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AREC Response to COVID-19

As you are all well aware, New Zealand is in lock-down as our nation responds to the evolving COVID-19 situation. I would like to share with you AREC's guidance for members over this period.

- **AREC is an essential service**
- **Our member's health and safety is paramount; older and health-compromised members should not deploy**
- **Ensure that Government guidelines are followed**
- **Consider alternative ways of working**
- **Note the key messages for the Public**
- **Be kind**

AREC is an essential service

Police, Search & Rescue and Civil Defence may call upon us to assist.

If you need to travel, wear your AREC or agency clothing / hi-vis (if you have it) and take your AREC membership card. If you are stopped, or your need to travel is questioned, briefly and clearly explain why you are travelling and have the contact number of an agency or AREC representative handy should verification be required.

Under no circumstances are we to turn up "just in case".

AREC member's health and safety is paramount; older and health-compromised members should not deploy

Please remember that your own safety is paramount. Those who are older (over 70, or even over 60), those who have health issues (especially respiratory issues such as COPD, or congestive heart failure, or are currently on immunosuppressive drugs), or live with people who could be at risk, should not deploy for the good of everyone.

Also note that AREC meetings and training are not "essential" and are to be postponed while we are in lock-down. However, where possible, please continue to meet by radio net or online. This will test our ability to operate remotely and regular contact is good for engagement, mental health and well-being. Lastly, our on-going contacts confirm that our members are okay.

Ensure that Government guidelines are followed

There is excellent advice available on Government web sites to guide us how to stay safe (e.g. <https://covid19.govt.nz/>).

Key things to note are:

- Don't interact with others outside of your household unless absolutely necessary
- Keep at least 2 metres away from other people
- Wash and sanitise your hands regularly – wipe-down surfaces and equipment before and after use



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Consider alternative ways of working

One of the great things we offer is innovation. Many of you have well-equipped shacks with supporting IT. This is the perfect time to consider how you can support tasks from home through running the radios and using SARTrack and on-line collaboration tools to connect in with other members, the agency or IMT.

A reminder that Amateur radio equipment cannot be used on commercial frequencies however AREC has access to some commercial gear that can be loaned out. Contact your group leader for more information.

Key messages for the Public

I have attached a document prepared by a number of outdoor agencies urging people to recreate responsibly and not putting our emergency and rescue services at unnecessary risk. Spread this widely to help us all stay safe.

Be kind

Most importantly, we are all in this together. Restrictions can be frustrating but remember that we all have a duty to keep ourselves and each other safe. Be patient and be kind. As a nation we will pull through this.

Queries?

If you have any questions or are unsure about anything please send an email to: arec.mgt@gmail.com

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Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

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