

# Health and Safety during COVID-19

## Keeping our people and participants safe under Alert Level 2

**The emphasis for the Ministry of Justice is for courts to operate as efficiently as possible, with the overriding principle that everyone who works in or comes to courts and tribunals must be kept safe.**

**The Ministry's approach will enable participants and staff to take personal responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.**

**This is a national approach with the ability to adapt at a local level, as each court building has its own unique physical layout, caseload, community, and staffing situation.**

### Security

We are performing appropriate checks on people entering our buildings, and monitoring physical distancing requirements, in line with the **Ministry of Health** guidelines.

**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 will continue to be denied to those:**

- who have a temperature of 38° or above;
- showing signs of illness such as coughing and sneezing;
- reporting feeling unwell;
- who have had close-contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed case;
- or
- unwilling to disclose the purpose of their visit or their personal information.

**Thermal scanners** have been installed in sites with permanent screening stations to reduce the risk of an unwell person entering a court building. These will become operational throughout May.

An **appointment process** in the senior courts, and a system to stagger appearances in the District Court, have been introduced to manage the increased number of people coming to court. Entry continues to be limited to one person at a time at the doorway, maintaining physical distancing.

**Members of public** (including whānau or other support person) **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 e-mail to the registrar in advance (if granted this must be supplied to the Court Security Officer at the front entrance) or on the day of the hearing by requesting a Court Security Officer at the front entrance to convey an application via the registrar to the presiding judge. All such applications will 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.

All people entering a courthouse or tribunal will continue to be required to **provide their name and contact details** on entrance to enable **contact tracing**.

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

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## Hygiene

Each Ministry and court site has a **designated site manager** who, amongst other things, is responsible for overseeing health and safety and hygiene at that site.

The best form of defence against contracting the virus is good hygiene. **Hand sanitiser** is available in all buildings. This includes at main entrance points. Toilets contain **antibacterial soap**, which are regularly refilled by the cleaners onsite.

**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 persons who are being held in custody to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

The Ministry has developed a **protocol to deal with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19** in any of the buildings for which it is responsible.

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## Physical distancing

The majority of counters are open under Alert Level 2 and most sites will 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 increased numbers of people, some **areas have been marked off** in court buildings, including in lifts, to help ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Physical distancing requirements are that **people keep at least one metre apart**. Participants in queues will need to keep one metre apart from others standing on the marked areas in the line. Security staff will ensure physical distance is maintained in public areas.

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## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

It is not a Ministry of Health requirement that all participants and staff wear PPE, however, it is available for use if people wish.

All Court Security Officers and Bailiffs are provided with **disposable gloves, facemasks, and goggles**. Contracted private security guards will wear the same PPE when working at a court site.

PPE (**gloves and facemasks**) are available for all court participants. These supplies are located at the entrance point with security staff.

Persons in the custody of Police, Corrections or Oranga Tamariki will be provided with a **facemask** by those respective agencies for use if they wish.

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## Cleaning

The Ministry's 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** will have maximum capacity limits and cleaning products available for use before and after meetings.

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

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The Ministry 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 this court, please direct them to the court manager.*