

34. Diplomatic Clearances For Aircraft and Vessels

34.1 New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987

For any foreign military vessel to enter the internal waters of New Zealand or for a foreign military aircraft to land in New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade officials conduct an assessment of the capability of the vessel or aircraft, including any nuclear capabilities.

The Prime Minister may only grant approval for the entry into the internal waters of New Zealand by foreign warships or to the landing in New Zealand by any foreign military aircraft if the Prime Minister is satisfied that they will not be carrying any nuclear explosive device when it lands in New Zealand. Ships whose propulsion is wholly or partially dependent on nuclear power are not permitted to enter New Zealand's internal waters.

The above points relate to Sections (9), (10), and (11) of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987 (the [Act](#)).

34.2 Aircraft

Diplomatic clearance is required from the New Zealand Government for all State and Military aircraft visiting New Zealand. This applies to all State and Military aircraft undertaking activities that are governmental in character (i.e. not commercial activities).

All diplomatic clearance requests should be sent under a Third Person Note requesting clearance to: diplomatic.clearance@mfat.govt.nz

Six (6) weeks prior notice is required for all incoming aircraft and vessels.

34.2.1 Military Aircraft

Military aircraft landing in or overflying New Zealand require diplomatic clearance.

34.2.2 Non-military (State) Aircraft

Non-military (State) aircraft landing in New Zealand require diplomatic clearance.

Non-military (State) aircraft overflying New Zealand do not require diplomatic clearance. Airways Corporation advises its only requirement is for the flight to be flight planned correctly as per the International Civil Aviation Organisation format. Specific approval from Airways would only be required if the aircraft was non-RSVM (reduced vertical separation minimum) and looking to operate within the RVSM stratum (between 29,000 and 41,000 feet).

34.2.3 Process for Requesting Diplomatic Clearance for Aircraft

Please send the following forms to diplomatic.clearance@mfat.govt.nz:

- Third Person Note requesting clearance
- Completed Aircraft Diplomatic Clearance Form

34.3 Vessels

In general, the New Zealand Government requires both military and non-military state vessels to obtain Diplomatic Clearance.

34.3.1 Military Vessels

Military vessels entering New Zealand's internal waters (which includes ports but does not include the territorial sea or Exclusive Economic Zone) require diplomatic clearance.

We kindly request the applicant indicate whether the vessel has embarked aircraft which will be flown during the intended visit, or whether Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Unmanned Surface or Underwater Vehicles will be launched during the visit.

34.3.2 Non-Military (Government) Vessels

Non-military (Government) vessels entering New Zealand's internal waters require diplomatic clearance.

We kindly request the applicant to indicate whether the vessel has embarked aircraft which will be flown during the intended visit, or whether Unmanned Aerial Vehicles or Unmanned Surface or Underwater Vehicles will be launched during the visit.

34.3.3 Process for Requesting Diplomatic Clearance for Vessels

Please send the following forms to diplomatic.clearance@mfat.govt.nz:

- Third Person Note requesting clearance
- Completed Vessel Diplomatic Clearance Form

Vessel captains (or authorised persons) should ensure all arrival and departure notifications requirements are met.

Vessel captains (or authorised persons) should consult with the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) officials regarding appropriate biosecurity protocols for ships during a visit and must comply with MPI requirements. More information is available on the MPI website: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/import/border-clearance/ships-and-boats-border-clearance/arrival-process-steps/>

34.3.4 Marine Scientific Research

For requests to conduct Marine Scientific Research in New Zealand's Territorial Sea, Exclusive Economic Zone, or Continental Shelf, please refer to MFAT's guidance on applying for consent to undertake this in New Zealand's waters here: [Marine scientific research | New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(mfat.govt.nz\)](#), or contact MSR@mfat.govt.nz.