



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
Manatū Aorere



# Consular Snapshot

2022-23



# Consular at a glance



58 Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates and Representative Offices in 52 Countries and diplomatic cross-accreditations to 119 countries.



2 million SafeTravel website users



Over 1,100 SafeTravel messages were sent to registrants



Assisted New Zealand citizens in over 1,400 new and over 1,200 existing consular cases



Responded to over 42,200 general consular advice inquiries



8,842 notarial services, including 4,967 authentications



Assisted with 226 bereavement cases



Responded to 23 offshore emergencies



Assisted New Zealand citizens in 130 new and 178 existing law infringement cases



Assisted with 275 lost property cases



Assisted New Zealand citizens in 111 new and 41 existing medical cases



Assisted 117 New Zealand citizens in financial distress



957 open consular cases as at end of financial year

### Most common requests for assistance:

LOST PROPERTY

BEREAVEMENT

LAW INFRINGEMENT

### Where most cases happened:

AUSTRALIA

UNITED STATES

UNITED KINGDOM

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade acts in the world to build a safer, more prosperous and more sustainable future for New Zealanders.**

**Keeping New Zealanders safe when traveling and living abroad, and ensuring they can access consular assistance and emergency advice when required, is an important part of our work.**

The Ministry's recently released Strategic Foreign Policy Assessment 'Navigating a shifting world / Te whakatore i tētahi ao hurihuri' describes an increasingly unpredictable and more complex world, with heightened strategic tension and considerable levels of disruption and risk.

Given this, it is no surprise that demand for consular assistance has remained high. The changing nature of the international environment has contributed to an increase in the complexity of the Ministry's consular caseload over the past year, at a time when significant numbers of New Zealanders returned to international travel.

Over the twelve months from July 2022 to June 2023, the Ministry assisted 2,600 New Zealanders in difficulty overseas, received over 3,500 calls to our call centre, and responded to over 49,000 general consular enquiries.

The most complex cases in the last year have included helping New Zealanders that were unwell or sustained serious injuries, assisting whānau to return loved ones home after a death overseas, providing advice to New Zealanders in detention in other countries, providing support to tamariki in distress offshore, advocating against the death penalty, and leading responses in certain kidnapping cases. At the same time, we responded to 25 offshore emergencies, including helping nearly 30 New Zealanders and their family members to evacuate conflict in Sudan.



The changing strategic environment has also placed increased demands on the Ministry's consular contingency planning.

Our support for major international events has continued, including ensuring that New Zealand athletes could compete safely at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and contributing to the first 'business as usual' commemoration on the Gallipoli Peninsula since 2019.

The SafeTravel website is the Ministry's key tool for the provision of official advice for New Zealanders living and travelling overseas. Over the July 2022 – June 2023 period we sent over 700 messages to SafeTravel registrants and updated over 100 travel advisories.





## Staff at Embassies can:

- Give advice, with the aim of helping you to help yourself.
- Help with a lost or stolen passport.
- Help you contact relatives or friends to request emergency funds.
- Provide a list of English-speaking lawyers, and help you contact family and friends, if you are detained or arrested.
- Help you contact family and friends if you are ill or injured.
- Help with arrangements following a death overseas.
- In certain circumstances, provide notarial services such as witnessing affidavits, statutory declarations and other documents for use under New Zealand law.
- Help during crises, such as civil unrest and natural disasters.



## Staff at Embassies cannot:

- Pay your hotel, travel or other bills, legal or medical expenses, or costs of returning a body to New Zealand.
- Give you legal advice, including on family law matters such as child custody, international surrogacy and adoption issues.
- Investigate a crime or get you out of prison.
- Get you better conditions in prison or hospital than a local citizen would receive
- Arrange visas or work/residency permits for you.
- Operate a personal mail service for you including through the diplomatic bag or store your belongings.
- Compel another country to overturn your travel ban.
- Become involved in commercial disputes or civil litigation.
- Secure access to or administer vaccines to New Zealanders who are located offshore.

**For more information  
visit our [SafeTravel  
website](#)**



# What is Consular Assistance?

**Consular assistance is about helping a New Zealand citizen in distress while travelling or living overseas to help themselves.**

We deliver consular services as part of the Ministry's purpose **to act in the world to build a safer, more prosperous and more sustainable future for New Zealanders.**

The Ministry's global network is comprised of 58 posts in 52 countries with 119 accreditations to other countries and 70 Honorary Consuls.

