

DISEASE RESPONSE BIOSECURITY PLAN

GUIDEBOOK

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1.Purpose

Notifiable poultry diseases including Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), Newcastle Disease, or Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD), spread fast, hit hard, and leave devastation in their wake.

This poultry Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Guidebook is a practical, step-by-step framework designed to help you prepare to act quickly, confidently, and effectively when faced with a disease emergency.

For simplicity, this document refers to any notifiable poultry disease as “a disease.”

By following this guidebook, you will be able to complete the Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template for your poultry operation.

This Disease **Response** Biosecurity Plan Guidebook complements the Disease **Prevention** Biosecurity Plan Guidebook, which focuses on preventing disease from entering your farm in the first place. Together, these resources help you build a complete biosecurity strategy, from prevention to recovery.

This guidebook is divided into four parts:

- Part A: What to do when a notifiable disease is suspected - including clinical signs, reporting, and immediate containment.
- Part B: The 3Ds - Depopulation, Disposal, and Decontamination. This section helps you choose humane and practical methods, and coordinate logistics prior to the arrival of a disease to make things work more smoothly when you are under pressure.
- Part C: Business Resilience and People Support – covering staff welfare, mental health, support networks, financial assistance, stress management, communications, and farm security. This section helps you build a people-focused plan that supports job security, answers tough questions, and keeps your team strong through uncertainty.
- Part D: Recovery and Repopulation - including restocking criteria, and monitoring, to ensure your farm returns to full operation safely.

If you’ve already got your own written response plan that meets the legal requirements and follows the guidance, you’re good to go - there’s no need to fill out the Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template!

PART A: What to Do When a Notifiable Disease is Suspected

A.0 Signs to Watch for and Immediate Actions

Know the Signs. Act Fast.

If you see sudden changes in your flock such as a sudden drop in food or water intake, an unexpected drop in egg production or a spike in dying or sick birds, don't wait call your vet or stock manager immediately. If your vet is not immediately available, and the situation appears to be escalating call the MPI Exotic Disease Hotline on 0800 80 99 66.

Click on the links to make sure you know the signs to look out for:

- 👉 [Avian Influenza](#)
- 👉 [Newcastle Disease \(ND\)](#)
- 👉 [Infectious Bursal Disease](#)
- 👉 [Pullorum Disease \(Salmonella Pullorum\)](#)

Birds don't always show the same signs when they're sick, and some diseases can show up in unexpected ways. One bird might look perfectly healthy while another shows clear symptoms. Signs can be subtle at first, or non-specific, so it's worth knowing your flock well and if in doubt, call your vet!

Know What to Expect

[Duplicate process flow]

A.1 Emergency Contact List

Ensure the emergency contact list is completed and regularly updated in the designated section of your Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template.

As you work through this guidebook, consider who you will need to contact if you suspect or confirm a disease in your flock. The key individuals and organisations relevant to a disease outbreak will become clearer as you progress. For this reason, it is recommended that you fill in the emergency contact list as you go, ensuring it reflects the most accurate and relevant information.

A.2 Farm Production Area Map & Lockdown Plan

A.2.1 Farm Production Area Map: Key Disease Risks & Biosecurity Control Points

A farm production area map helps you identify the highest-risk zones for disease spread and clearly shows where to place your biosecurity control points during a disease outbreak to effectively reduce the risk of transmission. Use it to plan how people, vehicles, and materials move around your farm, and how they enter and exit during a disease response. In the event of a confirmed or suspected disease on your farm, this map becomes your go-to tool for fast action, containment, and coordination.

Start with your RMP (Risk Management Programme) business as usual map, then add the extra details you'll need in a disease response. Make sure you draw these clearly in the farm production area section of your Response Plan Template. Focus on these key areas:

- **Boundaries & Farm Gates:** Control access points to lock down or isolate your farm. Mark where you'll place signage and set up entry and exit points for people and vehicles.
- **Traffic Movements:** Map out vehicle routes and parking areas. Clearly define your movement flow and vehicle movement route (prevent crossovers). Decide where to install disinfection points and what methods to use e.g. wheel baths, spray stations, or portable disinfectant units. Consider shared roads and think how to mitigate the risks. For instance, do you need temporary mobile sprayers at the gate?
- **Staff & Visitor Facilities:** Designate parking areas for staff and visitors. Control access to sheds, caravans, barns, and ranges. Identify where you will set up shower-in/shower-out facilities if needed. Mark where you will place PPE stations to separate clean and dirty zones.
- **Equipment:** Manage how equipment moves in and out of sheds and on and off the farm. Identify where you will sanitise all tools and machinery.
- **Feed, Water Storage & Waste Areas:** Identify your water sources, feed stores and waste areas, in places where you can best protect them from wild birds and other contamination risks. Mark any high-risk areas, like creeks, that you need to isolate.

