



PCO, n.d.

New Zealand Legislation Glossary

Please note that this page is not intended to give complete definitions of these terms, but rather is to help the general user by explaining how the terms are used in the context of this website.

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A

Act

An Act is a law passed by Parliament. Before an Act is passed by Parliament it is called a [Bill](#). There are five types of Acts: [public](#), [private](#), [local](#), [provincial](#), and [imperial](#).

administering department, ministry, or other agency

Most [Acts](#) and [Legislative Instruments](#) are administered by a government agency, usually a department or ministry, which is identified in the Act or Legislative Instrument. That department or ministry is generally responsible for the operation of the legislation and for making recommendations to the government of the day about improving it. You can usually find the name of the administering agency at the start of the document. Alternatively it may appear under legislative history or administrative information at the end of the document (linked to from the contents page).

[Other Instruments](#) can be administered by a wider variety of agencies. The administering agency is named on the Other Instrument's information page.

amendments

Changes made to an [Act](#) or [Legislative Instrument](#) are called amendments. By default, this website shows Acts and Legislative Instruments with the amendments incorporated, up to the date indicated (the "as at" date). Amendment Acts and amendment Legislative Instruments (as opposed to principal Acts and principal Legislative Instruments) are those that make changes to existing Acts or Legislative Instruments. [Other Instruments](#) can also be amended; how their amendments are shown depends on the agency that administers them. In amending legislation, blocks of text to be inserted into an Act or Legislative Instrument are shaded (if published after 11 April 2015) or indicated with quotation marks (if published before this date). See [Why does the format of some documents vary?](#)

as at

When viewing an [Act](#) or [Legislative Instrument](#), the *Versions and amendments* tab displays an "as at" date for each version. This indicates the last date that amendments commenced and were incorporated into each individual version. (If the legislation is not official and has not been amended since it was loaded into the database and it shows an "as at" date, the "as at" date will be the date it was loaded.) See also [reprint](#).

as enacted

"Enacted" means, in relation to a [Bill](#), passed or made into law (ie when it was assented to by the Governor-General). On this website, "as enacted" refers to the original version of an [Act](#) when it was passed into law.

as made

On this website, "as made" refers to the original version of a [Legislative Instrument](#) when it was made into law. Legislative Instruments that are Orders in Council are made into law by being signed by the Governor-General. Other Legislative Instruments are made in different ways.

assent

See [Royal assent](#).

B

Bill

A Bill is a proposed [Act](#) that has been [introduced](#) (although not all Bills will become Acts). Bills change as they go through the legislative process—see [Bill number](#). For information on the legislative stages a Bill passes through, see [How a bill becomes law](#). To comment on a Bill before a [select committee](#), see [Make a submission](#).

Bill number

Bills are assigned a number when they are introduced into the [House of Representatives](#). A version number is shown after the Bill number, eg 100—1, 100—2, 100—3.

The first version is the Bill "as introduced" into the House of Representatives. The second version will usually be as reported from the relevant [select committee](#). The third version will usually be as reported from the [committee of the whole House](#). (See [How a Bill becomes law](#) for information on the various stages.)

C

clause

On this website, a clause refers to the basic unit of a [Legislative Instrument](#) or a [Bill](#). Each clause within a Legislative Instrument or Bill deals with a separate subject or idea and has its own number. When a Bill becomes an [Act](#), its clauses are called sections.

Within the text of a Legislative Instrument, the basic unit may actually be called "regulation", "rule", or "clause".

commencement

Commencement refers to the date when an [Act](#) or [Legislative Instrument](#) (or part of it) first comes into force.

commentary

After a [select committee](#) has examined a [Bill](#), it will report back to the [House of Representatives](#). The commentary explains the changes to the Bill recommended by the select committee, and describes the issues the committee has considered. The commentary usually appears at the start of the Bill.

committee of the whole House

This is a committee that includes all members of Parliament. For more information, see the [New Zealand Parliament website](#).

D

Deemed Regulations

On this website, Deemed Regulations are now known as [Other Instruments](#).

departmental disclosure statement

A departmental disclosure statement provides information about the development and content of legislation proposed by the government. The [explanatory note](#) of a Bill (or Supplementary Order Paper) may link to a disclosure statement. Disclosure statements are available at disclosure.legislation.govt.nz.

