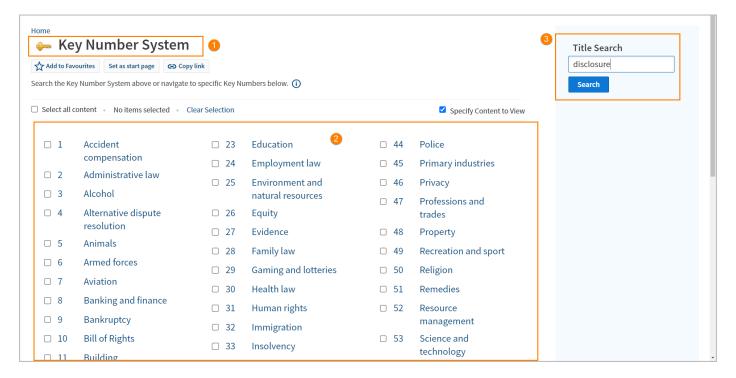# Westlaw New Zealand
How to search for cases by topic

The Key Number System identifies and indexes legal concepts so you can find cases stating or applying a legal concept.
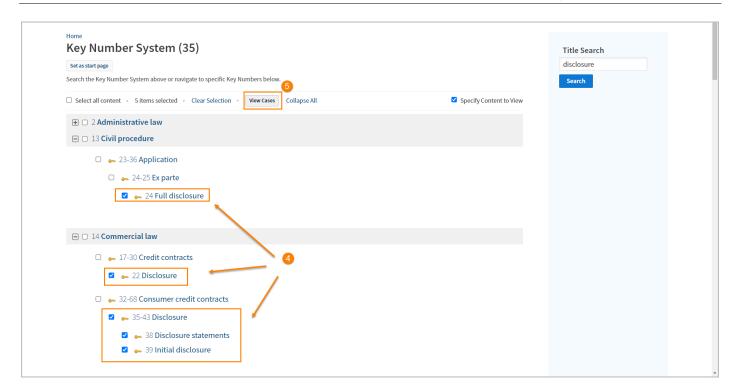
Experienced legal editors have read, summarised and classified case law by topic and subtopics that represent specific points of law. Each specific point of law is assigned a unique number, called a Key Number.

Browse the Key Number System

1. From the New Westlaw NZ home page, click on Key Number System
2. The list of topics covers all the legal classifications used for case law in NZ – click on one of them to see further sub-headings and choose the one you want.
3. If you are unsure which title your topic appears under, Use the title search bar to search for classifications relevant to your issue. For example., disclosure "good faith" compensation.
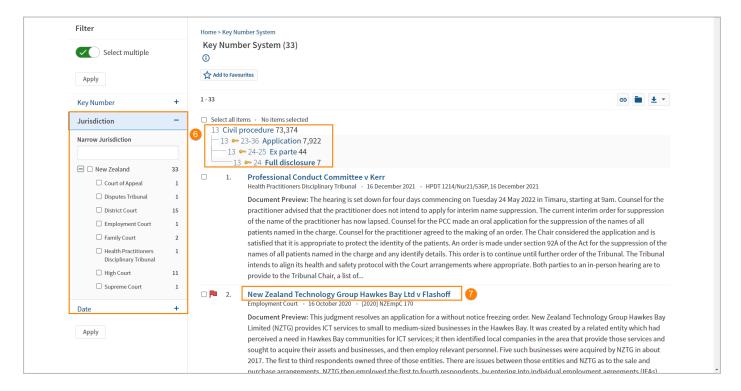

4. The term you chose may appear under several major classifications. Click on the topic you want or tick the boxes on the left for multiple topics.
5. Click View Cases from the row of options near the top of the screen (you may need to scroll up a bit).

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6. The cases relevant to the selected key numbers will be displayed. The number in brackets at the end of the Key Number System title indicates the overall number of cases found for the topic(s).

