

COVID-19 – Alert Level 4 Guidelines: Updated 6 September 2021

During Alert Level 4, other than the delivery of 'emergency and acute' eye care, optometry practices must close their doors and remain closed.

The Ministry of Health recognises that Optometrists may assist in the delivery of 'emergency and acute' eye care during the lock down period.

Emergency and acute eye care – new restrictions

As you are aware, optometrists are recognised as essential health services in the delivery of 'emergency and acute' eye care under Alert Level 4. However, due to the increased risk of the transmissibility of the Delta variant, the scope of provision is to preserve life or limb only.

[Click here](#)¹ for the communication from the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer.

Therefore, if your patient needs are urgent/acute and cannot be assessed, or treated via telehealth, please contact your local DHB and refer them to these services. Face to face consultation should not occur under Alert Level 4 unless it is to preserve life or limb.

The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) has been in contact with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) to ensure ophthalmology is aware of these changes and the subsequent impact on DHB eye departments around the country.

Provision of optical products and devices – new restrictions

As indicated earlier the provision of optical products could be considered an essential non-food product, if it is deemed by the practitioner that it is an essential good and meets the definitions set out by the Government.

However, this must be limited to instances where it is at a level of a “true emergency” only (using sound clinical judgement) and can only be done without any face-to-face contact. Optometry practices should remain closed, and patients should not be invited to attend the practice. Delivery of goods should be done adhering to all strict COVID-19 protocols specified by the Government. Sales and commercial gain should not influence any clinical decision making.

The Board would like to remind all Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians the importance of adhering to the Alert Level 4 protocols.

¹ <https://www.odob.health.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Letter-from-the-Ministry-23August2021.pdf>