

Background

From 1 October 2019, passengers who are transiting through New Zealand on the way to another country are required to hold an NZeTA (New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority) or a transit visa. New Zealand and Australian citizens are exempt from this requirement.

Airlines play an important role in educating and informing passengers, which is why most airline passenger communications (such as email booking confirmations) include reminders about a passenger's responsibility to check their transit and entry requirements.

However, some travellers may still arrive at check in without the correct travel authority or visa. This information will help you understand and reinforce the transit rules for New Zealand.

What is Immigration New Zealand's definition of a transit passenger?

A passenger who plans to pass through Auckland International Airport on the way to another country is a transit passenger. To be considered a transit passenger, they must (for the whole time they are in New Zealand) stay:

- On board the craft they came to New Zealand on; or
- In the transit area of Auckland International Airport (airside).

A passenger can spend a maximum of 24 hours in transit.

If your airline has integrated tickets that do not require check in at point of transit in Auckland, or you operate (or outsource operations of) transit desks/phones in the airside transit area then you can check in the passenger as a transit passenger.

A passenger is **not** considered to be transiting if they go landside at Auckland International Airport for any reason (including landside check in for a connecting flight).

Auckland International Airport is the only airport in New Zealand where transit is permitted. Cruise passengers are not transit passengers.

Who needs an NZeTA to transit New Zealand?

Visa waiver travellers: Travellers from a visa waiver country or a transit visa waiver country must hold an NZeTA to pass through Auckland International Airport (airside only) as a transit passenger. Australian permanent residents must also hold an NZeTA to transit. You can find the list of countries at immigration.govt.nz/nzeta.

Visa required travellers: If they are travelling to or from Australia, passengers from all other countries ("visa required countries") are eligible to pass through Auckland International Airport as a transit passenger if they hold an NZeTA. In these cases, the passenger can use an NZeTA instead of a transit visa. If the passenger is transiting on the way to a country other than Australia, the existing transit visa requirements apply.

Requesting an NZeTA

As part of the NZeTA request process, travellers are asked "**Will you be staying in New Zealand?**" The travel conditions attached to their NZeTA reflect how the traveller answers this question.

If they answer "No. I am a transit passenger": The NZeTA issued to the traveller will allow them to transit New Zealand, but will not allow them to visit. This means the traveller must not leave the transit area of Auckland International Airport.

If the traveller answers "Yes. I will be coming to New Zealand to visit": The passenger has indicated their intent to enter New Zealand and the NZeTA issued to the traveller will reflect this. They will also be charged the NZD \$35 International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy (IVL), if applicable. These travellers can use their NZeTA to visit and/or transit.

If a traveller who answers "No" later decides they want to enter New Zealand, they must request a new NZeTA and answer "Yes" to indicate their intent to visit the country. The traveller must pay the NZeTA request fee again and, if applicable, the NZD \$35 International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy. If the traveller is eligible, they will be issued a new NZeTA.

Common transit passenger scenarios for airlines

Scenario 1:

What happens if a flight is cancelled or delayed at Auckland International Airport and the passengers need to leave the airport (e.g. to be put up in a hotel)?

Airlines need to call Immigration Border Operations (IBO) as they do now. There are existing provisions to facilitate this situation.

Scenario 2:

What happens if a flight is diverted to New Zealand or another airport within New Zealand, including if the passengers need to leave the airport (e.g. to be put up in a hotel)?

Airlines need to call Immigration Border Operations (IBO) as they do now. There are existing provisions to facilitate this situation.

Scenario 3:

What happens if a passenger has not requested an NZeTA in advance of their travel (regardless of whether they are transiting New Zealand or visiting) and arrives at their port of origin for check in?

A passenger who arrives for check in at their port of origin will be identified by NZ APP as 'Do Not Board' if they are required to hold an NZeTA and do not. In this case, the passenger should be advised to request an NZeTA at the port and then re-attempt check in.

Scenario 4:

What happens if a passenger has not requested an NZeTA in advance of their travel and arrives at an off-shore transit port with a short turnaround time which leaves little time for the passenger to request an NZeTA?

A passenger who arrives for check in at their transit port (prior to reaching New Zealand) will be identified by NZ APP as 'Do Not Board' if they are required to hold an NZeTA and do not. In this case, the passenger should be advised to request an NZeTA at the port and check back in at the gate.

If the passenger is unable to request an NZeTA due to tight turnaround times between flights, airlines need to call Immigration Border Operations (IBO).