

DRIVING IN NEW ZEALAND

There are a few things that you may not be used to when driving in New Zealand. For example:

- we drive on the left side of the road
- it's easy to underestimate travelling times here
- our roads are narrower, more winding and sometimes steeper than you might expect
- our roads are mostly two-way, with one lane in each direction - we have few motorways.

Make sure you have a safe and enjoyable journey.

Roads are monitored by NZ Police who ensure that all road users stick to the rules and stay safe. Speed cameras operate all over the country. If you break the road rules or cause a crash, you could be fined or prosecuted.

TRAVELLING TIMES

It's easy to underestimate travelling times in New Zealand. Distances may seem short on the map but our roads can be narrow with more curves and hills, and vary from motorways (freeways) to unsealed gravel roads. Outside the major cities our roads are mostly two-way with only one lane in each direction.

Calculate your travel times at aa.co.nz/time-distance-calculator

KEEP LEFT

Always drive on the left side of the road. Some narrow roads don't have centre line markings to guide you.

- You must remember to keep left every time you drive, every time you come to an intersection and every time you pull out on to a road.
- Drive in the left lane and do not cut corners.
- Do not cross the centre line unless safely passing or turning off the road.



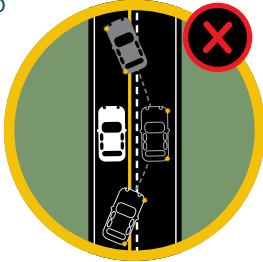
Remember - the driver should be closest to the centre line.

OVERTAKING (PASSING)

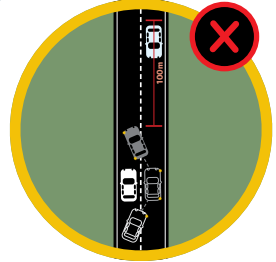
Most roads in New Zealand have a single lane each way, and some provide 'passing lanes' at regular intervals. 'Passing lanes' should be used where possible when overtaking, please be patient until you reach them.

You must never cross a solid yellow line on your side of the centre line to overtake a vehicle, as this indicates it's too dangerous to overtake.

A double yellow centre line means that no traffic (on either side of the road) can overtake.



If you do not have a solid yellow line on your side of the centre line, it is only safe to overtake when you can see that the road is clear for 100m throughout the entire manoeuvre.



Never overtake on or near a corner.



Going slow?
If there is a line of traffic behind you, find a safe place to pull over and let them go past.



DRIVING SPEEDS

The speed limits on New Zealand roads vary – look for speed limit signs. They will let you know what the maximum speed limit is for the stretch of road you're on. You'll often need to go slower than the limit to drive on our roads safely. That means a 100km distance will seldom equal one hour of driving. It will usually take a lot longer, so always allow more time when planning your trip.

On many of New Zealand's main rural roads, the speed limit is 100km/h unless a sign says a different speed applies.

If you are driving a vehicle with a gross weight over 3500kg (such as a large campervan), you are limited to a maximum speed of 90km/h, even on a road marked 100km/h.



In urban areas, the speed limit is usually 50km/h unless a sign says otherwise.



Yellow advisory speed signs warn that you are coming up to a tight curve or bend in the road and recommend a safe and comfortable driving speed. The arrows show which direction the curve goes.



SEAT BELTS

By law, everyone in the vehicle must wear a seat belt or child restraint - whether they're in the front or back.



AGE	LEGAL REQUIREMENT
Children under 7	Approved child restraint
Children aged 7	Approved child restraint if available or seat belt
Children aged 8 and over	Seat belt
All adults	Seat belt

FATIGUE

If you're tired you're much more likely to have a crash.

- Get enough quality sleep before you drive, especially if you've just arrived in New Zealand after a long flight.
- Take a break from driving every two hours. If possible, share the driving with someone else.
- Avoid driving during the hours when you would normally be sleeping.
- Avoid large meals, which can make you tired, and drink plenty of water.
- If you begin to feel sleepy, stop at a safe place and try to have a short nap for 15-30 minutes. If you're feeling very tired, find a place to stay overnight.

INTERSECTIONS



At a stop sign, you must come to a complete stop, then give way to all traffic.



At a give way sign, you must give way to all traffic on the intersecting road. If turning, you must also give way to vehicles that are not turning.



At roundabouts, you must give way to traffic from your right. You must travel around the roundabout in a clockwise direction.

Always indicate for at least three seconds before turning.

In New Zealand, when the traffic signals are red, you may not go unless there is a green arrow for the direction you are going.

If turning at traffic signals when green, give way to traffic that is not turning and to people crossing the road.

ONE-LANE BRIDGES

Some roads in New Zealand have one-lane bridges where vehicles must stop and wait for vehicles coming from the other direction.

The signs below warn that there is a one-lane bridge ahead. Slow down and check for traffic coming the other way. Stop if you need to give way.

The red (smaller) arrow shows which direction has to give way.



These two signs show you must give way to traffic coming the other way across the bridge.



This sign indicates that if no traffic is approaching, you can proceed across the bridge with caution.

ENJOY THE VIEW SAFELY

Keep your eyes on the road, not the scenery. If you want to stop and look at the view, make sure you find a safe place to pull completely off the road and stop.

MOBILE PHONES

Drivers must not use a hand-held mobile phone when driving. If a phone is used it must be hands free. Texting on any mobile phone while driving is illegal.



RAIL CROSSINGS

Approach with caution.

- If red lights are flashing, stop and only go once the lights have stopped flashing.
- If you see a stop sign at a rail crossing, stop and only cross the track if there are no trains approaching from either direction.
- If you see a give way sign, slow down and be ready to stop and only cross the track if there are no trains approaching.



UNSEALED (GRAVEL) ROADS

Unsealed roads can be slippery to drive on. Keep left, reduce your speed, and slow down even further when approaching oncoming traffic as dust could obscure your vision and loose stones could chip your windscreen.



SHARING THE ROAD

Cars do not have priority over pedestrians and cyclists in New Zealand.

Drivers must watch for pedestrians crossing the road, particularly at pedestrian (or zebra) crossings and intersections.

Always slow down near cyclists. Pass slowly and only when safe, and try to leave a space of 1.5 metres.

If you see animals on the road, slow down and proceed carefully. Do not sound your horn.

WINTER DRIVING

Our weather conditions can change quickly so driving takes skill and concentration. Check the weather forecast – www.metservice.com – and road conditions – www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic – before you travel and be flexible with your journey.

Snow and ice can make roads even more hazardous, particularly around mountain passes. Rental vehicle companies will often supply snow chains if you're likely to be driving in these conditions – make sure you know how to fit them before setting out.



Look out for this slippery surface sign in wet or icy conditions – slow down and avoid braking suddenly.

PARKING

In New Zealand, you can be fined or towed away for parking on the wrong side of the road, unless it is a one-way street, where you're allowed to park on either side of the road.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Don't drink alcohol or use drugs and then drive.

Recreational drugs are illegal in New Zealand. For drivers under 20 years old there is a zero alcohol limit. For drivers aged 20 and over, the alcohol limit is 50 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood or 250 micrograms per litre of breath.

STOPPING FOR POLICE

If police require you to stop your vehicle they will drive behind you and activate red and blue lights and a siren. You must pull over as soon as possible. Park your car off to the side of the road safely and wait in it for the police officer to approach you.

DRIVER LICENCE REQUIREMENTS

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 permit is not in English, you must also carry an accurate English translation. After 12 months of living in New Zealand you must obtain a New Zealand driver licence. For more information go to www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/new-residents-and-visitors/