



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

20 August 2021

## MEDIA STATEMENT

# Court arrangements: Alert Level 4 (Delta variant)

### ALERT LEVEL 4

The Government announced today that all of New Zealand will remain at COVID-19 Alert Level 4 until 11.59 Tuesday 20 August 2021.

### COURTS ARE AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE AND WILL OPERATE DURING ALERT LEVEL 4 ACCORDING TO THEIR AGREED PROTOCOLS

Courts are an essential service. During COVID-19 Alert Level 4 they will continue to operate, with necessary changes to their operating procedures in the interests of public health and safety.

This media release announces the court arrangements for the District and High Court that will operate under Alert Level 4. The appendix provides links to the other courts' operating protocols, as well as their court fixtures lists.

### DISTRICT COURT AND HIGH COURT ARRANGEMENTS

#### *Jury trials in the District Court and High Court*

In the interests of health and safety, no new jury trials will begin during COVID-19 Alert Level 4 in the High Court or District Court. Jury trials currently underway will remain adjourned and trial judges will consult and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Jurors summoned for the week beginning Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August do not need to attend. The registry will contact any juror already serving on a trial.

#### *All other proceedings in the District Court, including Family Court and Youth Court*

The District Court will also continue to conduct priority proceedings at Alert Level 4. To the extent that this can be done, all priority proceedings at Alert Level 4 will be conducted remotely in the Criminal, Family, Youth and Civil jurisdictions of the District Court.

Priority proceedings will include matters considered to be of such significant national or community importance that the immediate attention of the District Court is warranted. This category may include proceedings taken by, or that arise out of actions taken by, public officials during Alert Level 4.

The selection of priority proceedings is guided by these over-arching principles:

- Liberty of the individual;
- Protection of the at-risk or vulnerable, including children;
- The national and community safety interest;
- Facilitating and promoting public order.

Contact 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787) for more information.

#### *All other matters in the High Court*

All other matters in the High Court—criminal and civil—will be conducted to the extent that this can be done using remote technology. Registry staff will be in contact with the parties. Only in exceptional circumstances will an in-person hearing occur.

#### ALL OTHER COURTS

The Court of Appeal hearings are proceeding as scheduled using remote technology. Registry will be in contact with counsel or parties.

All other courts are proceeding in accordance with their Alert Level 4 protocols (see appendix).

The appendix also provides links to each court's regularly updated court lists.

#### LIMITATION ON PUBLIC ACCESS AT COURTS

In the interests of health and safety, during Alert Level 4, access to courthouses is limited. For this reason, members of the public (including a whānau support person or persons for a defendant) whose presence is not required at court will not be permitted to enter unless granted permission by the presiding Judge.

Public counters are closed at Alert Level 4, and all documents can be filed by email to the Registrar. Contact 0800 COURTS or the registry if you require further information.

#### MEDIA ATTENDANCE AT COURT

Out of concern for participants in court, and in the interests of health and safety, media are asked not to attend court in person and instead to attend by remote viewing. [See the Courts of New Zealand website for information](#) on how to arrange this. If remote viewing is not available in your court, please contact the individual registry.

#### MASKS

In accordance with Ministry of Health guidance, masks are to be worn at all times within the courthouse, unless permission is given by a judge.

#### NEXT STATEMENT

The Chief Justice will issue a further statement following the Government's next review of alert levels.

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## APPENDIX: COURT PROTOCOLS AND COURT LISTS BY COURT

### Trial courts

District Court | Te Kōti ā Rohe

Upcoming cases: ring 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787)

[Alert level 4 operating protocol](#)

High Court | Te Kōti Matua

[Daily list](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

### Appellate courts

Supreme Court | Te Kōti Mana Nui

[Daily list](#)

[Upcoming cases](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Court of Appeal | Te Kōti Pira

[Daily list](#)

[Upcoming cases](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Summary Appeal Court | Te Kōti Whakawā Pira Whakaraupapa Kaimahi o Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Māori Appellate Court

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

### Specialist courts

Coroners Court | Te Kōti Kaitirotiro Matewhawhati

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Court Martial | Te Kōti Whakawā Kaimahi o Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Employment Court | Te Kōti Take Mahi

[Upcoming cases](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Environment Court | Te Kōti Taiao

[Upcoming cases](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

Māori Land Court | Te Kooti Whenua Māori

[Alert level operating protocol](#)