Each consular case is unique and the assistance provided will depend on the circumstances.

Consular assistance can range from:

- responding to an emergency event involving New Zealanders overseas e.g. a global pandemic, terrorist incident or natural disaster;
- helping New Zealanders who are sick or injured;
- assisting with arrangements following the death of a New Zealander overseas;
- undertaking welfare visits for those arrested, or detained or in a hospital offshore; and
- providing notarial services such as statutory declarations for use under New Zealand law.



**We have three main messages for travelling New Zealanders:**

**1** Take out appropriate travel insurance

**2** Register your travel details on SafeTravel

**3** Check our travel advice

# 1

## Take out travel insurance

We strongly advise New Zealanders to get comprehensive travel insurance before heading away. Travellers need to make sure that it covers everywhere they are going, and everything they plan to do. **“If you can’t afford travel insurance, you can’t afford to travel”.**

Travel insurance covers risks when travel doesn’t go as planned and things go wrong. Having unforeseen risks covered ensures an additional layer of protection against financial loss. New Zealanders who do not have travel insurance will have to pay out of their own pocket should any problems arise.

Your insurance policy should cover any activities you plan to undertake (from scuba diving to scooter riding), personal liability, medical treatment, emergency medical evacuation, and any pre-existing medical conditions. Even minor medical treatment can be very expensive overseas. Having travel insurance could save you thousands. The New Zealand Government cannot pay your travel bills, legal or medical expenses, or the costs of returning to New Zealand.

### Case study:

While on a backpacking tour of South East Asia, a New Zealander tripped and sustained serious spinal injuries. They had to be stabilised in a neighbouring country and then medevac’d back to New Zealand for treatment. With no travel insurance, the New Zealander had to re-mortgage their house to cover the costs (over \$150,000) of their initial treatment and the medevac charter aircraft back to New Zealand.

### Case study:

The Auckland anniversary weekend floods in early 2023 resulted in the closure of Auckland Airport. Multiple international flights to New Zealand were cancelled, and many New Zealanders had to stay offshore for longer than they had planned. Many people who did not have travel insurance had to cover the additional costs out of their own pocket.





# 2

## Register your travel details on SAFETRAVEL

**New Zealanders travelling and living overseas are encouraged to register their travel and contact details on SafeTravel.** Registering means we can send important travel information to you and provide updates if the worst happens (e.g. significant events such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks or other emergencies). SafeTravel registration is voluntary and all information provided remains confidential and is held in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.

**Over 700 messages were sent to SafeTravel registrants from July 2022 to June 2023.** The messages provided advice and information to thousands of registrants on how to keep safe, and alerted them to other important information relating to emergencies and natural disasters.

**Anywhere there is an emergency, and if we think New Zealanders might be affected, we can respond by:**



Sending advice to SafeTravel registrants



Providing travel advice and crisis updates with news features on SafeTravel



Deploying staff to affected areas



Putting in place and regularly reviewing the contingency plans all Embassies and High Commissions have in place to respond to emergencies



Liaising with families in New Zealand



Liaising with local authorities and networks

# 3

## Check our travel advice

The Ministry has an important role in establishing, updating and disseminating travel advice for destinations around the world through the SafeTravel website.

Our goal is to ensure New Zealanders are able to live, do business, travel and communicate more safely offshore.

SafeTravel has a wide range of tips to help ensure safety when travelling offshore, what to do if things go wrong, and how the New Zealand Government can (or cannot) help if you are in trouble.

SafeTravel advice is designed to help New Zealanders make informed decisions about travel destinations. We do not provide advice on all destinations. We focus on locations that we have reliable information on security and safety issues that may affect New Zealanders.

Two million people accessed the SafeTravel website over the last year. Most users (53%) were in New Zealand suggesting New Zealanders were using SafeTravel as a platform to make informed decisions before travelling overseas. August was the busiest month for SafeTravel website views.

### Top five unique website page views



The New Zealand government’s official travel advice website is [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz).

