



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann  
Chief Justice of New Zealand  
Te Tumu Whakawā o Aotearoa

26 March 2020

Dear Practitioners

**Limitations on members of the public entering courthouses during COVID-19 alert level 4**

Today the judiciary has taken steps, as outlined in the attached media release (not released pending advice to the profession) to exclude members of the public who are not required for that day's court business, unless they have obtained prior approval to attend. This applies to criminal proceedings only.

This step has been taken to observe the requirements of the COVID-19 alert level 4 and to protect the safety of those who must attend at court, including court staff and lawyers.

Lawyers will of course be allowed to enter the building but may need to show a form of identification which includes a photograph.

Media will also be permitted access to courthouses to ensure that the principles of open justice are maintained.

As for priority civil matters, including priority Family Court proceedings, there will be signs on the court doors advising who to contact for assistance to gain access, and information available on the various websites identified in the enclosed media statement.

These arrangements take effect immediately.

Hei konā mai i roto i aku mihi,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Winkelmann'.

Helen Winkelmann  
Chief Justice/Te Tumu Whakawā

Cc Secretary for Justice

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