

# Importing a vehicle

## temporarily

A **temporary vehicle import** is where a vehicle is brought into New Zealand by a resident of another country, usually for a maximum of 12 months, **while remaining registered in its country of origin**. (Note that 'vehicle' includes motorcycles.)

The vehicle's registration in its country of origin must remain current for the duration of its stay in New Zealand, and must remain in the name of the person who imported the vehicle into New Zealand.

The vehicle must be exported out of New Zealand within the allowed temporary entry period. You must not import the vehicle with the intention of selling it.

### New Zealand Customs Service requirements

If you want to bring the vehicle in free of duty charges, you will need to have a *Carnet de passages en douanes* (carnet). These are issued by AIT/FIA-affiliated member clubs (eg the Automobile Association). You can use a carnet issued by a Chamber of Commerce, but these are usually issued only for vehicles imported as demonstration models for commercial purposes.

The vehicle must be exported from New Zealand while the carnet is still current.

If you don't have a valid carnet, you must apply to the New Zealand Customs Service for a **temporary import entry**.

If your vehicle is imported using a temporary import entry, you'll be required to pay a **cash deposit**. The cash deposit will be the same amount as the Customs' charges you would have to pay if the vehicle was being imported on a permanent basis.

This cash deposit will be refunded by the New Zealand Customs Service if your vehicle is exported within 12 months of its arrival in New Zealand. If you have been granted an extension, the cash deposit will be refunded if the vehicle is exported before the end of the extension period.

For more information, contact the New Zealand Customs Service.

### Quarantine requirements

Before your vehicle is released to you, it must be inspected by the Quarantine Service of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). You need to contact the nearest office of the MPI Biosecurity New Zealand Cargo Clearance Services (0800 222 018 within New Zealand) to arrange the inspection.

There is an inspection fee, which is less if the vehicle has not been removed from the wharf area. There will be an additional cost if the vehicle has to be cleaned in any way.

### Does the vehicle need to be registered in New Zealand?

A temporary vehicle import is exempt from having a New Zealand registration as long as its registration in its country of origin remains current for the duration of its stay in New Zealand and it remains in the ownership of the person who imported the vehicle into New Zealand. The owner must still, however, pay a motorist's Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levy.

The vehicle does not need New Zealand registration plates (also called 'number plates' or in some overseas jurisdictions, 'licence plates'). It must continue to display the overseas plates.

### Payment of the ACC levy

The owner is required to notify the NZ Transport Agency of the details of the vehicle prior to its use on New Zealand roads. The ACC levy is paid at the time of notification. On receiving notification, the Transport Agency will record the details of the vehicle and the owner on the Motor Vehicle Register.

### Who can help?

Notification can be made to an entry certifier. The following organisations are entry certifiers:

- **Automobile Association:**  
phone: 0800 500 333  
email: aatech@aa.co.nz  
website: www.aa.co.nz
- **Vehicle Inspection New Zealand**  
phone: 0800 468 469  
email: info@vinz.co.nz  
website: www.vinz.co.nz
- **Vehicle Testing New Zealand**  
phone: 0800 88 88 69  
email: technical@vtnz.co.nz  
website: www.vtnz.co.nz
- **Drivesure Vehicle Testing Ltd**  
phone: 0800 220 240  
email: admin@drivesure.net.nz  
website: www.drivesure.net.nz
- **Nelson Vehicle Testing Centre Ltd**  
phone: 03 539 1223  
email: office@nvtc.co.nz

### What do I do?

When you take your vehicle to an entry certifier, you'll be required to:

- fill out a *Notice of temporary vehicle import by overseas visitor form* (MR2C)
- provide proof that the vehicle is currently registered in your name in its country of origin (eg by providing original vehicle registration documents)

- show your carnet or temporary import entry
- provide identification that shows your name, date of birth and signature
- pay an ACC levy, but none of the other registration and licensing fees.

You'll then be issued with a licence label to attach to your vehicle as proof of payment.

