

Drivers and operators of freight, vehicle recovery and passenger transport services industries are required to comply with a range of rules and regulations. In most cases this includes holding an appropriate transport service licence.

These regulations and rules assist transport service licence holders to run successful and compliant businesses while ensuring safe management practices and protecting other road users.

This factsheet provides advice on how to get a transport service licence. On the last page, there's guidance on where to find more complete information.

## Who needs a transport service licence?

Whether you're an individual or a company, you must hold the appropriate transport service licence if you're operating any of the following types of service:

### A goods service

A goods service delivers or carries goods, whether or not for hire or reward, using a motor vehicle that has a gross laden weight\* of 6000kg or more, including one that is 'on hire' to carry goods.

\***Gross laden weight** is the greatest of the following:

- any weight specified as a vehicle's gross laden weight by the vehicle's manufacturer
- any weight specified as the gross laden weight of a particular kind of vehicle by the NZ Transport Agency
- the weight of a vehicle together with any load it's carrying, including any equipment and accessories.

### A passenger service

A passenger service carries passengers; usually for hire or reward.

There are two types of passenger service: small and large.

- A **small passenger service** uses vehicles that carry 12 or fewer people (including the driver), for hire or reward. Small passenger services include taxi services, shuttle services and private hire services. Dial-a-driver services are also small passenger services but the vehicles used in these services are not passenger service vehicles. There are special rules for taxi services that do not apply to other small passenger services – see Factsheet 4 *Taxi drivers and area knowledge certificates*.
- A **large passenger service** uses vehicles that are designed or adapted to carry more than 12 people (including the driver), whether or not they operate for hire or reward.

### A vehicle recovery service

A vehicle recovery service tows or carries vehicles. It requires a transport service licence if it isn't exempt under the Land Transport Act (eg you don't need a transport service licence to tow a friend's car with your own in the case of a breakdown).

### A rental service

A rental service hires out vehicles to carry goods or passengers.

## Penalties for operating an unlicensed service

It's illegal to operate an unlicensed transport service of the kinds described above. If you're convicted, you may face a fine of up to \$10,000. The fine increases to a maximum of \$25,000 for subsequent convictions.

In addition to the fine, the court may impound vehicles used in an unlicensed service for up to 90 days (no matter who owns them).

## How to apply for a transport service licence

### Fill out an application form

You need to fill out and submit an application form. You can download one from our website: [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/transport-service-licence-application/](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/transport-service-licence-application/).

You can also get one by calling us on 0800 822 422.

Post your completed application form to:

NZ Transport Agency  
Private Bag 11777  
Palmerston North 4442

Make sure you have provided everything necessary for the application.

### What do I have to provide?

You need to provide:

- the application fee of \$449.80
- the police vetting fee of \$28.80
- a certificate of knowledge of law and practice relevant to the transport licence you're applying for, except if you're going to operate a dial-a-driver or rental service

- the personal details required in the application form, including a statement asserting that the information supplied in the application form is correct and that you are not disqualified from holding or obtaining a transport service licence.

### What is the criteria for approval?

Any person that will hold the licence or will be in control of the transport service must complete a personal details form and will have to meet the legal fit and proper person criteria.

### Certificate of knowledge of law and practice

One of the requirements for getting a transport service licence is that either the licence holder or a person in control of the service must hold a certificate of knowledge of law and practice. This shows that the holder of the certificate has the required knowledge of the laws and practices relating to the safe, efficient and proper operation of a transport service.

### How do I get the certificate?

To get a certificate of knowledge of law and practice, you have to pass a test run by Aspeq (previously known as Assessment Systems Limited). Aspeq's contact details are:

Aspeq Ltd                      Phone: (04) 913 9812  
 PO Box 30343                Fax: (04) 913 9814  
 Level 1  
 191 High Street  
 Lower Hutt

Website: <https://nzta.aspeqexams.com>

The test covers the rules relating to the type of service you will be operating and specific knowledge relating to the requirements and responsibilities of a transport service licence holder. There is an individual handbook for each class of service.

### What are the costs for a certificate?

Handbook and test	Current price as at 1 January 2017
TSL handbook – <i>Knowledge of law and practice</i> (includes postage and packaging)	\$50.50
Goods, passenger or recovery exam	\$108.00
Optional extras	
Reader assisted	\$479.50
On-demand examination	\$379.50
Interpreter assistance	\$900.50

### Who might be exempt from holding a certificate?

The requirement to obtain and hold a certificate of knowledge of law and practice does not apply to operators of rental services and operators of dial-a-driver services. You still must hold the appropriate transport service licence.

In special circumstances, the Transport Agency may waive the requirement for other transport service operators to hold the certificate where the service is limited or infrequent. An example is a truck that's used to carry apples in the picking season, but that only carries bits and pieces around the orchard for most of the year. Generally, exemptions are granted for operators who are carrying their own goods and not for hire or reward.

The application form for an exemption is available by calling us 0800 822 422. Complete the exemption application form when you apply for your transport service licence.

### About the test

The Aspeq website (<https://nzta.aspeqexams.com>) has information on the test.

The test questions are based on the *Knowledge of law and practice* handbook (which includes sample questions). You can buy the handbook online from Aspeq.

The test, which is computer based, is open book, which means you may take the handbook into the test with you. Handbooks are not supplied by Aspeq at the test venue.

An example of how the computer-based test works can be found on the Aspeq website.

You have up to two and a half hours to complete the test and you must score 80 percent or higher to pass the test.

Test standards are set and audited by the Transport Agency.

### What identification do I need to bring to the test?

On the day of the test, you'll need to show identification that has both your photograph and signature on it (eg your driver licence or passport). If you don't present acceptable identification, you won't be able to sit the test. You can find out more about acceptable identification on the Aspeq website.

### When does the test take place?

Aspeq has timetables for when the test takes place in different areas. These are available on the Aspeq website.

Aspeq offers an on demand option, which reduces the waiting period but costs more.

### How do I apply to sit the tests?

You can book your exam up to 24 hours before the exam starts, subject to availability.

### Existing candidates who have a current Aspeq client number

Go to <https://nzta.aspeqexams.com> and click on **Log On** in the banner near the top of the page. Enter your username and password and follow the prompts. Then click on **Book Exam** on the left hand side menu.

If you're a new candidate who doesn't hold a current Aspeq client number, you'll need proof of identity (driver licence) when you register for the first time. Go to <https://nzta.aspeqexams.com> and click on **Register** in the banner near the top of the page. Follow the instructions displayed underneath.

### Is this your first time with Aspeq?

Follow the prompts to either order your exam electronically or download the ASL417 form and post it together with payment (cheque made out to Assessment Systems Ltd) to the Aspeq offices at:

Aspeq Ltd  
 PO Box 30343  
 Lower Hutt 5010

If your application is incomplete Aspeq may return the form to you for completion. If your application is not received in time for the exam booking to proceed, you may be booked in to the next available session.

For information on transfers to different test dates, cancellations or refunds refer to the Aspeq website at:  
<https://nzta.aspeqexams.com>.

**Note:**

This information is provided as a general guide only, and does not cover everything in the law. It is not the source of the law.

## Further information

If you have any questions regarding getting or holding a transport service licence, please call us on 0800 822 422 for advice.

The information in this factsheet is a general guide only. It is not the source of the law and should not be used in place of authoritative legal documents. Some factsheets are updated frequently and print versions can quickly become out of date. If the currency of the information you are reading is important, check the factsheet index on our website ([www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets)) or call us on 0800 822 422.

### Contact details

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- Email us: [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz).
- Write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442.