A.2.2 Lockdown Plan

A lockdown plan shows how you'll quickly secure your farm to stop the movement of people, vehicles, and equipment, and reduce the risk of disease spread.

Use the Biosecurity Control Points marked on your Farm Production Area Map to create a clear, step-by-step lockdown checklist. Write this in the designated space in your Response Plan Template.

Be specific. Know who does what. For example:

- Assign a person in charge and activate your response team.
- Install signage and barriers at all entry points.
- Lock all gates.
- Set up wheel-wash stations for vehicles.
- Place footbaths and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stations at shed entrances.
- Restrict access to essential personnel only.
- Continue logging all movements on and off the farm.

Remember: MPI will need movement records going back to the start of the disease's incubation period (which differs for different diseases), not just from when symptoms appear. Keep your records up to date.

Questions to Ask When Mapping Your Farm & Preparing a Lockdown Plan

- Why does this person or vehicle need to enter the farm?
- Do you access the farm directly from your home?
- Do you share any entry points with neighbouring properties?
- Which areas pose the highest risk for disease (e.g. wild bird activity, creeks, streams, dams)?
- Do you have enough disinfectant and PPE (gloves, masks etc) to manage lockdown for the first week?
- Who's visiting your farm this week? Who's essential and must follow lockdown protocols, and who can you postpone or cancel? Can you limit essential visitors to specific areas?
- Have you contacted all visitors that are expected in the next week to inform them of the situation?

A.3 Report a Suspected Notifiable Disease: What You'll Need and Why it Matters

If you see signs of a notifiable disease in your flock, **do not wait**, call your vet or stock manager immediately. If you can't reach them and the signs are escalating, call MPI's Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline on **0800 80 99 66** (available 24/7, every day). Be prepared to answer the following questions, which you can record in your Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template:

Where are you located?

- Provide your Agribase number¹ or GPS coordinates
- Give your farm name and physical address

What is happening on your farm?

- Describe the symptoms you're seeing
- Say when they started
- Share your daily and weekly mortality rates
- List any recent changes (production, feed, water, environment)
- Report any wild bird activity or animals near sheds
- Note any visitors, deliveries, or new staff (see A.4)
- Confirm when you last moved birds on or off the farm

What is happening around you (use a 10km radius as a rule of thumb)?

- Are you aware of what other commercial poultry, backyard flocks or wild bird populations are nearby?
- Are you aware of any disease outbreaks in your surrounding area?

What actions have you taken?

- Have you called your vet?
- Have you started a biosecurity lockdown? (see A2.2)
- Have you reviewed your farm's Response Plan to ensure all elements have been considered, i.e. Depopulation, Disposal and Disinfection as well as the associated Animal Welfare Code requirements?

¹ Knowing your Agribase ID significantly speeds up MPI's time to identify the farm location, neighbours and surrounding environmental areas at risk and start placing these locations on surveillance/movement controls.

A.4 Contact Identification & Tracing

If a disease is suspected or confirmed on your farm, one of the first and most critical steps is to trace all recent movements and contacts. This helps MPI or your industry support, contain the disease and protect other farms.

You must have records of all movements on and off your farm from the past 30 days. Use your visitor book or the template in your Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template to record:

- Who was involved
- When the movement occurred
- Where from and where to
- Which locations were visited on your farm e.g. sheds, disposal sites, feed store.

Include movements of:

- Birds, eggs, feed, packaging, shavings, stores, and equipment
- Vehicles and drivers
- Staff, contractors, and visitors

Also record in your emergency contact list (see A.1), details of those who visit the farm frequently so MPI or your industry support can notify these individuals quickly. Attach extra pages to your Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template as needed.

