

# Health and safety during COVID-19

## Keeping our courts safe under Alert Level 2

**The Ministry of Justice operates in a way that protects the health and safety of all staff and court participants in our facilities.**

**We have adapted how we work during COVID-19 based on the Ministry of Health guidelines.**

### Hygiene

The best form of defence against contracting COVID-19 is good hygiene. **Hand sanitiser** is available in all buildings at main entrance points. Toilets contain **soap**, which is regularly refilled.

**Cleaning products** are provided at entrance points for everyone to wipe down items placed in screening trays. Staff regularly wipe trays with antibacterial wipes or antibacterial spray and disposable towels.

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.

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

### Security

We are 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 the NZ COVID Tracer app 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.

**Access is denied to those:**

- showing signs of illness, such as a new onset of coughing and sneezing, or report feeling unwell
- who have a temperature of 38°C or above
- who have had close contact with someone displaying symptoms or a confirmed case of COVID-19, or
- who 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)**.

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

Entry is limited to one person at a time at the doorway to help maintain physical distancing.

**Members of the public** (including a whānau support person or person for a defendant) whose presence is not required at court **will not be permitted to enter unless granted permission from the presiding judge**. Such permission should be sought in the first instance by email to 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 request a Court Security Officer at the front entrance to convey an application via the registrar to the presiding judge. All such applications need to identify the reason or reasons why permission is sought and will be determined on a case by case basis. This restriction is necessary to protect others and allow courts to conduct business.

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## Physical distancing

Under **Alert Level 2**, most counters are open and have plastic shields at counters to guard people against fluids. This means that participants can stand at the counter instead of one metre away to ensure a more private interaction.

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

Physical distancing requirements in controlled public spaces (where contact tracing and rigorous hygiene protocols are in place) are that **people keep at least one metre apart**. Participants in queues outside must keep two metres apart from others standing on the marked areas in the line (unless they are in the same 'bubble'). There is no need for those in the same bubble to stand two metres apart.

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

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## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The Ministry of Health recommends that face masks be worn where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

All Court Security Officers and private security guards are provided with **disposable gloves, face coverings, and goggles**.

All those attending court are encouraged to wear face masks in public areas. Jurors are encouraged to wear face masks at all times.

Because of concerns about community transmission of COVID-19, all those attending courts in the Auckland region should wear masks in public spaces and court rooms; jurors should wear face masks at all times. Counsel, defendants, parties and witnesses may be required to remove masks when speaking in court or otherwise by judicial direction.

Face masks and gloves are available for all court participants who need them at the end of the screening point.

People in the custody of Police, Corrections or Oranga Tamariki will be provided with a **face covering** by those respective agencies for use.

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## Cleaning

Court cleaning protocols are based on Ministry of Health guidelines. There is **cleaning every night** 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. **A midday cleaning regime** occurs at larger sites specifically focused on high touch points.

**Meeting and interview rooms** have maximum capacity limits and cleaning products available for use before and after meetings.

**Bio-cleans** are conducted in response to close contact cases of COVID-19 at relevant sites.

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The Ministry of Justice is following **Ministry of Health guidelines** to ensure the health and safety of all court users and participants in a secure and controlled environment.

*If you have any questions about health and safety at court, please ask the court manager.*