

# ORDER OF PRECEDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

**A guide to the relative precedence of constitutional office holders and certain others, to be followed, as appropriate to each occasion, at State and official functions**

*Her Majesty The Queen has approved the following Order of Precedence in New Zealand:*

## ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

The Sovereign (Notes 1 and 2)

The Governor-General or, while acting in the place of the Governor-General, the Administrator of the Government (Note 3)

The Prime Minister

The Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Chief Justice

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

The Deputy Prime Minister

Ministers of the Crown/ Members of the Executive Council (Note 4)

Former Governors-General

Ambassadors and High Commissioners in New Zealand and Chargés d'Affaires accredited to New Zealand (Note 5)

The Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives

Leaders, including co-leaders and joint leaders, of political parties represented in the House of Representatives, other than Ministers of the Crown

Members of Parliament

Judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court of New Zealand (Note 6)

Former Prime Ministers, former Speakers of the House of Representatives, former Chief Justices, and members of the Privy Council

Mayors of territorial authorities and chairpersons of regional councils, while in their own cities, districts and regions

The State Services Commissioner, Chief of Defence Force, Commissioner of Police, and Officers of Parliament (The Controller and Auditor-General, Chief Ombudsman, and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment)

The Solicitor-General, Clerk of the House of Representatives, and Clerk of the Executive Council when attending a function involving the exercise of the position's specific responsibilities

Chief executives of public service and non-public service departments (Note 7)

The Vice Chief of Defence Force, and Chiefs of Navy, Army and Air Force, and other statutory office holders

Consuls-General and Consuls of countries without diplomatic representation in New Zealand

Members of New Zealand and British orders, and holders of decorations and medals in accordance with the Order of Wear in New Zealand (Note 8)

## **ADMINISTRATION**

This Order of Precedence is administered by the Honours Unit, Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Order of Precedence in New Zealand dated 9 January 1974, and amended on 10 September 1981, is revoked.

Issued this 15<sup>th</sup> day of September 2015.

Rt Hon John Key  
Prime Minister

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

These Notes form part of the Order of Precedence approved by The Queen.

The “Order of Precedence” indicates the relative precedence of constitutional office holders, public officials and certain others on State, official and other important occasions. It is a guide to be followed as appropriate to the circumstances of the occasion. With the exception of the Sovereign and the Governor-General, the precedence of those listed varies from time to time and from national to local level, depending on the nature of the occasion. Individuals not specifically included in the Order of Precedence may also be accorded precedence ahead of some office holders who are listed, where that is appropriate to the occasion. The relationship between the host and the guests and the requirements of courtesy, hospitality and tikanga may override strict precedence.

### **The Sovereign**

1. The precedence of the Sovereign is absolute.
2. Members of the Royal Family are accorded precedence appropriate to the occasion.

### **Governor-General**

3. In the absence of the Sovereign, the precedence of the Governor-General (or Administrator) is absolute.

### **Seniority within certain positions in the Order of Precedence**

4. Ministers of the Crown/ Members of the Executive Council take precedence according to their relative seniority as may be prescribed by the Prime Minister from time to time.
5. Ambassadors and High Commissioners take precedence according to the date of presentation of Letters of Credence or of assumption of duty. The relative precedence of diplomatic representatives in New Zealand may be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### **Judicial seniority**

6. All Judges of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal are Judges of the High Court of New Zealand.

Apart from the Chief Justice, the seniority of the Judges of the High Court (including Judges of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal) is determined by the seniority of the Court to which they are permanently appointed, and their seniority within that Court.

A list of Judges in order of seniority by Court is available from the Ministry of Justice.

### **Public service and non-public service departments**

7. Public service departments are those defined in Schedule 1 of the State Sector Act 1988. Non-public service departments are the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, New Zealand Defence Force, New Zealand Police, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, Parliamentary Counsel Office, and Parliamentary Service.

## Holders of Royal Honours and decorations

8. Members of the Order of New Zealand, New Zealand Order of Merit and Queen's Service Order, and the various British Orders, and holders of New Zealand and British decorations take precedence in accordance with the Order of Wear. The Order of Wear is available from the Honours Unit, Cabinet Office, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## General notes

**Tikanga/kawa.** The Order of Precedence does not specifically recognise Māori leaders who are widely recognised within a particular iwi or nationally. However, when these individuals attend an occasion where the Order is applied, they should be accorded appropriate precedence reflecting their seniority and the nature of the occasion.

This is of particular relevance to Māori occasions, especially those held on marae and involving state dignitaries. In aligning with this statement, the tikanga (practices) and kawa (protocols) of the host iwi will prevail. The relationship between the host (iwi/hapū) and the guests (state dignitaries and other guests), as well as the requirements of Māori cultural courtesy and hospitality, may override strict precedence.

Further advice and guidance can be sought from Te Puni Kōkiri.

**Realm of New Zealand.** Office holders of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, when in New Zealand on official business, are accorded precedence similar to that given to New Zealand office holders.

**Acting office holders.** Individuals acting in an office in the absence of the office holder are accorded the precedence of the office holder that they are representing.

**Spouses and partners.** The spouses or partners of those accorded precedence in this Order may, by courtesy, be accorded the same precedence as their spouse or partner.

**Precedence within a group.** Precedence within any group is usually determined by seniority, that is, date of appointment or length of service. Persons of equal seniority take precedence in alphabetical order of surname.