

Vehicle registration

for light vehicles (3500kg or less)

Factsheet

09

June
2018

ISSN 1172-0689 (print)
ISSN 1172-0778 (online)

Before you can use a vehicle on the road, it must be registered.

This factsheet explains:

- what vehicle registration is
- why vehicles must be registered
- when and how to register
- the difference between registration and licensing.

This information covers light vehicles with a gross vehicle mass of 3500kgs or less (eg cars, vans and utility vehicles).

If you need information on registering other types of vehicles (eg heavy vehicles, trailers, tractors, all-terrain vehicles), please call us on 0800 108 809.

Vehicle registration (plates)

Vehicle registration is paying a one-off fee to add a vehicle's details to the Motor Vehicle Register. When it's added to the register, we issue number plates for it.

This usually only happens once for most vehicles, when they've arrived in New Zealand and are first going to be used on the road.

Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle-number-plates for more information on number plates.

Vehicle licensing (label)

Vehicle licensing is paying a regular fee so that your vehicle is allowed to use the road. When you pay the fee, you get a licence label showing the licence expiry date. You must display the label on the vehicle.

Your vehicle licence is often referred to as your rego, but it's not the same thing as registration.

For more information, see Factsheet 49: *Vehicle licensing*.

The registered person and their responsibilities

The registered person is the person recorded on the Motor Vehicle Register as the person responsible for the vehicle.

This isn't the same as legal ownership (and the Motor Vehicle Register doesn't record legal ownership).

Sometimes the registered person asks to add a joint registered person to their vehicle. We can only record one registered person per vehicle (this doesn't mean legal ownership).

Your vehicle responsibilities

There's information online about who can be a registered person, and everything that means you're responsible for.

www.nzta.govt.nz/registered-person-responsibilities

This factsheet only focuses on your responsibilities for registering your vehicle.

Why vehicles must be registered

It's about keeping people safe.

Vehicles have safety and identification inspections when they're registered. This helps us make sure that only vehicles meeting New Zealand safety standards are being used on our roads.

Having a record of vehicles and their details helps us and the police with enforcement responsibilities.

What registration involves

As part of the registration process, the vehicle will be:

- inspected for safety
- certified
- added to the Motor Vehicle Register
- licensed (if applicable).

If it isn't the first time the vehicle is being registered, you'll need to provide proof that the vehicle has been registered in New Zealand before.

Certificate of registration

Once the vehicle is registered, we'll send a *Certificate of registration* to the registered person. It lists the vehicle's details and the registered person's details and responsibilities.

If your details change

If any details on your certificate are incorrect or they change (eg you paint your car a different colour) you need to let us know.

If you need a new certificate

You can download the *Application for replacement certificate of registration* (MR7) form online.

www.nzta.govt.nz/form-MR7

Where to get your vehicle registered

These approved agents can take care of all of the steps in the registration process for you.

Automobile Association (AA)

T: (09) 377 4660

E: techadmin@aa.co.nz

W: www.aa.co.nz

Vehicle Inspection New Zealand (VINZ)

T: (09) 573 3230

E: tech@vinz.co.nz

W: www.vinz.co.nz

Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ)

T: (04) 495 2500, 0800 888 869

E: technical@vtnz.co.nz

W: www.vtnz.co.nz

To find an agent near you, visit www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle-agents or contact the head offices above.

A vehicle's registration can be cancelled

You can cancel your vehicle's registration at any time, but you must take the vehicle off the road.

Registration cancelled by the registered person

Most people cancel their vehicle's registration when the vehicle has been:

- written off by an insurance company (the insurance company may cancel it for you)
- destroyed (or has become permanently useless)
- taken off the road permanently.

In these situations, you need to fill in an *Application to cancel registration* (MR15) form and hand in the number plates to a plate agent. Not all agents deal with plates. Check online at www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle-agents to see which ones do.

If you have overdue licensing fees owing, you'll need to pay those too.

If you want to use your vehicle on the road again, you'll need to register it again.

Registration cancelled by the Transport Agency

If your vehicle needs to be licenced continuously and you don't license it for more than one year, we'll automatically cancel the vehicle's registration.

If your vehicle doesn't need to be licensed continuously and you don't license it for more than two years, we'll automatically cancel the vehicle's registration.

If you want to use your vehicle on the road again, you'll need to register it again.

See Factsheet 49: *Vehicle licensing* if you're not sure if your vehicle needs to be licensed continuously.