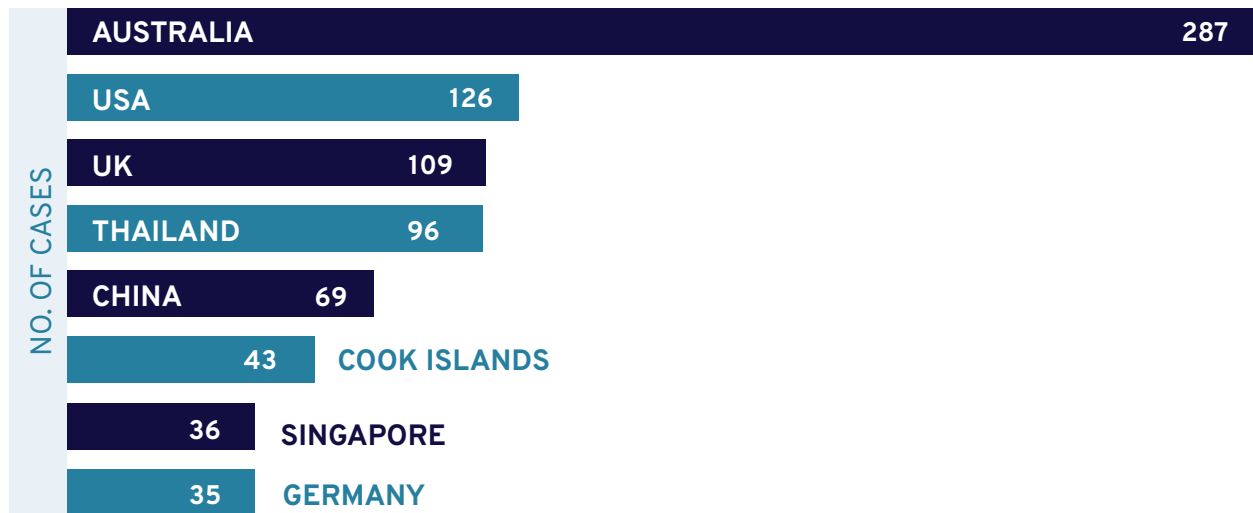
# Consular case breakdown

Most travelling New Zealanders never need consular assistance. Some choose not to contact New Zealand embassies even if they do get into difficulty.

The following table summarises the times where New Zealanders have sought assistance over the past seven years.

CASE TYPE	NO. OF CASES 2022/23	NO. OF CASES 2021/22	NO. OF CASES 2020/21	NO. OF CASES 2019/20	NO. OF CASES 2018/19	NO. OF CASES 2017/18	NO. OF CASES 2016/17
Accident	29	6	10	26	28	26	30
Adoption	0	5	4	0	1	6	2
Child custody	23	12	20	16	28	25	30
Civil unrest	20	255	10	8	2	15	5
Civil/employment disputes	4	3	2	4	5	14	24
COVID-19 related	17	718	485	1117	0	0	0
Death	226	168	130	190	213	183	186
Domestic incident	13	18	11	11	14	19	16
Financial distress	117	111	98	362	82	105	90
International surrogacy	1	0	1	5	1	4	1
Invigilation	1	1	1	0	9	5	5
Law infringement	130	88	78	138	201	212	198
Local immigration difficulties	97	109	97	147	200	230	202
Lost property	275	131	49	339	462	542	548
Medical	111	45	58	144	205	209	179
Mental well-being	26	31	22	39	34	38	37
Missing person	30	23	8	31	31	57	42
Natural disaster	1	1	1	5	3	23	2
Notarial problems	8	6	8	15	10	12	14
Other	86	64	35	91	78	87	76
Passport support/difficulties	54	61	40	93	175	170	196
Personal safety concerns	61	61	51	52	66	53	52
Scam	6	1	1	3	5	9	13
Terrorist attack	0	0	0	0	0	5	1
Threat warning	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Victim of crime	84	14	6	87	151	193	264
Welfare of minors	21	18	6	9	13	7	8
Witness marriage	0	0	0	1	0	2	1
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>2933</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2252</b>	<b>2222</b>

