

Pānui – New Policy – Sovereign Citizens

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A new Police Manual chapter on interacting with so-called Sovereign Citizens has been made available for staff.

The new chapter provides guidance on interactions Police may have with people who identify as a Sovereign Citizen (SOVCITs), and how to handle these interactions.

SOVCITs is a general term used for those who believe they are not subject to government laws, regulations, or authority. They often claim they are "sovereign" from the government and are immune to legal obligations such as holding a driver's license, paying taxes, or registering vehicles.

SOVCITs may reject the legitimacy of the courts, law enforcement, and other government institutions, often using pseudo-legal arguments to justify their actions, making unique challenges to Police due to their refusal to recognise legal authority.

This can sometimes lead to non-compliance, confrontations, and potential threats to officer and public safety.

This new chapter highlights:

- Prioritising the safety of Police and the public in all encounters, particularly when there is non-compliance or confrontation.
- The importance of recording interactions with SOVCITs in NIA, notifying the Security Intelligence and Threats Group (SITG), and escalating firearms and national security threats.
- How to assert lawful authority clearly and calmly, making it known that all persons within New Zealand are subject to its laws, regardless of their personal beliefs.
- That some SOVCIT documentation is not recognised by law but often includes key details such as real names and dates of birth, so is worth scanning.
- How to manage interactions with SOVCITs using scenario-based examples, including images of what genuine MFAT-issued Diplomatic ID cards look like.

The policy is designed to ensure Police handles interactions with SOVCITs professionally, respectfully, and within the bounds of the law, while upholding public order and safety.

If you have any questions or feedback about this policy, please contact [Police Instructions](#).

To read the full policy, you can find it [here](#), and the checkpoint update [here](#). For further information on SOVCITs, including available intelligence products, please see SITG's dedicated TenOne page [here](#).

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