



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

24 August 2021

## MEDIA STATEMENT

# Court arrangements until end of day, Friday 27 August: Alert Level 4 (Delta variant)

### Alert Level 4

The Government announced yesterday that all of New Zealand will remain at COVID-19 Alert Level 4 until 11.59pm Friday 27 August 2021, and that Auckland will remain in Alert Level 4 until 11.59pm Tuesday 31 August.

This media statement advises on court arrangements under Alert Level 4, and provides links to courts' operating protocols, as well as court fixtures lists where available.

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

### Jury trials will not commence under Alert Level 4

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

### District Court arrangements

The District Court will be issuing an updated operating protocol later this week. This will be available on the [Courts of NZ website](#).

The District Court will 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.

### *Limitation on access to courts*

In the interests of health and safety, access to courthouses is limited during Alert Level 4. 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 4, and all documents can be filed by email to the Registrar. Contact 0800 COURTS (0800 269 787) or the registry for further information.

### High Court arrangements

At Alert Level 4, High Court business will be conducted to the extent possible by remote participation.

The High Court's [operating protocol](#) for Alert Level 3 and 4 is available on the Courts of New Zealand website.

All documents for the High Court can be filed electronically.

### Arrangements for all other courts

The Court of Appeal will continue to hear appeals remotely. Priority will be given to urgent hearings, and other hearings will proceed subject to operational capability. 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.

### Media attendance at court

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, please contact the registry concerned.

### 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

High Court | Te Kōti Matua

[Daily list](#)

[Alert level operating protocol](#)

District Court | Te Kōti ā Rohe

Upcoming cases: ring 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787)

[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 | Te Kooti Pira Māori

[Alert level operating protocol](#) (Māori Land Court | Te Kooti Whenua Māori 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](#)