E**eprint**

See [reprint](#) and [reprint notes](#).

explanatory note

When a [Bill](#) is first introduced to the [House of Representatives](#) (the "as introduced" version), its text is prefaced by an explanatory note. This note is only available with this version. When a [Legislative Instrument](#) is published, an explanatory note appears at the end of the text. It is not part of the Legislative Instrument itself. Some types of Legislative Instruments are published with a "statement of reasons" instead of an explanatory note. If the Legislative Instrument is later amended, the explanatory note will not appear in the amended version (since it may no longer accurately reflect the content of the Legislative Instrument). But it is retained in the "as made" version.

G**Gazette**

The [New Zealand Gazette](#) is the official newspaper of the Government of New Zealand. [Legislative Instruments](#) are notified in the [Gazette](#) after they are made. The date of notification is given at the end of the Legislative Instrument, under administrative information or the [Gazette](#) information. [Other Instruments](#) are usually either published in or notified in the [Gazette](#).

government Bill

A government Bill is a [Bill](#) introduced into the [House of Representatives](#) by a member of Parliament in his or her capacity as a Minister. Government Bills deal with matters of public policy.

Governor-General

The Governor-General is the representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second in New Zealand. Royal assent, given by the Governor-General as the Queen's representative, is required before a Bill passed by the House of Representatives can become an Act.

H**House of Representatives**

The House of Representatives is a body made up of elected individuals who are called members of Parliament. For more information on the House of Representatives and Parliament, see [What is Parliament?](#) and [Role of Parliament](#).

HTML

Hyper text markup language, the standard web page language. On this website, HTML versions of documents are the versions you see when you first navigate to a document.

I**imperial Acts**

Imperial Acts are [Acts](#) of the Parliaments of England, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom that are part of the law of New Zealand under the [Imperial Laws Application Act 1988](#).

imperial subordinate legislation

Imperial subordinate legislation is a type of [Legislative Instrument](#) made under an imperial Act and in force in New Zealand under the [Imperial Laws Application Act 1988](#).

in force

In force means that the [Act](#) or the [Legislative Instrument](#) has the force of law. On this website, all Acts and Legislative Instruments that have come into force, or have had any provisions in them come into force, and have not been [repealed](#) or [revoked](#), are said to be in force.

interpretation

An [Act](#), [Bill](#), or [Legislative Instrument](#) may contain one or more interpretation sections or clauses, which define specific words and phrases used in the document and may include other matters of interpretation. If words or phrases are not defined in the particular Act or Legislative Instrument (or defined under the Act under which a Legislative Instrument is made), their ordinary meaning applies unless a definition in other legislation applies. The [Interpretation Act 1999](#) provides definitions that apply to all legislation.

introduced

A [Bill](#) is introduced when a member of Parliament (or in the case of a Government Bill, a Minister) formally puts it before the [House of Representatives](#) for its consideration. Once a Bill is introduced, it is publicly available.

K**key**

If amendments are made to a Bill as part of its progress through the House, there is a key before the contents page that explains how the amendments are shown.

L**legislation**

On this website, legislation refers to [Acts](#), [Bills](#), [Legislative Instruments](#), [Other Instruments](#), and [Supplementary Order Papers](#) (although Bills and Supplementary Order Papers relate only to proposed legislation).

legislative history

For [Bills](#) and [Acts](#), legislative history is a summary of the key dates of a Bill's progress through its legislative stages in the [House of Representatives](#). These dates include the date of the Bill's introduction, the date when it was reported back to the House from the select committee, and the date when it received the Royal assent, as appropriate. Legislative history appears at the end of post-introduction versions of Bills. It is also included at the end of [as-enacted](#) versions of Acts, although not in older Acts.

Legislative Instruments

"Legislative instrument" is defined in section 4 of the [Legislation Act 2012](#). Legislative Instruments can include Orders in Council, regulations, rules, notices, determinations, proclamations, or warrants. Legislative Instruments are laws made by the [Governor-General](#), Ministers of the Crown, and certain other bodies under powers conferred by an Act of Parliament. Certain resolutions of the House of Representatives are also classed as Legislative Instruments. Legislative Instruments generally deal with technical details that may be subject to frequent change.

