



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

3 October 2021

MEDIA STATEMENT

All Waikato Courts to adopt Alert Level 3 protocols, beginning today

Alert levels

The Government announced today that areas of Waikato, including Hamilton City, are moving to Alert Level 3 at 11.59pm tonight, Sunday 3 October.

Alert levels for the Waikato will be reviewed on Friday 8 October.

Alert Level 3 will apply to all Waikato courts

The Chief Justice today announced that ALL Waikato courts will operate under the Alert Level 3 protocols, from 11.59pm tonight. This applies to the following courts:

- Hamilton High Court and District Court
- Huntly District Court
- Morrinsville District Court
- Te Awamutu District Court
- Te Kuiti District Court
- Thames District Court.

Courts are an essential service. During Alert Level 3 they continue to operate, with necessary changes to their operating procedures in the interests of public health and safety.

No new jury trials under Alert Level 3

No new jury trials will begin during Alert Level 3 in any of the District Courts in Waikato or in Hamilton High Court. Ministry of Justice staff are contacting court participants to advise them.

Jurors who are summoned to attend court in any of the courthouses listed above during the week beginning Monday 4 October through to Friday 8 October inclusive are excused from attending.

Travel for court hearings across boundary not expected

The Chief Justice confirms that defendants (including those in custody), prosecutors, counsel and witnesses are not expected to travel out of or into that part of the Waikato region affected

by today's Alert Level 3 announcement to attend an in-person hearing while the area remains at Alert Level 3, unless it is determined by the presiding judge that it is in the public interest to do so. The same instruction remains in place in respect of the Auckland boundary.

Any counsel or any other person who believes they need to travel across the boundary for court purposes should seek the direction of the presiding judge. If you are unsure how to do this, contact 0800 COURTS.

District Court (including Family Court and Youth Court) arrangements under Alert Level 3

See the District Court operating [protocol for Alert Level 3](#).

Access to courthouses is limited during Alert Level 3. To the extent possible, all hearings will be conducted remotely.

Counsel are expected to attend remotely, if at all practicable. The registry will facilitate remote access. Appearances in person should only happen in exceptional circumstances.

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.

Masks are to be worn at all times within the courthouse, unless permission is given by a judge.

Public counters are closed at Alert Level 3, and all documents can be filed by email to the Registrar. Contact 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787) or the registry for further information.

High Court arrangements under Alert Level 3

See the High Court's operating [protocol for Alert Level 3](#).

All High Court matters at Hamilton High Court for this week were already scheduled to be held remotely and will continue as planned. Hamilton High Court is the only High Court affected by the alert level change.

All documents for the High Court can be filed electronically.

Media attendance at court under Alert Level 3

Media are asked not to attend court in person during Alert Level 3 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, please contact the registry concerned.

Media representatives are asked to provide as much notice as possible to attend remotely to give registries enough time to arrange this.

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