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New Zealand

Official Name: New Zealand

LAST UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 16, 2015

Embassy Messages

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Quick Facts

- **PASSPORT VALIDITY:**
Must be valid at time of entry
- **VACCINATIONS:**
None
- **BLANK PASSPORT PAGES:**
One page required for entry stamp
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR ENTRY:**
None
- **TOURIST VISA REQUIRED:**
Not required for stays of up to three months
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR EXIT:**
None

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Embassies and Consulates

[U.S. Consulate General Auckland](#)**3rd Floor,****Citigroup Building,****23 Customs Street East, (cnr. Commerce St)****Auckland, New Zealand****Telephone:** +(64)(9) 303-2724**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(64)(4) 462-6000 or +(64)(9) 303 2724 ext. 2900**Fax:** +(64)(9) 366-0870aucklandacs@state.gov**[U.S. Embassy Wellington](#)****29 Fitzherbert Terrace, Thorndon****Wellington, New Zealand****Telephone:** +(64)(4) 462-6000**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(64)(4) 462-6000**Fax:** +(64)(4) 471-2380**Destination Description**

New Zealand is a stable parliamentary democracy, which recognizes the British monarch as head of state. It has a modern economy with many tourist conveniences and efficient local services. Read the Department of State [Fact Sheet on New Zealand](#) for additional information.

Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements

If you are a U.S. citizen, you are eligible for a visa waiver and do not need a visa for tourist stays of three months or less. You must have a valid passport. [Visit the New Zealand Embassy website](#) for the most current visa information.

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of New Zealand.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

Safety and Security

While in New Zealand you should review your personal security practices, be alert to any unusual activity, and report any significant incidents to local police.

To stay connected:

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) so we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements.
- Follow the Bureau of Consular Affairs on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) .
- Bookmark the [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).
- Follow the U.S. Embassy in Wellington on [Twitter](#) and visiting the Embassy's [website](#).
- In the event of an emergency, contact us at 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or via a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.
- Take some time before traveling to consider your personal security and check for useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: The crime rate in New Zealand is relatively low, but theft from cars, recreational vehicles, and hostels is common, especially in areas frequented by tourists. Do not leave passports or other valuable items in unattended vehicles. Violent crime against tourists is rare; however, if you are traveling alone, you should be especially vigilant and avoid isolated areas.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. We can:

- Replace a stolen passport.
- Help you find appropriate medical care if you are the victim of violent crimes such as assault or rape.
- Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and if you want us to, contact family members or friends.
- Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to local attorneys, although it is important to remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting the crime.

In New Zealand, a private organization called [Victim Support](#) works both independently and with the New Zealand Police to assist victims of crime. Victim Support is available 24 hours a day by calling 0800-842-846 (0800-Victim) or emailing help@victimsupport.org.nz.

Please see our "[Victim of Crime](#)" webpage and also our "[Help for U.S. Citizen Victims of Crime Overseas](#)," including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in New Zealand is 111.

Please see our [information for victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

Local Laws & Special Circumstances

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in New Zealand you are subject to its laws. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. Persons violating New Zealand laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in New Zealand are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. In New Zealand, driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. If you break local laws in New Zealand, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution.

There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States. You can be [prosecuted in the United States](#) for engaging in sexual conduct with children or for using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country regardless of the legality of these activities under that country's laws. Counterfeit and pirated goods are illegal in the United States and if you purchase them in a foreign country, you may be breaking local law as well.

Arrest notifications in host country: While some countries will automatically notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested in that country, others may not. To ensure that the United States is aware of your circumstances, request that the police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you are arrested or detained overseas.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Some heavily populated parts of New Zealand are in areas of high seismic activity. In recent years, several large earthquakes and aftershocks have occurred throughout the country, resulting in widespread damage to infrastructure, injuries, and deaths. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available from the [U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA).

Adventure Sports: Many tourists come to New Zealand to participate in extreme adventure sports, such as bungee jumping, sky diving, hiking, rappelling, climbing, motorcycling, and kayaking. All too often, injuries and even death result from participating in such activities. You should use caution and common sense when engaging in adventure sports. Make sure you have travel medical insurance and that it covers your sport. See our section on Medical Insurance below. **Never participate in these sports alone.** Always carry identification, and let someone else know where you are at all times. Before kayaking, check the river conditions and wear a life jacket. When hiking, rappelling, or climbing, carry a first aid kit, and know the location of the nearest rescue center.

