

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## COURT ORIENTATIONS / VISITS

### Q: What is a Court Orientation / Visit?

A court orientation is a visit to the court, where your Court Victim Advisor will help you get to know the building and what will happen at court during sentencing. It is a chance for you to ask questions and, if you want to, spend some time getting used to being in a courtroom. If you decide to attend the sentencing, a court orientation/visit can help you understand more about what will happen at court. During a court orientation/visit your Court Victim Advisor can:

- take you through the court security so you are familiar with this process
- explain the processes of the court
- show you the courtroom layout and explain who will be in the courtroom
- show you where you may be seated
- show you around the different parts of the building, including quiet rooms and prayer rooms
- If you are reading your victim impact statement, explain how and where you might deliver this. Your Police Family Liaison Officer can provide you with further information and will be in contact with you closer to sentencing

### Q: I've already been to court - is a Court Orientation/ Visit still helpful?

Even if you have been to court, you are welcome to arrange a court orientation/visit. Visiting the court at a quieter time may help you to become more familiar with the court environment and help you to understand what to expect at sentencing.

### Q: Do I have to do a Court Orientation / Visit?

No, it is your choice. There are other ways your Court Victim Advisor can give you information about court processes and what to expect. They can send you information or show you pictures or a video of the courtrooms so that you know where to go and what to expect.

### Q: How long does a Court Orientation / Visit normally take?

Your Court Victim Advisor will try to arrange a court orientation/visit at a date and time that suits you. How long your visit lasts will depend on what you need. You can talk this through with your Court Victim Advisor. It may help to take time to pause, or to ask questions if you have them. Sometimes people need to take a break during a visit and spaces are available if you wish to do this. Court orientations / visits normally take about an hour, but they can be longer or shorter depending on the amount of time you need.

### Q: Can I do a Court Orientation / Visit under New Zealand's COVID-19 restrictions?

This depends on what restrictions, if any, are in place. Under COVID-19 Level 1 and Level 2 restrictions you can visit the courthouse for a court orientation/visit. Continued health and safety precautions mean that you must not come to court if you feel unwell. Your Court Victim Advisor can explain any COVID-19 restrictions that are in place when they arrange

your court orientation/visit. If any COVID-19 restrictions in place at the courthouse change we will keep you informed.

**Q: Can I bring support people with me to a Court Orientation / Visit?**

Yes. You can bring a support person or people with you to a court orientation. If you know how many family members or support people you would like to bring, please let your Court Victim Advisor know.

**Q: I am not in Christchurch / I am unable to physically come to court - how can I do a Court Orientation / Visit?**

We are looking at how to offer court orientations/visits for people who are overseas, and for people who are elsewhere in New Zealand. If you are not in Christchurch, but would like a court orientation/visit, please contact your Court Victim Advisor to discuss how this can be arranged.

**Q: Will the sentencing take place in the exact parts of the court that I visit?**

We will do our best to show you the parts of the court where the sentencing will take place. However, because of the planning involved and the need to keep everyone visiting the court safe and well, the exact rooms may need to change. We will keep you informed of any changes that you need to know about when coming to court for the sentencing.

**Q: What wellbeing support is available after a Court Orientation / Visit?**

Sometimes going into a courtroom can be intimidating or upsetting, even if it is for an orientation. Your Court Victim Advisor will talk with you about what supports you might need during and immediately after you finish your orientation. This includes having a support person with you during your court visit and taking breaks if you need it.

---

## Wellbeing

**If you or someone you know needs emotional support, help is available.**

Let your Court Victim Advisor, Victim Support worker or Police Family Liaison Officer know. They can refer you for support.

Make an appointment with your GP. They can provide support or refer you to local community services.

Free call or text **1737** for a confidential conversation anytime. Free counselling is also available at: [1737.org.nz](https://www.1737.org.nz)

For more practical suggestions about looking after your wellbeing visit:  
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>