PART B: The 3Ds – Depopulation, Disposal and Decontamination

B.1 Depopulation

You must develop a depopulation plan to ensure the humane and effective destruction of birds during a disease outbreak. When choosing your primary and backup methods, assess whether you can scale up your usual approach, estimate the maximum number of birds to be euthanased, calculate the time required, and confirm the availability of trained staff, personal protective equipment (PPE), and equipment. You also need to outline how you will manage any birds that survive the initial process. Support each method with Standard Operating Procedures and ensure full compliance with the Codes of Welfare under the New Zealand Animal Welfare Act 1999.

When planning the prioritisation for depopulation, note that for animal welfare considerations, young animals should be euthanased before older animals; for biosecurity considerations, infected animals should be euthanased first, followed by in-contact animals, and then the remaining animals².

Each method listed below includes a supporting document set, of guidelines and work instructions that can be found on the prepare page of the poultry industry biosecurity website.

Table One: Depopulation Options

	Method	PROS	CONS
Adults	Cervical Dislocation	Manual method; immediate if performed correctly	Physically demanding; requires trained personnel. Can be distressing and tiring for personnel; requires skill
Adults	Containerised Gassing	Controlled; less distress with gas mix	Must ensure rapid collapse; equipment-intensive
Adults	Whole House Gassing	Efficient for large-scale operations. Requires fewer staff	Equipment not currently available in New Zealand. Carbon dioxide (CO ₂) may cause distress. Nitrogen potential alternative.
Adults	Captive Bolts	Instantaneous and humane; reusable tools (appropriate for larger birds e.g. Turkeys or Geese)	Tool maintenance needed Requires specifically trained staff
Chicks	Cervical Dislocation	No equipment needed; immediate death if done correctly	Can be distressing for staff; Must be done by trained staff; labour intensive.
Chicks	Containerised Gassing	Minimizes handling; gas mixtures reduce distress	Requires specialized equipment and reliable gas supply
Fertile Eggs	Chilling/Freezing	Non-invasive; suitable for embryo death	Time-consuming; requires reliable temperature control
Fertile Eggs / day-old chicks	Fragmentation / Maceration	Quick and effective for very young embryos and day-old chicks	Requires specialised machinery and a clear disposal plan
Large birds	Firearm	Suit large birds e.g. Emus, Ostrich.	Licensed firearm holder required.

² Ref: WOAHP Terrestrial Code for Animal Welfare, Chapter 7.6 <https://sont.woah.org/portal/tool?le=en>

B.2 Disposal Plan (Incl. Biosecure Transport)

You must develop a disposal plan to remove dead birds, eggs and litter quickly and safely during a disease outbreak. Assess whether you can scale up your usual method, estimate the maximum tonnage, calculate the time required, and confirm the availability of trained staff, PPE, and equipment. Support each method with SOPs and follow local council rules (refer to the Regional Disposal Guides for details). Remember to check if you need resource consent as this needs to be organised in advance of a disease outbreak. Any items that can't be decontaminated will also need to be disposed of and need to be included within the disposal plan.

Use sealed, leak-proof containers for transport and follow the protocols outlined in the Biosecure Transport document set.

Each method listed below includes a supporting document set, of guidelines and work instructions that can be found on the prepare page of the poultry industry biosecurity website.

Table Two: Disposal Options

Method	Pros	Cons
On-site burial	Immediate containment No transport required	Risk of groundwater contamination Requires suitable land and biosecurity measures Requires consent over particular volumes specific to region
Off-site burial	May be better regulated Avoids contamination at origin site	Transport risks Public concern Requires coordination with external site Requires consent
Engineered landfill	Controlled disposal Nearby facilities may be available	May not accept infected material Environmental concerns Public perception Costly
On-site composting	Reduces transport risk Can be managed locally Environmentally beneficial	Requires technical know-how and resource consent ahead of time. Requires space and management. May attract pests or odours if not properly handled
Offsite/commercial composting	Professional handling Potential for large-scale processing	Transport risks May not accept infected material Cost and logistics involved
Fixed-facility incineration	High biosecurity Reduces volume and pathogen risk	Limited capacity in NZ Costly Not suitable for commercial poultry

B.3 Decontamination Plan

You must begin decontamination of the entire farm immediately after removing infected birds and contaminated materials to prevent further spread of the disease and prepare for repopulation. This process includes cleaning, disinfection, and other alternative methods such as liming, of all affected areas with the aim of eliminating any remaining disease.

If full decontamination is not immediately feasible, you may choose to secure the area and fallow it, leaving it undisturbed to allow for natural die-off of the disease.

