



Cook Islands Diplomatic Clearance Procedures: Aircraft

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for state aircraft to transit Cook Islands territorial airspace and/or land in the Cook Islands must obtain confirmation of Diplomatic Clearance via Note Verbale, issued either directly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand. This process and confirmation may differ for partners who have been granted Diplomatic Blanket Clearance – further details can be found on the Diplomatic Blanket Clearance Factsheet.

Information required for Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance

To obtain Diplomatic Clearance for state aircraft, foreign governments must complete a diplomatic clearance for aircraft form and submit under cover of a Third Person Note (TPN), this must be submitted

- 1. Official purpose of the flight** (e.g. governmental, humanitarian).
- 2. Aircraft details**
 - a. Aircraft type (make and model)
 - b. Aircraft tail number or registration number
 - i. Alpha-numeric only (maximum ten (10) characters)
 - ii. When noting this information please do not use any blank spaces, dashes, slashes or any other special characters.
 - c. Aircraft call sign to be filed on the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) flight plan
 - i. Maximum seven (7) alpha-numeric characters
 - ii. ICAO three (3) letter designator to be used where applicable
 - d. Alternate Aircraft details
- 3. Ownership & Operation**
 - a. Owner and operator of the aircraft
 - b. Confirmation whether the aircraft is state-owned or chartered for exclusive governmental use
- 4. Crew & Passenger Information**
 - a. Full name of the pilot
 - b. Number of crew on board
 - c. Number of passengers on board
 - d. Number of VIPs on board with titles and names
- 5. Flight Itinerary**
 - a. Departure point prior to entry into Cook Islands airspace
 - b. Arrival date, time, and airport(s) in the Cook Islands
 - c. Departure date and time from final Cook Islands airport
- 6. Overflight Routes**
 - a. For transits only: Cook Islands Sector Airspace entry and exit points and times, through either
 - i. Latitude and longitude coordinates; or
 - ii. ICAO five (5) letter designator boundary reporting point for planned route.
- 7. Ground handling agent**
 - a. Name of nominated ground handling agent in the Cook Islands
 - b. 24-hour contact number of ground handling agent
- 8. Cargo/ Dangerous Goods**
 - a. Description of cargo
 - b. Hazardous/ dangerous cargo to be clearly identified
 - c. Weapons on board (e.g. type, quantity)
 - d. Photographic, electro-optical, or other Observation/ Sensor Equipment (e.g. type, quantity)

9. Declarations & Contact

- a. Declaration that the aircraft will not engage in commerce
- b. After-hours contact number for urgent operational matters

Further general notes for Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance to the Cook Islands

- An aircraft may not land at an airport not specified in the diplomatic clearance approval.
- Submission of complete crew and passenger manifests on arrival is mandatory under Cook Islands Immigration and Customs requirements.
- Ensure all crew and passengers hold and are carrying with them valid travel documentation i.e. Passport with a minimum of six (6) months validity.
- Compliance with other Cook Islands government agency requirements (e.g. Cook Islands Customs Service, Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Biosecurity Service and relevant port authorities) is the responsibility of the requesting government.
- Failure to comply with these agency procedures could result in penalties and affect issuance of future diplomatic clearances.

Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance lead time and processing timeframes

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for state aircraft to transit Cook Islands territorial airspace or land in the Cook Islands must submit the above information via Note Verbale, with a completed Diplomatic Clearance form for Aircraft to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of the Cook Islands or the Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand **no later than three (3) full business weeks (15 working days) in advance of the aircraft's initial entry into the Cook Islands.** Business days are routinely Monday through to Friday and do not include public holidays.

Compliance with advance notification timelines is critical to enable inter-agency coordination. Failure to comply may affect the issuance of future diplomatic clearances. **Failure to comply with the advance notification rule could affect issuance of future diplomatic clearances.**

Exception to the three business week notification rule may be made under the following circumstances;

- Bona fide emergencies (e.g. urgent medical evacuation, humanitarian and disaster assistance, search and rescue operations)
 - Medical emergencies must be accompanied by information about the emergency as verified or endorsed by the Cook Islands Ministry of Health and is considers the possible loss of life, limb or eyesight if treatment is not sought within 24 hours.
- Mechanical or weather delay

Confirmation of clearance, should it be granted, will be conveyed via responding Note Verbale no later than five (5) working days in advance of the aircrafts initial entry into the Cook Islands.

Contact Points

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
Attention: Office of the Secretary
Phone: (+682) 29 347
Email: secfai@mfai.gov.ck | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand
Attention: Corporate Services Officer
Phone: (+64) 4 472 5126
Email: admin@mfai.gov.ck and wellingtonstaff@mfai.gov.ck |
|---|--|

Disclaimer

This document is a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration is not responsible for the results of any actions taken on the basis of information in this document, or for any errors or omissions.