

21 September 2021

To Club Secretaries
CC Regions

Covid 19- Advisory No 17

Hi Everyone

Yesterday the Government announced changes to the Alert Levels.

Some minor relief for those living in Auckland with the decision to reduce the Alert Level to 3 from 11.59pm today, Tuesday 21 September. Auckland will remain at Alert Level 3 until the next cabinet review on 4 October. In announcing the change, the Prime Minister has recommended those aged 65 and over to remain home until they are vaccinated.

For those living elsewhere in New Zealand they remain at Alert Level 2, but gatherings now increased from 50 to 100 persons.

We appreciate, many Clubs would have preferred that we were more definitive in our last advisory/guidelines. The reason why the responsibility for decision making must rest with the Clubs is that Clubs are the legal entity, and as such are free to pursue whatever course of action they so decide. NZ Bridge cannot mandate what Clubs do. All we can do is offer guidance.

In putting guidance notes together, we have endeavoured to be caring and pragmatic, thinking about the welfare of clubs, players, and the community. We want to be seen as responsible, avoiding any prospect of an outbreak from within a club. The consequence of such an event is unimaginable and would be damaging to the future development of the game and our reputation in the community.

We know the delta variant is virulent and as seen in the last few days it does not take much for this virus to spread. For this reason, we continue to advocate caution, pragmatism, and a common-sense approach.

From 11.59pm, Clubs outside of Auckland will be able to increase player numbers to 100 persons, provided they adhere to the published Covid-19 Alert Level 2 rules. The interpretation of the rules has caused some angst. Do masks have to be worn, is physical distancing required, does bridge fit under the definition of a social gathering, what is active recreation?

To help, a private social gathering is informal and involves getting together with friends and whanau that you regularly socialise with. I don't believe this definition fits with organised club bridge. Active recreation is non-competitive physical activity for the purpose of wellbeing and enjoyment. The latter includes activities such as outdoor recreation, fitness/exercise, community recreation, aquatics undertaken by individuals or groups.

Under Alert Level 2 Clubs can resume play. However, play should be limited to club members, no visitors. Please observe public health guidelines, such as sanitizing hands, keeping surfaces clean and rotating cards. QR scanning and/or record keeping is mandatory. If you are unwell or

required to isolate stay home. Staff including directors and scorers should wear a mask. While masks for players are not obligatory it is highly recommended.

Inevitably there will be questions whether tournaments can resume. We are fortunate we can play within our own "bubble". Once we open-up the tournament programme we run the risk of players, whom we do not know, entering the bubble. We will not be opening the tournament schedule for pop up events, as much as we would like events to resume.

All we ask is that you be sensible and take care. Hopefully, we will not remain in lockdown for too much longer.

Cheers Allan