



**CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE  
FOR NEW ZEALAND  
TE KAIWHAKAWĀ MATUA O  
TE KŌTI-Ā-ROHE O AOTEAROA  
Judge Heemi Taumaunu**

1 April 2020

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Kia ora koutou

**AN UPDATE REGARDING PROCEEDINGS IN THE DISTRICT COURT DURING ALERT LEVEL 4**

I am aware that since Alert Level 4 came into force, some defendants who are in custody and scheduled to appear in the District Court have not appeared and their proceedings have been administratively adjourned by the registry. As I stated in the District Court Alert Level 4 protocol dated 25 March 2020, all defendants who are in custody will appear before a Judge. Accordingly, those defendants should have appeared before a Judge. The Ministry of Justice has agreed to identify the defendants who were dealt with in this manner and will reschedule their appearances to the next available date before a Judge.

For clarification, all defendants who are in custody will continue to appear before a Judge on scheduled appearance dates during the Alert Level 4 period. All hearings will be facilitated by remote participation whenever possible. In addition, until further notice, no witnesses for Judge Alone Trials or Pre-trial Applications are required to appear in Court to give evidence on those dates. Instead, a call-over will be conducted.

I also advise that:

1. The Ministry of Justice has established a Virtual Meeting Room facility for all counsel, court participants, and accredited media to participate in priority proceedings by AVL from their homes or offices. A Judge and Registrar will be in the courtroom but counsel are encouraged to appear by AVL whenever feasible. VMRs have been provisioned for [31] courtrooms for District and Family Court use. Please be patient and bear with us as this system is bedded in. A list of the courts at which these facilities will be established is attached. Contact the registry at these courts for information about how to participate. Quick reference guides will be made available as soon as possible.
2. Applications made under the Returning Offenders (Management and Information) Act 2015 have been added to the list of priority proceedings in the District Court during the Alert Level 4 period.
3. All court participants in the District Court are permitted to wear Personal Protective Equipment while appearing in court either in person or remotely, such as gloves and facemasks.

Please distribute this information to your members. Thank you for your assistance.

Ngā mihi



Heemi Taumaunu  
Chief District Court Judge

cc: The Rt Hon Dame Helen Winkelmann, Chief Justice  
Justice Miller, Chair Judicial Steering Group  
Cate Brett, Chief Advisor, Judicial Development and Communications  
Carl Crafar, Chief Operating Officer  
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