Whichever approach you take, select methods suited to your farm’s layout, infrastructure, and risk level. Align your decontamination timeline with your depopulation and disposal plans and include contingency measures for potential delays. Identify any items or areas that cannot be cleaned and must be disposed of and outline your wastewater management strategy. Support your decontamination process with a SOPs.

Each method listed below includes a supporting document set, of guidelines and work instructions that can be found on the prepare page of the poultry industry biosecurity website.

Table Two: Disposal Options

Decontamination Methods for Indoor Areas

Method	Steps	Description
Cleaning & Disinfecting	Step 1: Dry Clean	Removes visible dirt, manure, and debris.
	Step 2: Wet Clean	Uses water (hot or cold), or detergent to wash down surfaces. This helps break down remaining organic matter.
	Step 3: Wet Disinfection	Once surfaces are clean and dry, spray, foam, or mist disinfectants deactivate the disease organism.
	Or Step 3:Fumigation	Fogging with gases like formaldehyde or hydrogen peroxide vapour disinfects enclosed spaces, may be particularly useful for dirt floors.
Alternative (currently in the trial phase)	Heating and Drying	High temperatures and drying helps kill disease organisms, especially in hard-to-reach areas or uneven or holey surfaces.

Decontamination Methods for Outdoor Areas

Method	Options	Description
Liming	There are two main types of lime, the key difference is that quicklime is raw and highly reactive, while hydrated lime is processed and more stable.	Liming is a practical way to raise the pH of the soil and help kill off disease organisms in the environment.

Decontamination Methods for Areas that Can’t be Adequately Cleaned & Disinfected

Method	Description
Fallowing	Fallowing means leaving areas or materials alone so the disease can die off naturally. Use it when you can’t clean or disinfect properly, like in free-range paddocks. The better the conditions (warm, dry, sunny), the faster the disease breaks down. Using multiple treatments can shorten the fallow period.

Managing Items That Cannot Be Decontaminated

You must identify and dispose of any items that cannot be effectively decontaminated, following your disposal plan. For example, enclosed-end belts that can't be disassembled may need to be removed and discarded if cleaning and sanitising aren't possible. Other items such as rock gardens, sand, grassed areas, or wooden structures may also require disposal. If housing structures cannot be cleaned, fallowing the premises may be the only method, as outlined in Section B3.

Wastewater Management

Decontamination activities may generate contaminated wastewater. All wastewaters must be handled in accordance with the protocols outlined in the associated document set. This includes containment, treatment, and safe disposal to prevent environmental contamination.

PART C: Business Resilience & People Support

Keep you and your people safe, supported, and informed.

An exotic disease outbreak affects more than just your birds, it impacts you, your team, your finances, and your future. This section helps you build a people-first plan that supports wellbeing, job security, and clear communication during a crisis.

What scares you most?

Use this section to help you write down your biggest concerns and then plan for them.

- What would make you feel more prepared?
- What support would help your team feel safer?
- What's your worst-case scenario and how would you respond?

C.1 Personnel Welfare

Your team will be under pressure. Make sure they know what's expected, what support is available, and how to stay safe.

- Assign clear roles and responsibilities for each stage of the response.
- Provide PPE and hygiene supplies to protect staff health.
- Ensure personnel know how to report concerns or symptoms - both animal and human.
- Keep a list of key contacts for health and safety support.

Where to Learn More

👉 [WorkSafe NZ – Keep Safe, Keep Farming Toolkit \[www.worksafe.govt.nz\]](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)

C.2 Mental Health & Stress Management

Outbreaks are stressful. Planning ahead helps reduce panic and burnout.

- Identify mental health resources and encourage regular check-ins.
- Rotate personnel to avoid fatigue and burnout.
- Create a quiet space on-farm for personnel to decompress.

Where to Learn More

👉 Farmstrong – Rural Wellbeing Programme [\[mentalhealth.org.nz\]](https://mentalhealth.org.nz)

👉 Rural Support Trust – Free, Confidential Help [\[www.rural-support.org.nz\]](https://www.rural-support.org.nz)

👉 Grow NZ – Mental Health Support Groups [\[grow.org.nz\]](https://grow.org.nz)

👉 Ember Services – Mental Health & Addiction Support [\[ember.org.nz\]](https://ember.org.nz)

👉 Future Farmers NZ – Youth & Community Connection [\[www.futurefarmers.org.nz\]](https://www.futurefarmers.org.nz)

C.3 Support Networks

You don't have to go it alone. Build a network of people who can help.

