter the border while it is restricted, including if you have a border exception
- meet health requirements, including vaccination requirements and getting pre-departure tests.

From Sunday 13 March, 11.59 pm

You can apply for a [working holiday](#) visa. We are reopening them gradually between 13 March and 13 September.

The 'other critical worker' border exception is expanded:

- You are now eligible if you earn at least 1.5 times the median wage (NZD \$84,240 a year or NZD \$40.50 an hour) for roles longer than 6 months.
- 'Other critical workers' who earn at least 1.5 times the median wage will no longer have to demonstrate that their skills are not readily obtainable in New Zealand.
- High-skilled temporary workers earning at least 1.5 times the median wage can apply to bring partners and dependent children to New Zealand (the "skills not readily obtainable" requirement will no longer apply to this border exception).

The list of [government-approved programmes](#) and [approved classes of workers](#) has been updated.

Step 3 — from Tuesday 12 April, 11.59 pm

The border reopens to:

- temporary work and student visa holders who still meet their visa requirements — this includes people currently outside New Zealand and those who leave and want to return
- up to 5000 international students to study in semester 2
- Australian citizens and permanent residents arriving from anywhere in the world.

From Sunday 1 May, 11.59 pm

The border opens to:

- visa-waiver travellers
- existing (onshore and offshore) holders of valid visitor visas

If you have a temporary visitor visa and you are currently in New Zealand you can leave any time and return as long as your visa conditions allow you to. This includes if you have a guardian visa.

Step 4 — from July 2022

Our borders will open to Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) holders. The AEWV will mainly be limited to roles that pay above the New Zealand median wage. More information on this will be made available soon.

Step 5 — from October 2022

The border reopens and normal visa processing resumes for all categories, including visitor and student visas, unless the visa is closed or paused. Border exceptions will be phased out.

Source [Immigration New Zealand](#)

This article is brought to you by AdviceWise People, who provide WGANZ's free employment helpline 0800 692 384. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the article, please call Philip or Anthony.