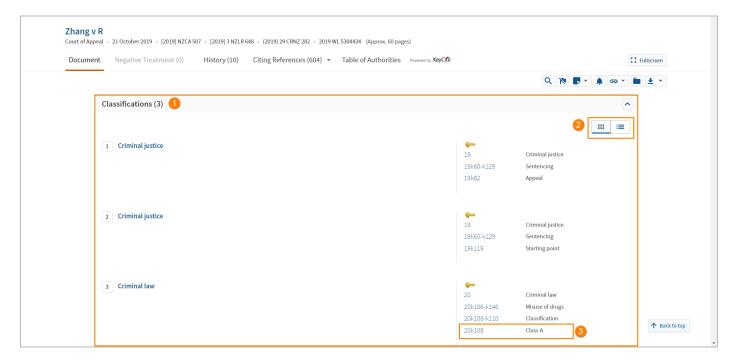   To narrow your results, you can filter by key number, jurisdiction, or date.

   - Use the plus (+) symbols to expand and select the required jurisdiction.
   - Select from the last 6 months, 12 months, 3 years, or enter a specific date or date range.

7. Click the title of any case you wish to see it in full. To move from one result to the next use the arrows in the Results option near the top left of the cases
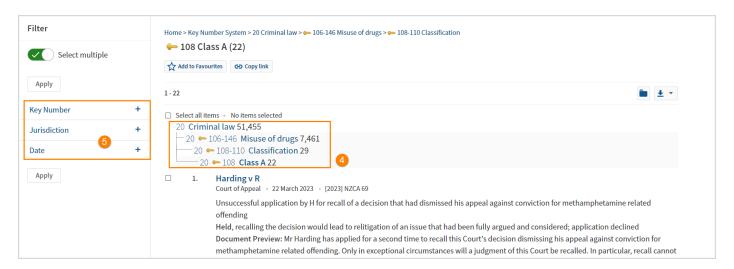
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You can use the Key Number System to find cases discussing similar legal concepts and principles.

1. Specific points of law addressed in a particular case will be listed in **Classifications** on the document tab of a case.

2. You can change the presentation of the classification using the view options at the top right of the first Key Number.

3. Scroll down the page to select a key number to locate cases on a relevant topic, e.g., (Criminal law > Misuse of drugs > Classification>Class A) **20k108 Class A.**

4. The results outlining there are 7,461 cases classified as Misuse of Drugs cases 22 are classified as classified as Class A.

5. Filters to narrow your search are available in the left pane.
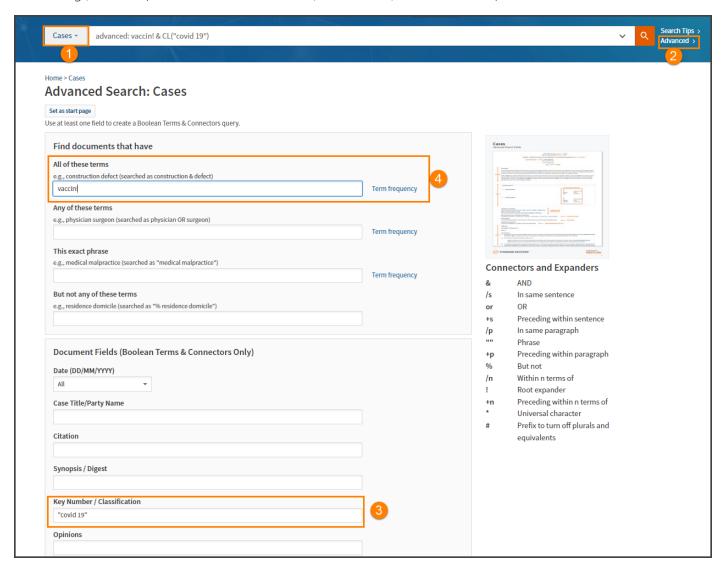
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Search the West Key Number System

The Cases advanced search template includes a field specific for Key Number/Classification, which you can use to search by a Key Number's text or numerical classification.

1. Access Cases from the homepage (under Content Types tab)

2. Select Advanced next to the global search bar.

3. Add the Key Number or Classification titles (e.g., COVID-19) to the Key Number/Classification field and click Enter or the magnifying glass to conduct the search.

