



SEARCH INFORMATION

One way Customs manages risks to New Zealand's border security is by searching people and their baggage. Under New Zealand law you must answer questions about your identity, travel, and the goods in your possession. You must also allow us to examine those goods.

Customs does not discriminate on ethnicity, race or gender — we examine travellers from all walks of life. In most cases only baggage and electronic items are examined, but sometimes we also search people.

NOT ALL TRAVELLERS ARE SEARCHED

Customs uses a variety of methods to assess a traveller's risk at the border so we do not need to search everyone entering New Zealand.

Being searched doesn't always mean we suspect you are hiding prohibited goods or smuggling contraband; it may just mean that your risk is unknown and has to be assessed.

SEARCHING BAGGAGE

During a baggage search the contents of your bags are removed and inspected by a Customs officer. Electronic items such as mobile phones, iPads, hard drives and laptops may also be examined. Please note that this process does not copy or alter your personal data.

We may also swab items to test for any drug or explosive residue.

We acknowledge that this process takes time and can be unpleasant and intrusive. However, this method ensures that all goods entering New Zealand comply with the law.

SEARCHING PEOPLE

Customs officers may also search you if they have reason to suspect that you have prohibited or restricted goods concealed on or about your body. Your rights will be fully explained before the search.

GOODS DETAINED BY CUSTOMS

We may hold goods for further examination or for payment of duty and/or GST. If this occurs you will be given a 'Receipt for Goods Detained' with the description of the items and any identifying marks and serial numbers.



We will also tell you what to do if you have questions about the goods.

CUSTOMS' AUTHORITY TO SEARCH

Under the Customs and Excise Act 2018 all persons entering or leaving New Zealand must report to a Customs officer and make their baggage and any other goods in the person's possession or under the person's control, available for inspection. This Act also provides Customs officers with lawful authority to search people, if necessary.

FEEDBACK

If you want to comment on the search process, ask to see the officer in charge at the time of the search, who will discuss this with you. If you want to provide comment later you can email us at: feedback@customs.govt.nz

FOR ALL GENERAL ENQUIRIES:

- 0800 428 786 (0800 4 CUSTOMS) (toll-free from within New Zealand)
- feedback@customs.govt.nz
- www.customs.govt.nz