

NZNO Strike, FAQs

Kia ora team,

We have been notified of the upcoming NZNO strike action and anticipate that you might have a few questions.

Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora NZNO members have voted to strike across two (2) days in September across all Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand hospitals and services:

1. Tuesday 2nd September from 0700-2300
2. Thursday 4th September from 0700-2300

STONZ position is that we support Nurses' right to strike, and we remain committed to completing our work in a way that is safe. However, we have our own challenges as a workforce and should not be donating our time to Te Whatu Ora | Health New Zealand to backfill nursing services in this period.

Here are a few FAQs – and if you have any other questions or concerns, please speak with your local delegates or email support@stonz.co.nz

What duties can I be expected to do during the NZNO Strike?

You will be expected to carry out your regular/normal work and expectations.

You can decline to do 'different' work than you wouldn't usually do. E.g., something that is usually a nurse only job.

The STONZ SECA states: "No RMO should be expected to provide cover for non-RMO work unless specified (with clear examples of where this may occur) in the run description."

Under employment law: You can be asked to cover a striking worker – but it is up to you to either agree or decline. If you agree, you may negotiate the terms on which you agree.

We expect local RMO Units/Services/departments/SMOs to communicate their plans to you in advance wherever possible in those services which will be impacted.

Can I be asked to change my duties (within the same service) because of impacts due to the NZNO Strike?

If this is within your normal scope of work, then yes, you can be asked to change your duties for the day.

This might look similar to if an RMO was sick, and you had to swap your scheduled duty to cover their clinic. If you would ordinarily do something as part of your job/normal work, then you need to continue doing it.

If an RMO ends up doing more work due to a vacancy or absent Nurse, does Cross-Cover still apply?

The STONZ SECA states that RMOs should not be expected to cover for non-RMO work unless specified in the Run Description.

It may be that during the strikes there will be nursing work not covered by another workforce or an SMO during the strike, e.g. recording observations. This is work you might be asked to do. In these circumstances, we advise:

1. Seek confirmation that you are being asked to perform this nursing work;
2. Decide whether you will agree to perform the work or not; and
3. Seek agreement as to how you will be remunerated for performing this additional work.

STONZ position is that if RMOs are asked to cover nursing work during the day because of the nursing strike, you should be remunerated by being paid Cross-Cover rates. Therefore, we recommend you seek written confirmation that you will be paid the relevant Cross Cover rate before agreeing to do the work.

We expect contingency plans to be communicated to RMOs on how the service will run with less staff in services where this is applicable.

If you consider your workload to be unreasonable or unsafe, please raise this immediately with your service in the first instance.

If my scheduled teaching is cancelled due to the strike, will it be rescheduled?

Yes, it is our expectation that any protected teaching would be rescheduled in order to meet minimum requirements as outlined in the SECA.

Can I support the Industrial Action?

It is important to highlight that as a STONZ member, you cannot take legally protected industrial action in support of NZNO (or anyone else who is taking industrial action over an agreement you are not covered by). You cannot be seen to be performing or working at a reduced output/level as that could be seen as taking action. If you would normally do something as part of your day-to-day role as a House Officer, or Registrar then you need to continue doing it.

If you are not rostered to work, or are on approved annual leave, then you can head along to support any of the rallies if you so choose. We ask that members do not make any public statements that appear to be on behalf of STONZ. You are welcome to share your personal views in any way but remain mindful of your obligation to not undermine your employer in a public forum.