Before 5 August 2013, legislation of this type was in general known as "Regulations", or "Statutory Regulations". On this website, these documents are now found under "Legislative Instruments". Regulations were published in the Statutory Regulations series; they have an "SR" reference number (eg SR 2011/139). Legislative Instruments made from 1 January 2014 are part of the Legislative Instruments series and have an "LI" number (eg LI 2014/25). Legislative Instruments made between 5 August 2013 and 1 January

2014 were published in the Statutory Regulations series, and so have an "SR" number.

See [About legislation](#) for more on Legislative Instruments.

local Act

A local [Act](#) deals with matters of public interest but only affects a particular part of New Zealand, eg the [Aid to Water-Power Works Act 1910](#) and the [Masterton Trust Lands Act 2003](#).

local Bill

A local [Bill](#) is a Bill promoted by a local authority that becomes a local Act if enacted.

M

member's Bill

A member's Bill is a non-government [Bill](#) promoted by a member of Parliament who is not a Minister. A member's Bill deals with matters of public policy, and becomes a [public Act](#) if it is enacted.

N

not yet in force

This refers to an Act or Legislative Instrument (or part of one) that has been enacted or made but that has not yet come [into force](#) because its commencement date is in the future.

O

official

An official version of legislation is legislation that is taken to correctly set out the text of legislation. It will be taken by the Courts to correctly state the law without any further proof of its accuracy. See [sections 16 and 18](#) of the Legislation Act 2012. Only legislation that displays the New Zealand Coat of Arms on the front page is official.

If the Act or Legislative Instrument does not display the New Zealand Coat of Arms on its front page, it is not an official version and is provided for information only. See [Status of legislation on this website: what is official](#) for more information about identifying official legislation.

"Official" is not a term that is relevant to Bills or SOPs, because they are not enacted law.

officialisation

Officialisation is the term that was used by the Parliamentary Counsel Office to describe the process that was used to check compiled legislation to confirm its accuracy, before the [New Zealand Legislation website](#) became a source of official legislation.

The officialisation process has included the exercise of the powers conferred by [section 24 of the Legislation Act 2012](#) (and previously [section 17C](#) of the Acts and Regulations Publication Act 1989, now repealed). This section authorises the Parliamentary Counsel Office to make certain editorial changes to a reprinted enactment so that it can be reprinted in a format consistent with current legislative drafting practice.

Order in Council

A type of [Legislative Instrument](#) that is made by the Executive Council presided over by the Governor-General. Most Legislative Instruments are made by way of Order in Council. For more information about the Executive Council, see the [Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website](#). To find Orders in Council on this website, search or browse under [Legislative Instruments](#).

Other Instruments

Other Instruments, in the context of this website, are instruments that are made under Acts or the Royal prerogative and that may have legislative effect, but are not [Legislative Instruments](#). Examples include most land transport rules, civil aviation rules, and a wide variety of other rules, codes, and instruments.

Other Instruments are not hosted directly on this website; instead, we provide a link to where they are hosted, usually on the website of the agency that administers them, or to the relevant [New Zealand Gazette](#). Limited information about each Other Instrument is held on the New Zealand Legislation website, which is why searching and browsing only by title and year are available.

For more information on Other Instruments, see [Other Instruments](#) and [About legislation](#) on the Parliamentary Counsel Office website.

P

Parliament

Parliament is New Zealand's principal law-making body. It has full power to make laws that apply to anyone in New Zealand. Parliament is made up of the [House of Representatives](#) and the Sovereign (represented in New Zealand by the [Governor-General](#)). For more information, see the [New Zealand Parliament](#) website.

Parliamentary Counsel Office/Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata

New Zealand's Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO) is responsible for drafting and publishing most of New Zealand's legislation. The Parliamentary Counsel Office provides and maintains this website. For more information, see the [Parliamentary Counsel Office](#) website.

PDF

Portable document format, on this website a format intended for downloading and printing. See [Downloading PDFs](#).

