

EMPLOYMENT COURT

COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 2

1. The representatives in each case currently set down for hearing are being contacted by the Court. They are being asked to keep in touch with clients and witnesses about their health and recent travels prior to any court appearances; seek approval for telephone attendances should they be unwell or concerned about their recent travels or contact with people who have recently travelled or potentially been exposed to COVID-19; and advise the Registry promptly if they have any concerns about their health or possible exposure, or that of their client or witness/es.
2. Parties are now being asked to file electronic bundles of documents. This is a safety precaution but will also provide a greater degree of flexibility in terms of future case management.
3. While the current medical advice is that hearings in person may still proceed safely, and the intention is that in-Court hearings in the Employment Court will continue to take place as required, that position is under constant review.
4. For in-Court hearings, participants can be assured that the Ministry of Justice has a stringent cleaning regime in place for all public contact surfaces. Hand sanitizers, tissues and paper towels have been installed on counsel benches, and the witness box. The use of gloves for handling paper copies of documents for hand up during court proceedings is encouraged.
5. However, by consent, most applications in the Employment Court can be conducted by non-visual teleconference, or on the papers. Also, representatives who would otherwise travel by public transport (including by air), or who have clients or witnesses who would do so, may apply for hearings to be conducted in whole or in part by audio visual link under the Courts (Remote Participation) Act 2010. Current technology means that will still require attendance in a courtroom in New Zealand to connect to the Judge/s sitting. More flexible AVL technology is being trialled by the Ministry of Justice.
6. Adjournments may be ordered, including where any representative or other person whose presence at the hearing is necessary are unwell or unavailable, or where AVL is not available. Representatives should apply for adjournments where appropriate.
7. All new matters will be referred to a Judge and will be prioritised in the usual way. Parties are reminded of the ability to apply for urgency under cl 21, sch 3 of the Employment Relations Act 2000. Any application should be supported by a full explanation as to why urgency is sought.

8. The Court has set up a twitter page to enable you to access information (<https://twitter.com/EmploymentCourt>). The Court's webpage is also being regularly updated.
9. You should also feel free to ring the Registrar of the Employment Court for further guidance or clarification. The contact details are:

Registrar Auckland: Mima Bobot

Phone: 09 916 6359

mima.bobot@justice.govt.nz

Emergency phone: 027 295 6673

Registrar Wellington: Joseph Buckton

Phone: 04 918 8313

joseph.buckton@justice.govt.nz

Emergency phone: 021 946 790