

Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS)

Frequently asked questions

What is the Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS)?

The Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) identifies motorcycles that are considered suitable for riders on a Class 6 (motorcycle) learner or restricted licence. The scheme moves away from applying restrictions based on engine capacity alone to applying restrictions based on the overall performance capability of the motorcycle.

A comprehensive list of approved motorcycle models is available on the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) website.

Why is LAMS being introduced?

Motorcyclists are over-represented in crashes, and have a high risk of being involved in fatal and serious injury crashes. As larger and more powerful bikes are more likely to be involved in crashes than lower powered motorcycles, a power-to-weight restriction will be applied to determine the motorbikes that riders on a Class 6 learner or restricted motorcycle licence are able to ride to help reduce this risk.

The introduction of the scheme is one of many initiatives from Safer Journeys, New Zealand's Road Safety Strategy 2010-2020, and has been legislated in the Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment Rule 2011.

When did the scheme come into effect?

The scheme came into effect on 1 October 2012.

What restrictions are proposed on the types of motorcycles that Class 6 learner or restricted licensed riders can ride, and why?

Holders of learner and restricted motorcycle licences used to be restricted to riding motorcycles of 250cc and less. However, advances in technology are limiting the effectiveness of the restriction. A number of powerful high-performance 250cc motorcycles capable of high speeds and rapid acceleration are available on the market. These motorcycles are not suitable for riders on a Class 6 learner or restricted licence due to their power, riding position and handling. Advances in motorcycle technology are likely to continue.

What motorcycles can a rider on a learner or restricted licence ride?

The scheme allows learner and restricted licence holders to ride motorcycles:

- with a maximum power-to-weight ratio of 150 kilowatts per tonne **AND**
- an upper engine capacity of 660cc **AND**
- that are published on the approved list on the NZTA website.

The scheme also allows learner and restricted licence holders to ride any electric motorcycles, unless that electric motorcycle is on the NZTA LAMS-prohibited list.

What motorcycles can a rider on a learner or restricted licence not ride?

Any motorcycle not on the approved list; these are:

- any motorcycle with an engine capacity of 250 cc or less, that is on the NZTA LAMS-prohibited list,
- any motorcycle with an engine capacity of between 251 cc and 660 cc **and** a power-to-weight ratio of more than 150 kilowatts per tonne,
- any motorcycle over 660 cc
- any electric motorcycle that is on the NZTA LAMS-prohibited list.

Won't this restrict the number of motorcycles that a learner or restricted licence holder can ride?

The scheme provides learner and restricted licence holders with access to a greater range of motorcycles more appropriate for their level of experience. The expanded range includes motorcycles with better handling characteristics and some with advanced safety issues like ABS and combined braking systems.

How do people know whether a motorcycle is approved?

The NZTA has published on its website:

- a list of approved motorcycles 251-660cc, and
- a list of prohibited motorcycles up to 250cc.

As new approved or prohibited motorcycles become available in New Zealand, the website lists will be updated.

What about people who are part way through the motorcycle Graduated Driver Licence Scheme, and their 250cc motorcycle is on the prohibited motorcycle list?

Where a learner or restricted licence holder was riding a particular motorcycle prior to 1 October 2012 and that motorcycle is added to the list of prohibited motorcycles, the person can apply for an exemption. If granted, the exemption will allow the learner/restricted licence holder to continue riding that motorcycle after 1 October 2012.

These exemptions will not be granted for an indefinite period. Instead, each exemption will be granted for a period of time that is sufficient to allow each person to progress from their learner or restricted licence through to their restricted or full licence.

More information about applying for an exemption is on the exemption application form. These forms are available online at www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/driver-licence-exemption or a regional NZTA office can print one out on request.

What if a motorcycle is not on the approved list?

If a motorcycle is not on the approved list published by the NZTA, then it cannot be legally ridden on a learner or restricted licence.