## Where consular cases happened

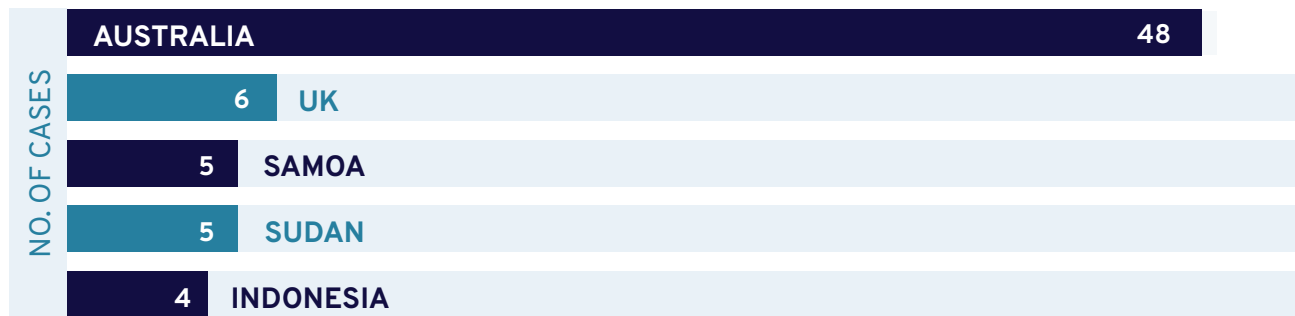


New Zealanders can seek consular assistance from our global consular network. In an emergency situation, consular assistance is available 24/7. Australia continues to be the country with the highest number of consular cases.

## Most common consular cases



# Financial distress



*New cases of financial distress reported in 2022-23*

There is no automatic right for New Zealanders in distress overseas to receive financial assistance from the government. If you do not have insurance, you are expected to pay any costs yourself.

As a last resort, and only in certain emergency exceptional circumstances and when all other options for support have been exhausted, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade may be able to provide you with an emergency consular loan. A consular loan is not a right, it depends on the circumstances, and is subject to strict rules. If your situation is assessed as eligible for a loan, you will need to sign an undertaking to repay the loan within a short timeframe.





# Law infringement

New Zealanders overseas are subject to the local law of the country they are travelling in. Local laws in some places can seem harsh by New Zealand standards, but New Zealanders are not entitled to special treatment compared to locals. The New Zealand government cannot interfere in the judicial process of another country.

## If you are arrested, a New Zealand consular officer can:

- Provide a list of local English-speaking lawyers for you to select a legal representative and/or provide information about local legal aid.
- Inform your next-of-kin or other relatives/friends of your arrest and seek any financial assistance from them, if you request this.
- Depending on the location of the court, attend a final court hearing as an observer.

## If you are imprisoned, a New Zealand consular officer can:

- Advise family of the prison contact details and how they may communicate with you, if you request this.
- Advise family or friends how to transfer or deposit funds for the prisoner, in accordance with prison regulations.
- If required, seek approval for prison visits by family or friends.
- Make periodic visits in countries where prison conditions are substantially different from New Zealand, depending on the location of the prison.
- Bring any medical or dental problems you may have to the attention of the prison authorities.
- Take up any justified complaint you may have about any ill treatment or discrimination with the prison authorities and advise your lawyer of these.



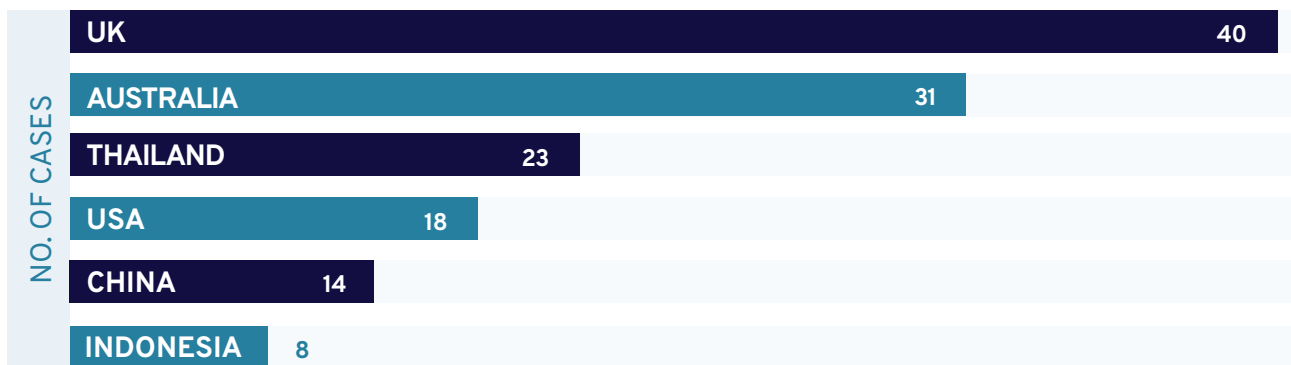
*New Law Infringement Cases reported in 2022-23*

# Deaths of New Zealand citizens overseas

Over the last year we supported 226 families who were dealing with the sad loss of a New Zealand citizen overseas.