- List neighbours, industry contacts, vets, and advisors who can assist.
- Include contact details in your Disease Response Biosecurity Plan Template.
- Join local poultry or farming groups for shared resources.

C.4 Financial Assistance & Planning

Outbreaks can hit your bottom line. Prepare early.

- Talk to your bank or financial advisor about contingency options.
- Identify potential costs: depopulation, disposal, downtime, restocking.
- Research available support and insurance options.

Where to Learn More

👉 MPI On-Farm Support Services [\[www.mpi.govt.nz\]](http://www.mpi.govt.nz)

C.5 Communications

Clear, calm communication keeps your team and community informed.

- Decide who will speak on behalf of your farm.
- Know the number to call for your Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (PIANZ) or Egg Producers Federation (EPF) representative. For broiler farmers work with your livestock manager.
- Prepare key messages for personnel, and neighbours.
- Keep personnel updated regularly, especially during lockdown or depopulation.
- **Don't speak to the media** – if you are approached direct them to PIANZ or EPF.

Where to Learn More

👉 Poultry industry website.

C.6 Farm Security & Lockdown

Protect your farm from unwanted visitors and biosecurity breaches.

- Lock gates and restrict access to essential personnel only.
- Install signage to alert others to the outbreak and biosecurity measures.
- Continue to keep a log of all movements on and off the farm.
- Make sure you have enough supplies to get through at least one week without leaving the farm. This includes essentials for both farm operations and anyone living on-site.

Where to Learn More

👉 [Farm Emergency Planning Guide – Landcare NZ \[landcare.org.nz\]](http://landcare.org.nz)

👉 [Farm Hazard Mapping – WorkSafe NZ \[www.worksafe.govt.nz\]](http://www.worksafe.govt.nz)

C.7 Job Security & Contingency Planning

Help your team understand what's next.

- Be honest about what roles may change or pause during a response.
- Explore options for redeployment or temporary support roles.
- Document your plan for managing wages, leave, and responsibilities.

Where to Learn More

👉 [Rural Support Trust – Employment & Financial Advice \[www.rural-...ort.org.nz\]](http://www.rural-support.org.nz)

PART D: Post Outbreak Recovery

D.1 Post Outbreak Recovery

Recovery and repopulation after an outbreak are critical steps in restoring farm operations while reducing the risk of reinfection. If MPI invokes powers under the Biosecurity Act, they will determine when your farm can return to operation. This decision is based on disease status, testing results, and biosecurity compliance.

You may be required to undergo phased testing, which MPI will fund while your farm remains under a Restricted Place Notice. However, once the notice is lifted, typically after a stand-down period of 28 days, testing becomes unfunded.

You should also plan for a fallowing period, for your range of up to 120 days depending on the level of contamination and risk. Use this time to strengthen biosecurity measures, monitor for residual disease, and prepare infrastructure for safe repopulation.

D.1.1 Recommended Restocking Criteria

Supplier Verification System (Disease-Free Stock)

To prevent recurrence of a disease outbreak, it's critical to ensure that all incoming stock is disease-free:

- Source birds exclusively from certified disease-free hatcheries or breeders where possible.
- Confirm that suppliers conduct routine health checks and maintain transparent health records.

Phased Repopulation Plan

A gradual repopulation strategy helps mitigate risk and allows for early detection of health issues. You can:

- Begin with a pilot flock under heightened observation for signs of illness or abnormal behavior.
- Conduct weekly testing for disease during the initial weeks.
- Introduce subsequent flocks in phases, each followed by a monitoring period to enable rapid response to any health concerns.
- The full repopulation timeline may span several months, depending on flock size and farm capacity.

Monitoring Period for New Stock

For at least 30–60 days post-introduction, intensive monitoring protocols can include:

- Performing daily inspections for signs of illness such as respiratory distress, lethargy, reduced feed intake, or increased mortality.
- Recording and analyzing data on mortality rates, abnormal behavior, and clinical symptoms to identify potential issues early.
- Maintaining optimal environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, ventilation) to reduce stress and susceptibility to disease.

Financial Resilience

Prepare for the financial implications of an outbreak by consulting with a financial advisor and/or your bank, to assess potential risks and develop contingency plans.