What are the consequences if I ride a bike that is not on the approved list?

It is an offence to ride a motorcycle that is not on the approved list. Riding a motorcycle that is not on the approved list may result in being issued with a fine and demerit points.

What if a motorcycle is on the list and has been modified in a way that has increased its power-to-weight ratio?

Any motorcycle that has been modified to increase its power-to-weight ratio is no longer LAMS-complaint and must not be ridden on a learner or restricted motorcycle licence.

What is the power-to-weight ratio?

The power-to-weight ratio is a measure of the motorcycle's performance and is a better indicator of performance than engine capacity alone.

How is the power-to-weight ratio calculated?

There is no need for motorcycle riders to do any calculations, as this is done by motorcycle manufacturers. The power-to-weight ratio calculation involves the power output (kilowatts) being divided by the tare weight of the motorcycle plus 90 kg (for rider and safety gear). The result is then multiplied by 1000 (to convert to kW per tonne).

My motorcycle meets the LAMS criteria but is not on the list. Can I get it added to the list?

If you believe your motorcycle should be on the approved list and it fits the primary criteria of being under 660cc and less than 150 kilowatts per tonne, you will need to gather the following information from your motorcycle manufacturer:

- vehicle registration number, vehicle identification number, or chassis (frame) number
- make
- model
- year of manufacture
- engine size (cc rating)
- power at the crankshaft
- tare weight

Once you have this information you will need to submit a formal application to the NZTA. The application form can be downloaded from www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/getting/docs/lams-applications.pdf.

I am a motorcycle manufacturer and believe I have a model to add to the list – how can I do this?

Approved motorcycles are identified and confirmed by motorcycle manufacturers. If you are a manufacturer and believe a motorcycle model should be on the LAMS-approved list, and it meets the primary criteria of being under 660cc and less than 150 kilowatts per tonne, you will need to submit a formal application to the NZTA. The application must include:

- vehicle registration number, vehicle identification number, or chassis (frame) number
- make
- model
- year of manufacture
- engine size (cc rating)
- power at the crankshaft
- tare weight

The application form can be downloaded from www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/getting/docs/lams-applications.pdf.

Will approved motorcycles be identified with a label?

The NZ Transport Agency considered adopting the labelling system that is used in Australia to identify approved motorcycles.

The decision was made not to produce labels because of issues around motorcycle modifications. Motorcycles listed on the approved list are compliant as produced by the

manufacturer. If these motorcycles have been modified in anyway, they are no longer approved.

The NZTA has no control over the motorcycles once a label has been applied. This means it could be modified, but still appear to be LAMS-compliant.

If I increase the weight of my motorcycle by adding equipment, will that make it approved?

No. The weight of the motorcycle is that provided by the manufacturer for the motorcycle as it was originally manufactured, and does not include accessories or optional equipment.

Will the addition of aftermarket suspension affect the LAMS compliance of a motorcycle?

If a motorcycle has a direct suspension replacement, it would not affect the power-to-weight ratio of the motorcycle or the LAMS compliance.

Can I de-tune my motorcycle to make it comply with the requirements?

No. The power and weight calculations are based on the data provided by the manufacturer for the motorcycle as it was originally manufactured.

Can I de-restrict my LAMS-approved motorcycle?

Any modification which increases the power of a motorcycle makes it no longer LAMS compliant. If you increase the power of a approved motorcycle and ride it while you are on a class 6 learner or restricted licence, you would be failing to comply with your license requirements and may be fined.

Can a motor cycle with an engine capacity exceeding 660cc be considered if it has a power-to-weight ratio of less than 150kw per tonne?

No. This would go against the way the scheme has been developed and it would be inappropriate for the NZTA to grant such an exemption. The new Rule already allows for a far greater number of motorcycles to be used by class 6 learner and restricted licence holders.

Has the scheme been introduced elsewhere?

Yes. Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania have schemes similar to that being introduced in New Zealand.