PCO

See [Parliamentary Counsel Office](#).

principal Act

Principal Act (as opposed to an amendment Act) refers to an [Act](#) that deals with a particular topic and whose main job is not to amend another Act.

principal Legislative Instrument

Principal Legislative Instrument (as opposed to an amendment Legislative Instrument) refers to a [Legislative Instrument](#) that deals with a particular topic and whose main job is not to amend another Legislative Instrument.

private Act

A private Act is an [Act](#) that deals with the particular interest or benefit of an identified person or body, eg the [Wills's Road Hall Act 1935](#) and the [Sydenham Money Club Act 2001](#).

private Bill

A private [Bill](#) is a Bill promoted by a person or a body of persons that becomes a private Act if enacted.

provincial Act

A provincial Act is an [Act](#) that dates back to the time when New Zealand was a colony divided into six provinces. Each province had the jurisdiction to pass Acts that only applied within that province.

public Act

A public Act is an [Act](#) that affects the public at large. It deals with matters of public policy and is promoted by the Government or a member of Parliament who is not a Minister.

R**Regulations**

See [Legislative Instruments](#). To find Regulations on this website, search or browse under *Legislative Instruments*. For more information, see [About legislation](#). Regulations are defined in [section 29](#) of the Interpretation Act 1999.

regulatory impact statement

The [explanatory note](#) of a Bill may link to, or include, a regulatory impact statement (RIS). This summarises the responsible agency's advice given at the time decisions were made leading to the creation of the Bill. Recent regulatory impact statements are also available at www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/informationreleases/ris.

repealed Act

A repealed [Act](#) is no longer in force. When searching on this website, an Act that is spent or expired will also be found under repealed Acts.

reprint

On this website, a reprint, or eprint, is a version of an Act or Legislative Instrument that incorporates all amendments made to it as at the date of publication of the reprint. There may be multiple versions of a reprint with different "as at" dates, which enables a user to locate a specific version of an Act or Legislative Instrument with amendments incorporated "as at" a particular date. However, only the legislation that has been updated since September 2007 will state that it is a reprint, and will include reprint notes at the end of the document.

For more about reprints, see the [Parliamentary Counsel Office website](#).

reprint notes

On a reprint, or eprint, a note at the start of the document indicates the provision that has authorised changes to be made to the reprint, and refers to reprint notes at the end of the document. The reprint notes at the end of the reprint or eprint explain its status and list the amendments incorporated in that particular reprint or eprint. Reprint notes in unofficial legislation refer to the legislation as an eprint.

revoked Legislative Instrument

A revoked [Legislative Instrument](#) is no longer in force. When searching on this website, a Legislative Instrument that is spent, has been disallowed, or has expired will be found under revoked Legislative Instruments.

Royal assent

Royal assent, given by the [Governor-General](#) as the Queen's representative, is required before a Bill passed by the House of Representatives can become an Act.

S**section**

A section is the basic unit of an [Act](#). Each section deals with a separate subject or idea and has its own number.

select committee

These are committees made up of members of Parliament. For more information, see the [New Zealand Parliament website](#).

SOP

See [Supplementary Order Paper](#).

Statutory Regulations

Since 5 August 2013, legislation of this type is classed as a Legislative Instrument. To find Statutory Regulations on this website, search or browse under *Legislative Instruments*. For more about the change, see [Legislative Instruments](#) and [About legislation](#).

Supplementary Order Paper

A Supplementary Order Paper (SOP) is a published document that sets out proposed amendments to a [Bill](#).

T**terminated**

On this website, "terminated" refers to a [Bill](#) that has been defeated, discharged, vetoed, or withdrawn, or has lapsed. A terminated Bill has failed to become an [Act](#).

type

On this website, for an [Act](#), "type" means public, local, private, provincial, or imperial. For a [Bill](#), "type" means government, local, private, or member's.

Y**year**

On this website, for an [Act](#), "year" means the year it was enacted. For a [Bill](#), "year" means the year it was introduced. For [Legislative Instruments](#), "year" means the year it was made. For [Other Instruments](#), "year" means the year it was made or, on occasion, the year it came into force.