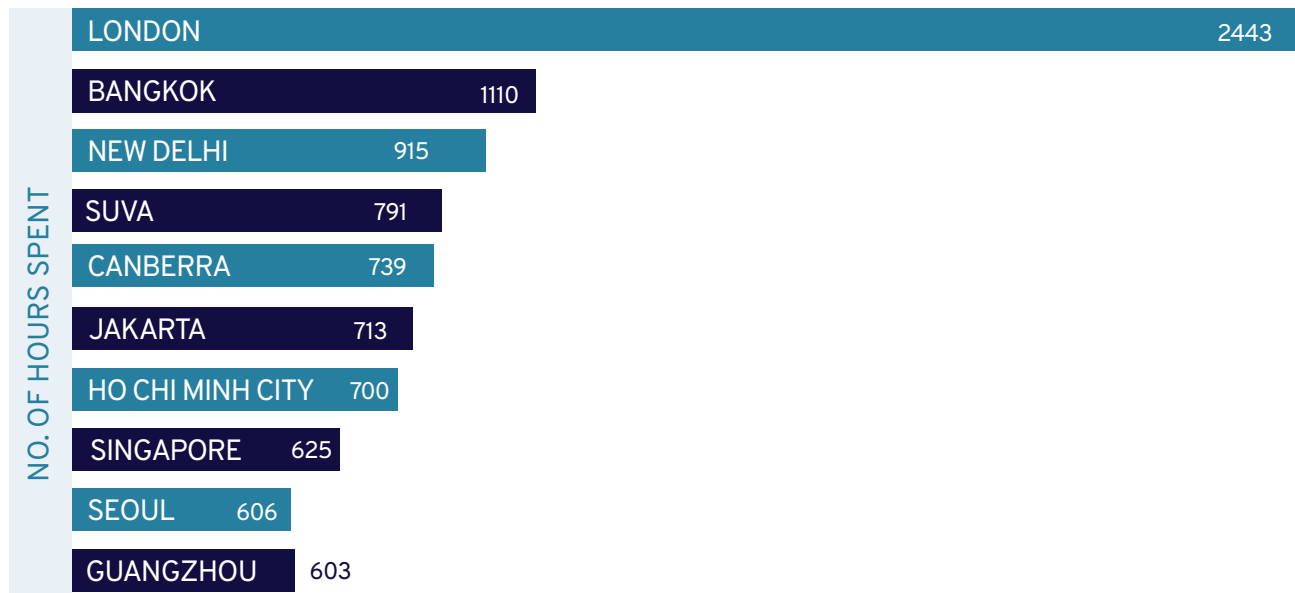
## We did this by:

- advising on what options are available locally, including whether burial or cremation was possible, and/or the repatriation of remains or ashes to New Zealand;
- advising on approximate costs of these options; and
- providing contact details for local funeral directors who could manage the funeral or repatriation arrangements in consultation with the family.



