



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

12 September 2022

MEDIA STATEMENT

Court operations from Tuesday 13 September

The Prime Minister today announced that the COVID-19 Protection Framework will be removed at midnight tonight.

As a result of these changes, the courts have published new operating protocols on the Courts of NZ website, which are effective from midnight tonight.

What these changes mean for our courts

Mask-wearing

Masks are no longer mandatory in courthouses, however public health advice remains that mask-wearing is the best defence against catching or spreading the virus. Masks will continue to be available in all courthouses.

In some situations, including jury trials, court participants may be required to wear masks at the direction of a presiding judge or judicial officer. For more detail, see:

- [individual court protocols](#), and
- [Jury Trial Guidelines](#).

COVID-19 testing requirements

The protocols outline when testing for COVID-19 is required. Tests will be available in all courthouses.

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must not attend court. Any person who receives a positive result while at court must leave immediately.

Any person who has symptoms of COVID-19, however minor, must take a rapid antigen test (RAT) **before** attending court. The protocols set out the circumstances in which a person with symptoms who tests negative may be able to attend court, and the safeguards (including mandatory mask wearing at all times) that will apply in those circumstances.

In some situations, including jury trials, court participants may be required to take a RAT at the direction of a presiding judge or judicial officer.

Special guidelines for Māori Land Court, Māori Appellate Court and Waitangi Tribunal

In recognition of the significant number of elderly, immune-compromised or otherwise vulnerable people who attend the Māori Land Court, Māori Appellate Court and Waitangi

Tribunal, special guidelines relating to mask-wearing and testing apply. See the individual protocols for further details.

- [Māori Land Court and Māori Appellate Court](#)
- [Waitangi Tribunal](#).

Jury Trial Guidelines

The Chief Judges of the High Court and District Court have issued separate guidance regarding jury trials, including a protocol which supplements the Jury Rules 1990. These are available on the Courts of NZ website:

- [Jury Trial Guidelines](#)
- [Protocol Concerning Jury Trials in the High Court and District Court](#).

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