How to register again when the previous registration has been cancelled

There are four steps to follow to register your vehicle if it isn't registered now, but it:

- has been registered in New Zealand before, and
- hasn't been structurally damaged or deteriorated, and
- hasn't been modified.

Step 1: Go to an agent

Take the vehicle to an agent.

Because it's unregistered, you can't legally drive it on the road. It needs to be towed or transported by another vehicle.

You need to take proof that it has been registered in New Zealand before, and that you're the person entitled to register it again now.

The proof can be old registration papers, or documentation that show the vehicle's identification number (VIN) or chassis number, eg:

- an old *Certificate of registration*, or
- number plates and a warrant of fitness checksheet, or
- number plates and insurance policy documents.

The agent will need to be satisfied that the documents demonstrate that the vehicle, when originally registered, was designed and constructed according to the requirements applying at that time.

Step 2: Inspect and certify

The agent will:

- inspect and certify the vehicle
- charge you a fee for the inspection and certification
- attach a VIN to the vehicle if necessary
- issue a record of compliance with registration requirements
- issue a warrant of fitness (WoF) or certificate of fitness (CoF) from the date the vehicle passes the inspection.

Step 3: Register and license

Register and license the vehicle, so you can legally drive it on the road.

The agent can do this for you, or you can do it within the timeframe that the record of certification is valid.

You'll need to pay registration and licensing fees. They include the cost of the new number plates and the necessary licence labels.

Step 4: Get back on the road

You can drive your vehicle on the road when it has its new number plates, licence label, inspection label and road user charges (RUC) licence label (if applicable) attached.

Damaged vehicles may need extra certification

The process may be more complicated and cost more if the agent needs to refer the vehicle to a specialist certifier.

The agent will do this if the vehicle has been:

- structurally damaged
- deteriorated (not in good condition)
- modified in a way that could affect its safety performance.

Specialist certifiers

The Transport Agency appoints specialist certifiers to help agents with vehicle certification. An agent may refer a vehicle to either of the following types of specialist certifier:

- a repair certifier, if the vehicle has structural damage, deterioration or previous structural repairs that could affect its safety
- a low volume vehicle (LVV) certifier, if the vehicle has been modified in a way that could affect its safety.

If the vehicle needs to be repaired

Check if it's worth repairing the vehicle

In some cases, the cost to restore or repair a vehicle (so that it can be registered) could be higher than the value of the vehicle itself.

Some agents may offer a preliminary check (for a fee) to give you an idea of the work needed to bring the vehicle up to standard.

It's up to the agent if they offer that service.

If the vehicle hasn't been repaired yet

We recommend going to an agent before you get the vehicle repaired. The agent will let you know if the repair needs to be certified under the supervision of a specialist repair certifier.

The repair certifier is responsible for making sure the repair is done correctly.

If the vehicle has already been repaired

If the vehicle has already had structural repair, the agent will let you know if the repair needs to be certified.

If it does, the repair certification may involve taking parts of the vehicle apart, because the repair certifier has to be satisfied with the quality of the repair.

Once the repair certifier is satisfied, they'll issue a repair certificate, which will be sent with the vehicle back to the agent.

You'll need to pay the cost of the:

- repair
- repair certification
- certification for the registration.

If a vehicle is so severely damaged or so poorly repaired that it's unsuitable for repair certification, it won't be given a repair certificate.

The vehicle will be released to you but you can't, by law, register the vehicle or drive it on the road in New Zealand until it meets the appropriate standard.

If the vehicle is modified or rebuilt

Modifications to a vehicle may affect its safety performance to the extent that it needs to be certified by a specialist LVV certifier. The agent will let you know if this is necessary or not.

When the LVV certifier is satisfied with the safety performance of the vehicle, they'll send the vehicle back to the agent.

You'll need to pay the cost of the LVV certification as well as the agent's certification fees.

More information about the fees

Most of the services mentioned in this factsheet are provided for a fee. The fees vary depending on the organisation doing the work and the specific service they offer.

The fees for registration and licensing are set by legislation and vary according to vehicle type, engine size and vehicle use.

To find out more about the cost of registration and licensing:

- see www.nzta.govt.nz/registration-fees
- see www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle-licensing-fees
- call us on 0800 108 809
- talk to an agent.

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) or call us on 0800 108 809.

Do you need to get in touch with us?

- Visit our website: www.nzta.govt.nz.
- Email us: info@nzta.govt.nz.
- Find us on social media: www.nzta.govt.nz/socialmedia
- Call us: 0800 108 809.
- Write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442.