

Health and safety during COVID-19

Keeping courts safe at Alert Level 4

Updated 18 August 2021

We have adapted how we work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are following Ministry of Health guidelines to protect the health and safety of all court participants and staff.

Hygiene and cleaning

Good hygiene is a critical defence against contracting COVID-19. **Hand sanitiser** is available in all buildings, including at main entrance points, and **soap** is available in bathrooms.

Cleaning products are provided at entrance points for everyone to wipe down items placed in screening trays. Staff regularly wipe down trays with antibacterial cleaning products.

Courthouses are **cleaned every night** (and midday at larger sites) with an increased focus on **high touch points** throughout public spaces, horizontal surfaces in court and hearing rooms, public counters (including bail counters), and all publicly accessible interview rooms.

Bio-cleans are conducted when necessary in response to close contact cases of COVID-19.

Coming to court

We are limiting access to the courts to essential staff and visitors only, performing appropriate checks on people entering our buildings, and monitoring physical distancing requirements, in line with the Ministry of Health guidelines.

Court participants are strongly encouraged to **download and scan the COVID-19 QR code** using their mobile phones. Otherwise, they must provide

their name and contact details (phone number or email address) in the paper registration form.

Signage tells everyone who feels unwell with cold or flu-like symptoms, including fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing, **not to enter** the court building. Entry is limited to **one person at a time** at the doorway to help maintain physical distancing.

Face masks are required to be worn, by all court participants, at all times.

Thermal scanners are used at many locations and entry will be refused to those registering a body temperature of 38°C or above.

Access is denied to those:

- showing signs of illness, such as onset of coughing and sneezing, or report feeling unwell;
- who are not willing to wear a face mask;
- who have a temperature of 38°C or above;
- who have had close contact with someone displaying symptoms or confirmed case of COVID-19;
- who have recently been in a “place of interest”; or are
- unwilling to disclose the purpose of their visit or their personal information.

Those who are denied access will be referred to the pandemic signage and advised to contact the Ministry on “**0800 COURTS**” (**0800 268 787**).

The Ministry has developed a **protocol to manage anyone displaying symptoms of or confirmed cases of COVID-19** in any of our buildings.

We have a detailed process for **managing the movement** of people who are being held in custody, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Access to members of the public

Members of the public (including whānau and support persons) whose presence is not required at court **will not be permitted to enter unless granted permission from the presiding judge**. This restriction is necessary to protect others and allow courts to conduct business.

Permission should be sought in the first instance by emailing the registrar in advance. If granted, this must be supplied to the Court Security Officer at the front entrance.

Alternatively, on the day of the hearing, you can ask a Court Security Officer at the front entrance to convey an application via the registrar to the presiding judge.

All applications need to identify why permission is sought and will be determined on a case by case basis.

Physical distancing

Under Alert Level 4 all **public counters are closed**, and all documents are to be filed by email to the Registrar.

Participants in queues outside and in **controlled public spaces** (where contact tracing and rigorous hygiene protocols are in place) will need to keep **at least two metres** apart from others.

To manage the numbers of people, some **areas have been marked off** in court buildings, including in lifts, to help maintain physical distancing.

Security staff will ensure physical distance is maintained in public areas.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

It is a Ministry of Health requirement to **always wear a face coverings** in businesses and places where a service is provided, including Courts.

Access will be denied if you are not willing to wear a face covering.

PPE for persons in the custody of Police, Corrections or Oranga Tamariki will be managed by those respective agencies.

If you have any questions about health and safety at this court, please direct them to the court manager.