



Polson Higgs Client Advice # IV – More on Wage Subsidies, Annual Leave, Working from home and more . . .

As we enter week two of the lockdown, we understandably, continue to see changes to Government policies and how businesses respond. In this newsletter we will cover:

- Annual Leave
- More on wage subsidies
- Working from home on the computer
- New webpage

Annual Leave – As businesses look at reduced workload some are looking at having staff take annual leave. What is that process?

This will vary from business to business, so if you have any questions please email us on covid19@ph.co.nz, but the main points are:

- Check your employment agreements, what have you agreed to with your staff?
- You can't insist that someone goes on annual leave "tomorrow".
- You can ask your staff if they are prepared to take annual leave given the circumstances and thereby maybe reduce your notice period. If you can get a written acknowledgement from them.
- If you can't get an agreement, then you can give 14 days notice that they will be on leave.

More on wage subsidies – If you haven't applied, because you have concerns about if you qualify, our advice is, you contact us urgently on covid19@ph.co.nz, as the reality is only a small number of businesses, self-employed etc. don't qualify. We are receiving new information as the subsidy evolves and the key points are:

- The \$150,000 cap has been removed. If you have already applied and MSD has capped the amount paid, MSD will automatically top-up the difference.
- If you have already applied for the wage subsidy for staff and claimed only enough to meet the cap (\$150,000) you will be able to reapply once you have paid the first subsidy to staff.
- If the subsidy is more than the staff members usual weekly pay (e.g. part time employees) then the difference should be used to top up other affected staff.
- The COVID19 leave payment is no longer available to employers. This has been folded into the wage subsidy scheme to prevent "double dipping".
- To apply for the subsidy you will need a New Zealand Business Number (NZBN), if don't have one contact us on covid19@ph.co.nz and we can help to find it or apply.

- Although you can only apply for the wages subsidy once, the website now says "one per employee". So if shareholders or other employees were not included in the first application, you can include them in the second.
- We suggest that clients apply about 10 days before the first subsidy runs out, to allow time for the funds to be received from WINZ.

Working from home on the computer – all of us are working from home, unless you are an essential service. To assist you, we are working on two projects. The first of which is a free 15 minute webinar from our IT Team, which should be on Wednesday afternoon (we are just sorting some details). This will be focused on:

- How can I communicate with everyone in my team?
- How can I share documents and files with everyone in my team?
- How to do you remote access or share computers?
- And some others tricks and tips

To register **click this link**.

We are also working on a second webinar on business continuity, to make sure you have everything "covered", more details shortly.

New webpage – we have added a new page to our website and are gathering different resources for you to use. Check out <http://www.ph.co.nz/expertise/covid-19/>

If you have a question about anything please don't hesitate to ask on covid19@ph.co.nz.

Stay safe and keep in touch.

Kind regards

Polson Higgs Team