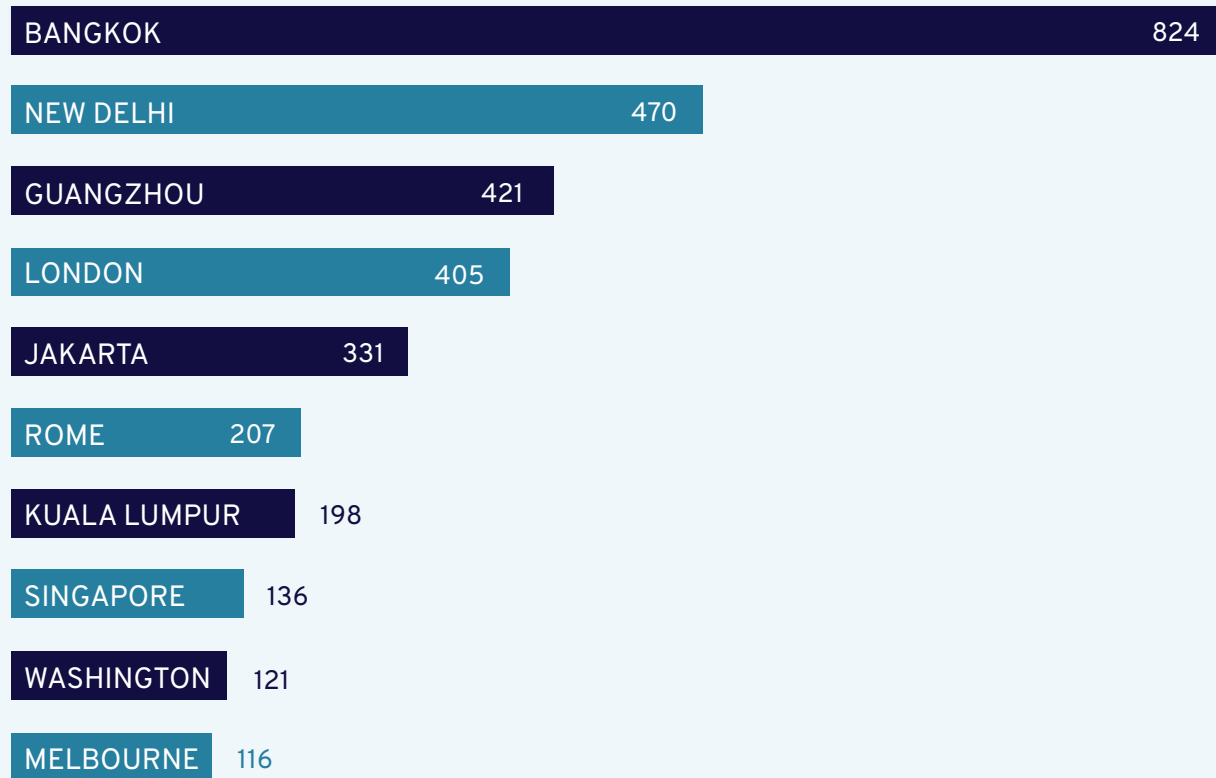
## Our busiest posts

Many of New Zealand's Embassies and High Commissions are accredited to more than one country, which means consular staff may need to travel across borders to help New Zealanders in difficulty. Dealing with complex and ongoing cases does require significant time investment from posts and other cases can be closed quickly. Some posts may receive more enquiries than others and some posts undertake notarial services more than others. The tables below summarises posts' efforts including new and ongoing cases, notarial services, general enquiries and other consular work.

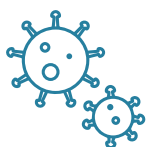


## Time spent on consular cases

Included in the above statistics is time spent helping New Zealanders with individual consular cases. The locations where we spent the highest number of hours on new and ongoing cases were:



## Hours spent by case type



LAW INFRINGEMENT  
1,537 HOURS



OTHER  
449 HOURS



FINANCIAL DISTRESS  
978 HOURS



VICTIMS OF CRIME  
407 HOURS



BEREAVEMENT  
819 HOURS



LOST PROPERTY  
398 HOURS



LOCAL IMMIGRATION  
DIFFICULTIES  
461 HOURS



PERSONAL SAFETY  
CONCERNS  
264 HOURS



MEDICAL  
460 HOURS



MENTAL WELL-BEING  
142 HOURS



# HOW TO FIND US

Our consular staff in Wellington and around the world provide consular advice and assistance to New Zealanders at all times.

## If you are in need of consular assistance, you can contact us:

- Through one of our 58 embassies, high commissions, consulates and representative offices and other offices in 52 countries and diplomatic cross-accreditations around the world. Contact details for our posts are available here: [www.mfat.govt.nz/embassies](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/embassies)
- **24/7 emergency consular assistance:**  
0800 30 10 30 (within New Zealand) or +64 20 20 20 (outside New Zealand)
- By email at [cons@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:cons@mfat.govt.nz)
- By filling in a form at [www.safetravel.govt.nz/contact](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/contact)
- On Facebook [www.facebook.com/SafeTravel.govt.nz](https://www.facebook.com/SafeTravel.govt.nz)





# PRIVACY

We value the privacy of people we give consular advice and assistance to. Any personal information provided to the Ministry is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 2020. Information we have received is only used for the provision of consular services. We may need to share the information we hold with other New Zealand and host government agencies or service providers, such as hospitals, for the purpose of providing consular services to you or as required by law.

If we need to share the information for reasons other than providing consular services to you, we will only do so in accordance with law or with your consent.





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