HIGH COURT OF NEW ZEALAND

SUBJECT: Procedure - Second Appearance of Category 4 Offences in the High Court over the Christmas Period 2026-2027

As at 10 November 2026

This memorandum explains how the second appearance of a Category 4 offence in the High Court will occur for December 2026, January and February 2027.

When a defendant is charged with a Category 4 offence, the second appearance is to be held in the High Court within 15 working days from the defendant's first appearance in the District Court, although rule 1.7 of the Criminal Procedure Rules 2012 allows timeframes between CPA hearings to be extended.

Normally, a specified day of the week (and time) is set aside in each High Court registry to deal with any required second appearances.

These arrangements need to be varied for late December 2026 and January 2027.

With only limited exceptions, the High Court does not sit from 20 December until 31 January. Section 5 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2011 (CPA) (interpretation of a working day) excludes days in the period commencing on 25 December in one year and ending on 15 January in the next year from being counted as working days.

Procedure

There will be no second appearance hearings for Category 4 offences after Friday 18 December 2026 and before Monday 18 January 2027 (a 4-week break).

Outside that period, second appearance hearings will take place in December 2026, January and early February 2027 as shown below. Hearings will be scheduled for 9.00 am unless otherwise advised.

Hearings required in the circuit registries from 20 December to 31 January will have the judge appearing by AVL.

Auckland Circuit

Auckland Registry

Wednesdays 2, 9 & 16 December 2026;
Wednesdays 20 & 27 January 2027; &
Wednesday 3 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Auckland, Manukau, North Shore, Waitakere, Papakura & Pukekohe.

Whangarei Registry

Fridays 4, 11 & 18 December 2026;
Fridays 22 & 29 January 2027; &
Thursday 4 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Whangarei, Dargaville, Kaikohe & Kaitaia.

Rotorua Registry

Fridays 4, 11 & 18 December 2026;
Fridays 22 & 29 January 2027; &
Thursday 4 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Rotorua, Taupo & Tokoroa.

Tauranga Registry

Wednesdays 2, 9 & 16 December 2026;
Wednesdays 20 & 27 January 2027; &
Wednesday 3 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Tauranga, Opotiki, & Whakatane.

Hamilton Registry

Tuesdays 1, 8 & 15 December 2026;
Tuesdays 19 & 26 January 2027; &
Tuesday 2 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Hamilton, Huntly, Morrinsville, Te Awamutu, Te Kuiti, Thames, Waihi & Taumarunui.

Wellington Circuit

Wellington Circuit Registries (Wellington, Napier, Palmerston North, Whanganui, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Nelson & Blenheim)

Fridays 4, 11 & 18 December 2026;
Fridays 22 & 29 January 2027; &
Thursday 4 February 2027.

Local District Courts (Wellington): - Wellington, Porirua, Hutt Valley, Masterton & Chatham Islands.
Local District Courts (Napier): - Napier, Hastings & Waipukurau.
Local District Courts (Palmerston North): - Palmerston North, Levin & Dannevirke.
Local District Courts (Whanganui): - Wanganui, Marton & Taihape.
Local District Courts (New Plymouth): - New Plymouth & Hawera.
Local District Courts (Gisborne): - Gisborne, Ruatoria & Wairoa.
Local District Courts (Nelson): - Nelson.
Local District Courts (Blenheim): - Blenheim & Kaikoura.

Christchurch Circuit

Christchurch Registry

Fridays 4, 11 & 18 December 2026;
Fridays 22 & 29 January 2027; &
Thursday 4 February 2027.

Local District Courts: - Christchurch & Rangiora.

Christchurch Circuit Registries (Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru & Greymouth)

Tuesdays 1, 8 & 15 December 2026;
Tuesdays 19 & 26 January 2027; &
Tuesday 2 February 2027.

Local District Courts (Dunedin): - Dunedin, Alexandra & Balclutha.
Local District Courts (Invercargill): - Invercargill, Gore & Queenstown.
Local District Courts (Timaru): - Timaru, Ashburton & Oamaru.
Local District Courts (Greymouth): - Greymouth & Westport.

Bail Applications

Any bail applications (along with any other urgent business) will be dealt with in the normal way by Duty Judges during the Court vacation.