



THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE | TE TARI TOKO I TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ

Guide for media attending and reporting the courts remotely under COVID 19 alert levels

Updated 20 August 2021

Purpose of this guide

The statutory rights of news media to attend and report on the courts is unchanged during the current pandemic. However, the courts, like other branches of Government, have adapted their processes in response to the public health emergency in the interests of safety for court participants, court staff and the judiciary. At Alert Level 4, this means that courts are operating remotely where possible, and, where not possible, restricting the number of people in court.

This information is intended to assist media to perform their vital role during Alert Level 4. It provides guidance only and should be read in conjunction with each court's specific [operating protocols and practice notes](#), rules and guidelines.

This guide also notes that not all courts have the ability to offer remote attendance, in which case journalists are advised to contact the registry.

General principle about media attendance during Alert Level 4 (Delta variant)

Accredited media continue to have a right to cover court proceedings. However, out of concern for participants in court, and in the interests of health and safety, media are asked not to attend court in person and instead to attend by remote viewing. If remote viewing is not available in your court, please contact the individual registry.

What is a remote court hearing?

In a remote court hearing, some or all people involved in the case—including the judge and the registrar—will attend by teleconference (phone), by videoconference (VC) using Virtual Meeting Rooms (VMRs), or using Microsoft Teams (a meeting solution that uses an internet browser or the Teams app on a computer, tablet or smartphone).

The judge in charge of each case will decide if people need to come to court or if they will use remote courts. Court staff will be able to advise media of this.

For quick reference guides on using VMR or Microsoft Teams, follow this link to "[Participating in a Virtual Meeting Room Court Hearing](#)".

The Office of the Chief Justice • Te Tari i te Tumu Whakawā

Old High Court Building, 46 Ballance St, DX SX 10084, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Telephone | Waea +64 (04) 496-3974 • Email | Imēra officeofthechiefjustice@courts.govt.nz • Website | Pae tukutuku courts.govt.nz



THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE | TE TARI TOKO I TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ

Accredited media have a right to attend remote court hearings

Members of accredited media organisations may attend any virtual hearing, and do not need permission to do so. However, registries need to make some arrangements to provide remote access, and this means they need to have prior warning of journalists' intention to attend.

How to notify Registry of an intention to attend a remote court hearing

Journalists wishing to attend a hearing remotely are asked to provide as much prior notice to the relevant registry as possible. Journalists will need to verify their identity in the normal way before being provided with login details for any hearing.

To streamline this process, journalists are encouraged to check that their details are on the centralised media database accessible to Senior Court registries by emailing media@justice.govt.nz.

Important guidance for journalists attending remote court hearings

- See the [Protocol for remote viewing of hearings](#).
- Journalists wishing to make audio and/or visual recordings of virtual hearings, either remotely or from the courtroom, must make an [In-Court Media Coverage Application](#). This should be emailed to the relevant registry. Journalists are asked to approach the court as early as possible if they wish to make any recording of the hearing.
- The login details provided by the registry are personal to the media representative to whom they are issued, and are to be held confidentially and not further published or distributed.
- Journalists attending a hearing remotely will be asked to identify themselves to the court at the start of any hearing.
- Journalists attend with their microphones muted.
- Journalists cannot record sound or capture video without express permission of the judge, which is to be sought in the normal way under the [In Court Media Coverage Guidelines 2016](#) unless the judge agrees otherwise. The judge will decide if there is anything the media cannot report.
- Journalists are entitled to report on the hearing in the usual manner subject to any statutory or court-ordered publication restrictions.
- Given the technological constraints of remote participation, it may not be possible for all media to join some remote hearings. In these cases, pool reporting arrangements may be required.

The Office of the Chief Justice • Te Tari i te Tumu Whakawā

Old High Court Building, 46 Ballance St, DX SX 10084, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Telephone | Waea +64 (04) 496-3974 • Email | Imēra officeofthechiefjustice@courts.govt.nz • Website | Pae tukutuku courts.govt.nz



THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE | TE TARI TOKO I TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ

Court lists

The District Court continues to provide regional daily lists for all criminal proceedings to regular and/or specialist accredited court reporters. Accredited media may also request press sheets for specific defendants or cases provided they are destroyed after one month.

Daily lists for the High Court, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and some other jurisdictions are available on the Courts of New Zealand website.

Journalists who wish to be notified when a new or updated list is published can follow the Courts of New Zealand twitter feed: @CourtsOfNZ.

Contact details for specific Senior Courts registries

High Court

The High Court daily lists contain the name and telephone number of the media contact for each court. Media are advised to contact this person if they wish to make arrangements to attend a hearing, either in person or by using technology for virtual hearings. Media can also email the registry directly. The following email addresses can be used for the High Court.

HIGH COURT CIRCUIT	COURT	EMAIL ADDRESS	
Auckland	Auckland High Court	aucklandhc@justice.govt.nz	
	Whangārei High Court		
	Hamilton High Court		hamilton.hc@justice.govt.nz
	Rotorua High Court		rotorua.hc@justice.govt.nz
	Tauranga High Court		tauranga.hc@justice.govt.nz
Wellington	Wellington High Court	wellingtonhc@justice.govt.nz	
	Gisborne High Court		
	Napier High Court		
	Palmerston North High Court		
	New Plymouth High Court		
	Whanganui High Court		
	Masterton High Court		
	Nelson High Court		
	Blenheim High Court		
Christchurch	Christchurch High Court	christchurchhc@justice.govt.nz	
	Greymouth High Court		
	Timaru High Court		
	Dunedin High Court		
	Invercargill High Court		



THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE | TE TARI TOKO I TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ

Court of Appeal

Journalists wishing to attend a remote court hearing must email courtofappeal@justice.govt.nz prior to the hearing.

In-court media coverage applications should be emailed to courtofappeal@justice.govt.nz. Applications will then be referred to a judge for direction.

Supreme Court

Journalists wishing to attend a remote court hearing at the Supreme Court must email supremecourt@justice.govt.nz prior to the hearing.

In-court media coverage applications should be emailed to supremecourt@justice.govt.nz. Applications will then be referred to a judge for direction.

Useful links

Courts of New Zealand website

- [Protocol for remote viewing of hearings](#)
- [Judgments of Public Interest](#)
- [Court protocol documents](#)
- [Courts of New Zealand COVID-19 media page](#)
- [Transcript \[PDF 174 KB\] media briefing with the Chief Justice and Heads of Bench, 3 April 2020](#)
- [Media resource sheets](#)

Ministry of Justice website

- [Why remote participation is important for all parties](#)
- [Jabber guest user instructions](#)
- [Remote participation for external parties](#)
- [Ministry of Justice COVID-19 information page](#)

The Office of the Chief Justice • Te Tari i te Tumu Whakawā

Old High Court Building, 46 Ballance St, DX SX 10084, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Telephone | Waea +64 (04) 496-3974 • Email | Imēra officeofthechiefjustice@courts.govt.nz • Website | Pae tukutuku courts.govt.nz