

18 February 2025

Adam Simperingham, President
Criminal Bar Association
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Dear Adam

Security checks for lawyers

On 12 February, the Ministry wrote to the New Zealand Law Society providing an update on health, safety, and security matters in courts. I acknowledge that this overlaps with the timing of your letter, and I apologise for any duplication. However, the letter addresses many of the concerns you have raised, and I have attached a copy for your reference.

In addition to these matters, I would like to specifically address three key issues raised in your letter.

Changes to Court Entry Screening (laptops)

The Ministry of Justice has recently tested court entry screening processes for the detection of 3D printed weapons. As a result of this exercise, and to enhance the safety and security of all visitors, screening procedures have been modified to ensure these items can be better detected.

On that basis, from 3 February, individuals entering the courts will be required to remove laptops from their bags before going through screening. I acknowledge that the notice period for this change was short and apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Security incidents involving lawyers

Court security incident data shows that from January 2019 to August 2024, lawyers were involved in 69 security incidents at Ministry sites. These incidents range from "Vaping in a Ministry building after being warned not to", to "Assault".

Notably, there were four incidents where lawyers were found in possession of a weapon, and one where a lawyer was found carrying drug paraphernalia.

Waikato

Thank you for bringing this recent incident to my attention. Following our conversation on Friday, I have reviewed the CCTV footage and can confirm that the security measures undertaken were appropriate.

Yours sincerely



Carl Crafar
Chief Operating Officer