## Vehicle safety requirements

While your vehicle is at the entry certifier, it must also be **inspected** to confirm that it is roadworthy. The vehicle must pass this inspection before you can drive it in New Zealand.

When your vehicle passes the inspection, the entry certifier will issue it with a **warrant of fitness** (WoF) if it is a light vehicle (ie weighs 3500 kilograms or less) or a **certificate of fitness** (CoF) and **certificate of loading** (CoL) if it is a heavy vehicle (ie weighs more than 3500 kilograms).

## What happens if the vehicle's registration in its country of origin expires?

The vehicle's registration in its country of origin must be renewed before it expires. If the vehicle's registration in its country of origin cannot be renewed, the vehicle no longer qualifies as a temporary import. It will have to be fully certified, registered and licensed in New Zealand, and issued with a **vehicle identification number** (if appropriate) and New Zealand registration plates.

A vehicle brought into New Zealand as a temporary import may not necessarily meet the requirements for full registration (eg it may not comply with required vehicle standards). Such a vehicle cannot be used on New Zealand roads legally if its registration as an overseas visitor's vehicle is no longer valid.

See Factsheet 44 *Importing a motor vehicle* for information on the criteria and inspection process.

## Do I need a New Zealand driver licence?

You must have your current and valid driver licence or driver permit with you at all times when you're driving.

If your overseas licence or driver permit is not in English, you must also carry an accurate English translation issued by:

- a translation service approved by the Transport Agency (a list is available at [www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/translators.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/translators.html)), or
- a diplomatic representative at a high commission, embassy or consulate, or
- the authority that issued your overseas licence.

An International Driving Permit (issued in accordance with a United Nations Convention on Road Traffic) may be acceptable as a translation.

Provided your overseas driver licence or driver permit remains current and valid, you can drive for a maximum period of 12 months from the date you arrive in New Zealand.

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 108 809.

Each time you arrive in New Zealand you can drive for a further 12 month period.

For further information see Factsheet 56 *New residents and visitors – driving in New Zealand*.

After 12 months (or if your overseas licence has expired), if you wish to continue driving in New Zealand, you must obtain a New Zealand driver licence. For further information see Factsheet 72 *Overseas driver licences: converting to a New Zealand licence*.

## Do I need insurance?

Vehicle insurance is not compulsory in New Zealand but it is **recommended**. Please note that the ACC levy is not insurance.

## Do I have to pay road user charges?

If your vehicle is diesel-powered or weighs more than 3500 kg, you may have to pay **road user charges** (RUC). These charges contribute towards the cost of the upkeep of New Zealand's roads. For more information, see Factsheet 38 *Road user charges* or call our contact centre on 0800 655 644.

## What do I need to do when I take the vehicle back out of New Zealand?

You'll need to fill out an *Application to cancel registration* form (MR 15), available from an entry certifier. This will ensure your vehicle's details are removed from New Zealand's Motor Vehicle Register. If your vehicle's stay was shorter than the period for which it was recorded as an overseas visitor's vehicle, you may be entitled to a partial refund of the ACC levy.

If you imported the vehicle using a carnet, you must get the document stamped by the New Zealand Customs Service on departure, or it won't be valid.

If you imported the vehicle using a temporary import entry and paid a cash deposit to the New Zealand Customs Service, you'll need to contact them regarding any refund of your cash deposit.

## Where do I get more information?

For information on **vehicle inspection** requirements, **vehicle registration and driver licence** requirements, contact the Transport Agency:

- Email: [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz).
- Phone: 0800 108 809.
- Write: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand.

For information on **importing** and **customs** requirements, contact the New Zealand Customs Service:

- Email: [feedback@customs.govt.nz](mailto:feedback@customs.govt.nz).
- Phone: within New Zealand, 0800 428 786; from outside New Zealand, +64 4 473 6099.
- Phone: from Australia 1800 301 861
- Phone: from overseas +64 4 927 8036.

### Contact details

- Call our contact centre: 0800 108 809.
- Visit our website: [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://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.