

# Vehicle licensing

Motor vehicle licensing is where you pay a fee to use your vehicle on public roads. The fee helps to pay for roading projects and road safety programmes.

Vehicle licensing is commonly referred to as 'rego' but should not be confused with registration which is the process where we add a vehicle's details to the Motor Vehicle Register and issue its registration plates.

## How do I relicense my vehicle?

You'll receive a relicensing notice in the mail two to four weeks before your licensing fee is due. (This is called an MR1.) It will set out the fees and your options.

You can pay for your motor vehicle licence at an NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) agent:

- The Automobile Association.
- Post Shops.
- Vehicle Inspection New Zealand.
- Vehicle Testing New Zealand.

You can also pay for your motor vehicle licence at some independent agents that display the NZTA logo.

You can either use the MR1 notice you got in the mail, or fill out a licensing form (MR1B) at the agent.

When you pay the licensing fee, you'll get a label that shows the date your licence expires. You must display this label on the left-hand side of your motor vehicle's windscreen, or near your number plate (for trailers or motorcycles).



Your motor vehicle must have a current warrant of fitness or certificate of fitness before you can get a licence label or use the motor vehicle on the road.

## How much does it cost?

Look at a list of common vehicle licensing fees on the website [www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/registration-licensing/fees.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/registration-licensing/fees.html).

### Relicense your vehicle online

Save time and money - it's quick and easy to relicense your vehicle online at [transact.nzta.govt.nz](http://transact.nzta.govt.nz). We'll send the label to you in the post.

## What if I don't relicense in time?

The person registered in respect of a motor vehicle is responsible for keeping that vehicle licensed. If your motor vehicle is unlicensed, you'll be sent notices to remind you that you need to relicense it.

- Six weeks after your licence expires, you'll receive an overdue notice.
- If you've still taken no action six months after the original licence or exemption expiry date, you'll receive a warning notice.
- If the vehicle remains unlicensed for 12 months, its registration will be cancelled. You'll be sent a final notice two to four weeks before this happens.

The NZTA will then use a debt collection agency to recover outstanding licence fees.

## What should I do if I don't get the notices?

Some people will not receive all the notifications outlined here - it depends on the address recorded on the Motor Vehicle Register and when the registered person notified their acquisition. If you don't receive any of these notices, you are still liable for licensing fees. If your licence has expired and you haven't received a notice, don't wait - use a licensing form (MR1B), available from an NZTA agent.

Note also that the New Zealand Police and local authorities fine registered people caught using unlicensed motor vehicles on the road. You could be fined \$200 for not displaying a current licence on your vehicle.

## Questions and answers

### Can I get an exemption?

Yes. Anyone who won't be using their motor vehicle on the road for a continuous period of at least three months should apply for an exemption from licensing, or arrange for someone to do it on their behalf.

Note that an exemption period can be for no more than 12 months, but you can apply for consecutive exemptions.

Exemptions must be applied for in *advance*. They take effect from when your current licence (or existing exemption) expires. If the motor vehicle isn't licensed, the exemption will start from the application date.

Fill out an *Exemption application* form (MR24), available from the NZTA agents. You'll have to pay outstanding fees (if any) before the exemption can be processed.

When the exemption expires, you'll need to either relicense the motor vehicle or apply for another exemption. If you don't do this, you'll be sent the reminder notices listed on the front of this factsheet.

There is a minimum of three months for an exemption period. If you license your motor vehicle within the first three months of your exemption period, the licence will backdate to the expiry date of the previous licence, exemption, or notice of acquisition, whichever is the most recent.

### Apply for an exemption online

You can apply for an exemption at our online transaction centre: [transact.nzta.govt.nz](https://transact.nzta.govt.nz). You'll need your driver licence, registration plate number and credit card. Plus, it's free!

### Can I change the licence expiry date?

You can change your motor vehicle's relicensing date by completing an *Application to change licence expiry date form (MR27)*, available from the NZTA agents. The agent will advise you of your options and the fee.

### What about refunds?

A licence fee can't be refunded unless the motor vehicle's registration is cancelled and you hand over the registration plates.

### How can I get my vehicle back on the road?

If your motor vehicle's registration has been cancelled and it will be used on a public road at a later date, there are several steps you need to follow first - inspection, certification, reregistration, licensing, and getting registration plates and labels issued to you (see factsheet 9 *Reregistering your vehicle* for more information).

### Do all vehicles have to be licensed continuously?

All motor vehicles must be continuously licensed while using the road, except for the following:

- vehicles that are not required by law to be registered or licensed
- vehicles that are more than 40 years old
- agricultural machinery, tractors and mobile machines
- exempt class EA and EB vehicles
- trailers and trailer-type caravans with a gross laden weight not exceeding 3500kg
- all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

These motor vehicles can be unlicensed while they're off the road (eg for repairs or restoration). They don't require exemptions to remain unlicensed. However, if these motor vehicles remain unlicensed for two years, their registrations are cancelled. If you have one of these vehicles and you won't be using it for more than two years, make sure you request an exemption before the two years is up, to prevent the registration being cancelled.

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](https://www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets)) or call us on 0800 108 809.

### How is the licensing money spent?

The licence fee is spent on road construction and safety programmes (there is also an administration and licence label fee).

The ACC Motor Vehicle Account Levy covers the medical costs related to injuries that happen on public roads.

Other levies that your motor vehicle may be subject to include the Safety Standards Levy, Audit and Standards Levy, and a Transport Licence Fee.

### Special circumstances

#### I've bought a vehicle without a licence

You'll only be required to pay from the date you acquire the vehicle, not the date the licence was due. The seller is liable for the unpaid fees before you acquire the vehicle.

#### I've sold an unlicensed vehicle

You are liable for any outstanding licensing fees up to the date of the sale or disposal of the vehicle. Normal debt collection practices are employed to recover outstanding licence fees.

#### My vehicle has been stolen

If its license has expired you won't be required to pay from the date it was stolen, as long as you contact the NZ Transport Agency and provide a copy of the police report. If your vehicle is recovered, you'll only be required to pay licensing fees from the date of its return.

If your vehicle has been stolen and is licensed, contact our motor vehicle licensing and registrations contact centre on 0800 108 809.

#### My vehicle will be permanently off the road

You'll need to cancel its registration by completing an MR15 form, available from some NZTA agents. It's very important that you hand in the registration plates at the same time as the MR15 form.

For information about which agents you can do this at, phone our motor vehicle licensing and registrations contact centre on 0800 108 809.

### Where you can find out more

- Email us: [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz).
- Phone our Motor Registration contact centre: 0800 108 809.
- Write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442.

#### Contact details

- Call our contact centre: 0800 108 809.
- Visit our website: [www.nzta.govt.nz](https://www.nzta.govt.nz).
- Email us: [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz).
- Write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442.