

Using New Zealand Sign Language in Courts and Tribunals

How do I tell the court or tribunal that I want to use New Zealand Sign Language?

- You will need to complete a “Request for an Interpreter” form. You can get a copy of this form from your local court, community law centre or from the Ministry of Justice website at www.justice.govt.nz/pubs. Alternatively, you can ring your local court and have this form sent out to you.

The address of your local court is in the blue pages of your local telephone directory under “Justice, Ministry of” or visit the Ministry of Justice website at www.justice.govt.nz/contacts/courtaddresses.html

- Complete the form and remember to identify which court or tribunal you wish to use New Zealand Sign Language in.
- Take the form or send it to the court or tribunal that you wish to use New Zealand Sign Language in, **within a reasonable time before** you appear in that court or tribunal.

Your case may be delayed if you do not give the court or tribunal reasonable notice that you want to use New Zealand Sign Language before you appear in that court or tribunal.

Will using New Zealand Sign Language cost me anything?

No. The court or tribunal will arrange payment for the interpreter.

For further information contact your local court, community law centre or visit the Ministry of Justice website at www.justice.govt.nz.





If your first or preferred language is New Zealand Sign Language you may have the right to use New Zealand Sign Language in legal proceedings before courts and tribunals.

The New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006 makes provision for this right.

This means that you can use New Zealand Sign Language in any legal proceedings at the following:

- Supreme Court
- Court of Appeal
- High Court
- District Courts
- Family Courts
- Youth Courts
- Employment Court
- Māori Land Court
- Māori Appellate Court
- Environment Court
- Waitangi Tribunal
- Employment Relations Authority
- Human Rights Review Tribunal
- Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal
- Tenancy Tribunal
- Disputes Tribunal
- Coroners Court
- Other Tribunals (as resources permit)

Who may use New Zealand Sign Language in a court or tribunal?

The New Zealand Sign Language Act 2006 specifies that certain people whose first or preferred language is New Zealand Sign Language may use New Zealand Sign Language in legal proceedings.

Any of the following persons may use New Zealand Sign Language in a court or tribunal:

- The parties (the person who is bringing the case or the person who is defending the case)
- Any witness
- Any member of the court or tribunal
- The lawyers or other person representing a party in the proceedings
- Anyone else if the judge or person in charge agrees.

What happens at the court or tribunal?

When you use New Zealand Sign Language an interpreter will interpret what you have said into spoken language.

Remember that other people in the court will use spoken language. An interpreter will interpret what they have said into sign language.

Interpreters

The court or tribunal will organise an interpreter for you. The interpreter must meet specific interpreting standards to provide interpreting services to the court or tribunal.
