



Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance Factsheet

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration
Government of the Cook Islands

Cook Islands Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance Procedures

Foreign governments seeking diplomatic clearance for state aircraft to transit Cook Islands territorial airspace 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.

Information required for Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance

To obtain Diplomatic Clearance for state aircraft, foreign governments must submit the following information to the above mentioned and below specified agent/s via Note Verbale, with technical information enclosed as required;

1. **Official purpose of the flight** e.g. governmental or non-governmental in nature.
2. **Specific type of aircraft** e.g. make and model.
3. **Aircraft tail number or registration number displayed on the aircraft.** A valid entry is any alpha-numeric combination not exceeding ten (10) characters in length.
 - a. When noting this information please do not use any blank spaces, dashes, slashes or any other special characters.
4. **Aircraft Call Sign** that will be filed on the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) flight plan. Valid state aircraft call signs for diplomatic flights are any alpha-numeric combination not to exceed seven (7) characters, usually beginning with an alphabetic character. If the state aircraft operator has an approved ICAO three-letter designator, please use this designator as the first three letters of the call sign.
 - a. When noting this information please do not use any blank spaces, dashes, slashes or any other special characters.
5. **Owner and operator of the aircraft** e.g. owned and operated by a foreign state or chartered by a foreign state to exclusively perform a governmental function.
6. **Crew Information**
 - a. Full name of the pilot
 - b. The number of crew on board
 - c. The number of passengers
7. **Flight Itinerary:** please ensure all times are noted in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and utilise ICAO codes for airport listing(s).
 - a. Time, date and name of airport from which the aircraft is departing immediately prior to entering the Cook Islands
 - b. Time and date when the aircraft will be arriving at its first destination in the Cook Islands and list all Cook Islands airports to which the aircraft will be flying and/or landing (if applicable)
 - c. Time and date when the aircraft will be departing from its final port in the Cook Islands
 - d. For transits only, note the entry and exit points and times as provided by the aircrew or mission planner.
8. **Cargo Description:** describe the type of cargo the aircraft is carrying; if the cargo is hazardous please ensure this is noted.
9. **Declaration** that the aircraft will not be used to engage in commerce, other than to exclusively transport government officials or government cargo for official government business.
10. **A reliable after-hours telephone number or point of contact** of relevant personnel as relates to the aircraft, for use in urgent situations.



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Further general notes for Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance to the Cook Islands

- An aircraft may not land at an airport that has not been specified on the diplomatic clearance request.
- It is the foreign government's responsibility to ensure submission of a complete manifest of both crew and passengers on arrival into the Cook Islands, as required by Cook Islands Immigration and Customs officials.
- It is the requesting governments' responsibility to meet other Cook Islands government agency requirements e.g Cook Islands Customs Service, Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Biosecurity Service and relevant port authorities. 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 to the below specified agent/s via Note Verbale, with technical information enclosed as required, **no later than three (3) full business weeks (120 working hours) 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 when the Cook Islands Government is closed.

Compliance with the three business week advance notification procedure is critical to ensuring necessary information and adequate lead time is provided to the various Cook Islands Government agencies involved with flights into and within the airspace of the Cook Islands. **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: 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 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.

Processing Agents for Diplomatic Aircraft Clearance to the Cook Islands

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Cook Islands High Commission in New Zealand

Attn: Corporate Services Officer

Phone: (+64) 4 472 5126

Email: admin@cookhicom.org.nz and cookislands@cookhicom.org.nz

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