4. To refine such results further, enter a search term into the search within results field.
   e.g., vaccin! (Which will deliver vaccine, vaccinated, vaccination etc).

5. To receive email updates when new cases are added to your search results, click the bell icon at the top of the results page and follow the prompts to create the WestClip Alert.
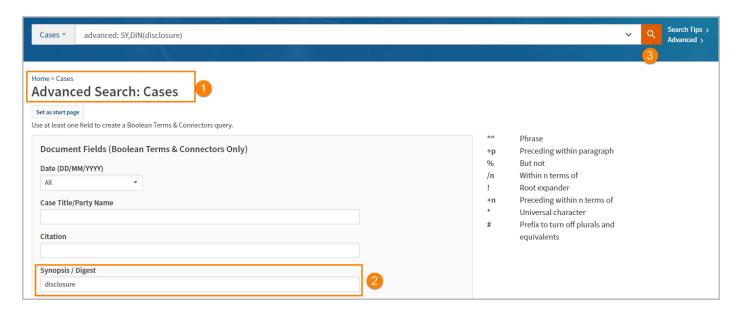
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Note: For cases to appear in the result list of a Key Number search, they need to have been classified by our Cases Editorial Team. Sometimes this process can take a few days, so very recent cases may not appear right away. There are some cases that have not yet been through the classification process, and there are older cases where the Key Number system is yet to be applied.

The Key Number system has new classifications added to it as new categories of cases appear (e.g., Covid cases, bullying cases), but those classifications may not be applied to older cases that may meet that criteria.

Search the Synopsis or Digest of a Case

1. Open the Cases Advanced Search Template.
2. Enter your search term into the Synopsis/Digest field. **e.g., disclosure.**
3. Click search.

4. The above search is looking through the case synopsis rather than the case classification, so terms not captured by the classification process are more likely to be found.

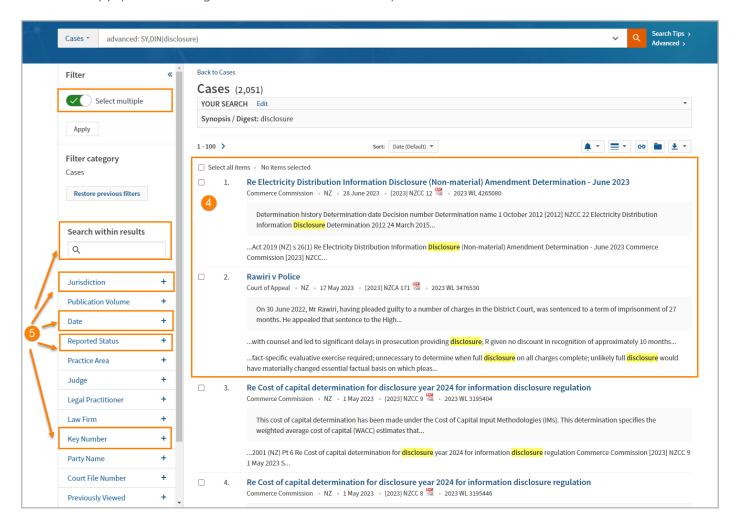Doing the search this way often finds more cases than using the Key Number System because:

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• Newer cases that have not yet been through the Key Number system may be included.
 • Older cases that have not yet been included in the Key Number system may be included.
• Cases eligible for classifications that did not previously exist (e.g., bullying, Covid-19), will be included.

5.   . Refine your results further by:

• Search for specific terms within the cases
• Filter by jurisdiction or date
• Choose to look at reported cases only
• Choose the Key Number filter to choose the type(s) of cases you want.

Tip: It is recommended that you switch on the Multiple Filters from the left pane by clicking Select Multiple. You only need to do this once. This will enable you to choose several filters and then click on Apply to run a single search over all the filters you choose.

Looking for more information?
To sign into Westlaw New Zealand, visit https://nzlaw.thomsonreuters.com.
For assistance using Westlaw New Zealand, email NZtrainers@thomsonreuters.com
For additional training materials, visit https://support.thomsonreuters.co.nz/product/new-westlaw-new-zealand

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