Imports: New Zealand is an island nation, and the government is serious about preserving its delicate ecosystem. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) strictly regulates what can be imported into New Zealand. If you do not declare goods that could be quarantined, you can be fined up to 100,000 NZD (approximately 80,000 USD) and/or face up to five years in prison. If you do not declare goods considered to be a biosecurity risk, such as fresh fruit, seeds, and plants, you can receive an instant fine of 400 NZD (approximately 317 USD). When importing a pet, you will need thorough veterinary documentation, and a quarantine period will be required. The MPI may seize and destroy unfinished wood products, used hiking shoes, gardening tools, fresh food items, and items such as used pet carriers. For more information please visit the [Biosecurity New Zealand website](#) .

WOMEN TRAVELER INFORMATION: If you are a woman traveling abroad, please review our travel tips for [Women Travelers](#).

LGBT RIGHTS: There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBT events in New Zealand. For more detailed information about LGBT rights in New Zealand you may review the State Department's annual [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#). For further information on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) travel, please read our [LGBT Travel Information](#) page.

ACCESSIBILITY: While in New Zealand, individuals with disabilities may find accessibility and accommodation very different from what they find in the United States. Every new building and major reconstruction in New Zealand must provide "reasonable and adequate" access for individuals with disabilities, but be aware that most buildings pre-date this requirement. Most facilities have wheelchair access. Some buses in towns and cities are equipped to cater to individuals with disabilities, but most public transport is not. If you are planning a holiday and need information on facilities for individuals with disabilities, please visit and the [New Zealand Tourism website](#) . Most transport operators can serve individuals with disabilities, but it is a good idea to phone ahead to tell them in advance what your needs are.

Car parking allocated for individuals with disabilities is available in New Zealand. We suggest you bring a letter from your medical provider on his or her professional letterhead detailing your medical condition and your need for accessible parking. You can read more about how to qualify for accessible parking spaces on the [CCS Disability Action website](#) .

Health

Quality medical care is widely available, but waiting lists exist for certain types of treatment. High-quality medication (both over-the-counter and prescription) is widely available at local pharmacies, although the name of the product may differ from the U.S. version. Access to medical care may be less available in rural areas. Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost thousands of dollars. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services.

You can find detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the [CDC website](#) . For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#) , which contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#) .

Travel & Transportation

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in New Zealand, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. All traffic travels on the left in New Zealand, and you should exercise extra caution if you are accustomed to driving on the right. Driving on the wrong side of the road is a leading cause of serious injury and death for U.S. tourists. Proceed carefully through intersections. Traffic circles are common throughout New Zealand. When approaching a traffic circle, always yield to traffic coming from the right--noting that traffic already in the circle has the right-of-way--and merge to the left into the circle. Right turns on a red traffic signal are not permitted.

Renting a car or a camper is a popular way to enjoy New Zealand's natural beauty, but if you are unfamiliar with local conditions, you should be extremely careful. New Zealand has only 100 miles of multi-lane divided motorways. Most intercity travel is on narrow, two-lane roads. While these roads are in good condition, New Zealand's rugged terrain means motorists often encounter sharper curves and steeper grades than those found on the U.S. Interstate Highway System. Make sure to follow the posted speed limit signs. The speed limits are much lower than they are in the United States. You should also use caution to avoid animals when driving in rural areas. Please note that there is very limited cell phone coverage on large portions of scenic highway in the South Island, which is remote and has little traffic.

Roadside sobriety checks by police are common and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol can lead to immediate jail time in New Zealand. Please be aware that the blood alcohol limit in New Zealand is lower than that in most U.S. states. Furthermore, New Zealand prohibits driving while texting as well as driving while using a cell phone.

Make sure to look carefully in all directions before crossing a street or roadway, and always use crosswalks. Pedestrians do not have the right of way except in crosswalks. New Zealand law requires that cars stop for pedestrians who are in a crosswalk and that cars stop at least two meters (approximately 6 feet) from a crosswalk that is in use.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. Also, we suggest that you visit the website of the country's [New Zealand national tourist office](#) and [the Land Transport Safety Authority website](#) .

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the government of New Zealand's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of New Zealand's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#) .

[Please see Fact Sheet for this country.](#)

Assistance for U.S. Citizens

U.S. Consulate General
Auckland
3rd Floor,
Citigroup Building,
23 Customs Street East, (cnr.
Commerce St)
Auckland, New Zealand

- Telephone
+(64) (9) 303-2724
- Emergency After-Hours
Telephone
+(64) (4) 462-6000 or +(64)
(9) 303 2724 ext. 2900
- Fax
+(64) (9) 366-0870
- Email
aucklandacs@state.gov
- **U.S. Consulate General
Auckland**

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