



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

6 September 2021

MEDIA STATEMENT

Operation of the courts

Alert levels from Wednesday 8 September

The Government announced today that as of 11.59pm on Tuesday, the country would be in the following alert levels:

Alert Level 4: Auckland region

Alert Level 2 (Delta): The rest of the New Zealand

Cabinet is next reviewing the alert levels on Monday 13 September.

Staged increase in workload tailored to local courts and capacity

Courts will progressively increase their workload as local conditions and capacity allow. Updated Delta Level 2 court protocols will be published on the Courts of New Zealand website on Tuesday 7 September.

Jury trials to commence at Delta Level 2

Jury trials in the District Court will take place in Alert Level 2 locations from Wednesday 8 September. However, judges will decide on a case-by-case basis whether a trial can proceed taking into account the individual circumstances of the case. Any jury trials that cannot safely be accommodated at Delta Level 2 will be adjourned or stood down. This decision is made by the local court and court staff will contact participants, including jurors, in these instances.

Jurors are asked to please await further direction from the local District Court and to check Ministry of Justice website and jury answer phone service after 5pm Tuesday 7 September.

No new jury trials will begin in the High Court before Monday 20 September. Jury trials that were due to begin have had to be adjourned to comply with Delta restrictions. Jurors who were summonsed for jury service in the High Court for the weeks starting 6 September and 13 September are therefore excused from jury service.

Any juror who is feeling unwell or is unsure if they still need to attend court as a juror, is asked to contact 0800 COURTS or check the Ministry of Justice website for further information.

Keeping the courthouse safe

The Chief Justice re-iterates that jurors can have confidence that their health and safety is seen to be of the utmost importance.

The Ministry of Justice is following Ministry of Health guidelines to protect the health and safety of all court participants and staff. Measures are in place to allow jury trials to proceed safely with appropriate physical distancing in the court and jury retiring room.

Masks are to be worn at all times within the courthouse, unless an approved exemption is provided, or permission has been given by a Judge. Contact tracing measures are in place.

Further information can be found at [Ministry of Justice COVID-19 information](#)

Media attendance at court at Delta Level 2

Accredited news media will have entry to the court in order to report court proceedings, and to ensure continued open and transparent justice.

Arrangements for all courts under Alert Levels 4

In the interests of health and safety, no **new** jury trials begin during Alert Level 4 in the District Court or the High Court.

Operating protocols for all courts under Alert Level 4 are available on the Courts of New Zealand website (see the appendix to this media statement for direct links). The appendix also provides links to each court's regularly updated court lists.

Remote access for accredited news media will continue to be facilitated at Alert Level 4 in accordance with current protocols.

Travel for court hearings between across Alert Level 4 Boundary

The Chief Justice confirms that defendants (including those in custody), prosecutors, counsel and witnesses are not required and not expected to travel out of or into Auckland to attend an in-person hearing while Auckland remains at Alert Level 4.

If this affects you and you have any concerns, please phone 0800 COURTS.

Chief Justice welcomes increased operations at Delta Level 2

The move to Delta Level 2 is important for the courts, which remain an essential service at all alert levels. The public health imperatives of operating at Alert Level 3 and 4 has significantly restricted the ability of the courts to hear criminal cases.

“We know that delays in the justice system have a significant human cost. This is causing distress for victims, for defendants, and for their whānau as they wait for cases to be heard in court.

It is therefore important that we are able to increase the amount of work done across the courts by reason of the shift in alert levels” the Chief Justice said.

“I thank the public and profession for their continued cooperation and understanding which enables the courts to continue to operate whatever Alert Level restrictions apply. I also acknowledge Ministry of Justice staff who have worked ‘above and beyond’ during this time”.

Contact: Lyn Eden, Judicial Communications Advisor

lyn.eden@courts.govt.nz | 027 462 8377

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

[Upcoming cases](#)

[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](#)