

Correct as at 16th May 2026. It may be superseded at any time.

Extract taken from: Entry certification > Technical bulletins > Inspection requirements for temporary vehicle imports

5 Inspection requirements for temporary vehicle imports

Application

This bulletin gives guidance to vehicle inspectors carrying out entry-level inspections on vehicles imported for temporary use on New Zealand roads.

Requirements for temporarily importing a vehicle

A temporary vehicle import is a vehicle 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.

The vehicle must be exported from New Zealand within the allowed temporary entry period.

Before a vehicle is released to its owner, it must be inspected by the Quarantine Service of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The vehicle must be licensed in New Zealand as an overseas visitor's vehicle. In addition, 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 overseas registration plates must remain on the vehicle; it does not need New Zealand plates.

When presenting a temporary import, the vehicle importer must:

- fill out an [Application for registration of an overseas visitor's vehicle](#) (form MR2C)
- provide proof that the vehicle is currently registered in his/her name in its country of origin (eg by providing original vehicle registration documents)
- show a carnet de passage or temporary import entry
- provide identification that shows his/her name, date of birth and signature
- pay an Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levy (but none of the other registration and licensing fees).

A temporarily imported vehicle does not need to meet New Zealand's requirements for entry certification. However, an entry certifier must carry out a basic safety inspection before issuing a warrant of fitness (WoF) or certificate of fitness (CoF) label for the vehicle.

Background

In 1958, New Zealand became a contracting state of the Geneva Convention. The Convention on road traffic was signed in September 1949. This convention developed several provisions to promote the safety of international traffic, outlined below.

Generally speaking, the vehicle does not need to comply with New Zealand approved standards, or requirements for specialist certification (eg low volume vehicle certification for modifications). It must at least comply with the provisions of the Geneva Convention. It should meet the basic safety requirements for condition and performance listed in the VIRM: In-service certification.

Applicable legislation

Geneva Convention Chapter IV – Provisions applicable to motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic.

Article 22: Every motor vehicle and trailer must be in good working order and safe mechanical condition so as not to endanger the driver or vehicle occupants or other road users, or cause damage to public or private property.
Inspection - Brake requirements for temporarily imported group M and N vehicles.

Mandatory equipment

1. A vehicle must be fitted with a service brake capable of slowing the vehicle and bringing it to a controlled stop under any conditions of loading, on any gradient that the vehicle may be operated on, in an efficient, safe and rapid way.
2. A vehicle must be fitted with a parking brake capable of bringing the vehicle to a controlled stop if the service brake fails.

Condition and performance

3. The brakes fitted to a vehicle must be capable of acting on at least half of the wheels, and brake performance must be balanced on each side of the longitudinal axis of the vehicle.
 4. At least half of the braking devices must act on braking surfaces directly attached to the wheels (or through parts not liable to fail).
 5. Braking surfaces must be in good condition, and must always be connected with the wheels of the vehicle in such a way that it is not possible to disconnect them, other than momentarily by means of clutch, gearbox or free wheel.
 6. The parking brake must be readily applicable and capable of remaining applied for an indefinite period even in the absence of the driver.
-

Braking requirements for temporarily imported group L vehicles

Mandatory equipment

1. A group L vehicle must be fitted with two braking devices operated by hand or foot, capable of slowing the vehicle and bringing it to a controlled stop in an efficient, safe and rapid way.
-

Brake requirements for temporarily imported trailers

Mandatory equipment

1. A combination of a motor vehicle and one or more trailers must be fitted with a braking device capable of slowing the vehicle and bringing it to a controlled stop under any conditions of loading, on any gradient that the vehicle may be operated on, in an efficient, safe and rapid way. A trailer must have a braking device that acts on at least half of the wheels, balanced on each side of the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, as follows:
 - a) The braking device for a class TA or TB trailer may operate as an overrun braking device (ie the trailer is stopped by moving upon the stopped towing vehicle).
 - b) The braking device for a class TC or TD trailer must be capable of being operated when the service brake of the towing vehicle is applied.
2. The braking device must be capable of preventing the rotation of the wheels when the trailer is uncoupled.
3. A trailer fitted with a braking device must be equipped with a breakaway brake (Note 1).

Note 1

Two-wheeled camping trailers or light luggage trailers do not require a breakaway brake if they are fitted with a secondary attachment, such as a safety chain.

Lighting requirements for temporarily imported group M and N vehicles

Mandatory equipment

1. A vehicle must be fitted with main-beam headlamps bright enough to illuminate the road ahead for 100m in normal darkness (Note 2).
2. A vehicle must be fitted with two white or yellow dipped-beam headlamps bright enough to illuminate the road ahead for 30m in normal darkness without causing significant dazzle to other road users (Note 2).
3. A vehicle must be fitted with two white forward-facing position lamps visible from 150m in normal darkness without causing significant dazzle to other road users. These lamps must be mounted as far towards each side of the vehicle as practicable, no further than 400mm from the extreme outer edges of the vehicle.
4. A vehicle must be fitted with at least one red rearward-facing position lamp, visible from 150m from the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.
5. A vehicle must be fitted with a rear registration plate illumination lamp that illuminates the figures and letters of the plate so that they are visible from 20m from the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.
6. A vehicle must be fitted with two red rear reflectors symmetrically mounted as far towards each side of the vehicle as practicable, no further than 400mm from the extreme outer edges of the vehicle. Rear reflectors must be visible from 100m in normal darkness when illuminated by means of two main-beam headlamps.
7. A vehicle must be fitted with a least one red or amber stop light mounted at the rear of the vehicle. A stop light must operate when the service brake is applied. If the stop light is red, the light intensity must be greater than that of the rearward-facing position lamps.

Permitted equipment

8. A vehicle may be fitted with direction indicators as follows:
 - a) a moveable arm protruding beyond each side of the vehicle and illuminated by a steady amber light when the arm is in the horizontal position, or
 - b) a constantly blinking or flashing amber light mounted on each side of the vehicle, or
 - c) a constantly blinking or flashing light at each side of the front and rear of the vehicle. These lights must be white or orange towards the front of the vehicle, and red or orange towards the rear of the vehicle.

Note 2

On vehicles from left-hand drive countries the headlamps dip to the right. To avoid blinding oncoming traffic, the headlamps must be adjusted so they do not dip to the right. Generally, asymmetric beam headlamps will also need to be modified to remove the right-hand flick-up, for example by applying some form of masking, such as plastic overlay, or fitting different bulbs.

Lighting requirements for temporarily imported motorcycles

Mandatory equipment

1. A motorcycle of class LC, LD, LE1 or LE2 must be fitted with at least one main-beam headlamp bright enough to illuminate the road ahead for 100m in normal darkness.
2. A motorcycle of class LC, LD, LE1 or LE2 must be fitted with at least one dipped-beam headlamp bright enough to illuminate the road ahead for 30m in normal darkness without causing significant dazzle to other road users.
3. A motorcycle of class LD must be fitted with two white forward-facing position lamps visible from 150m in normal darkness without causing significant dazzle to other road users. These lamps must be mounted as far towards each side of the vehicle as practicable, no further than 400mm from the extreme outer edges of the vehicle.
4. A motorcycle must be fitted with at least one red rearward-facing position lamp, visible from 150m from the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.
5. A motorcycle must be fitted with a rear registration plate illumination lamp that illuminates the figures and letters of the plate so that they are visible from 20m to the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.
6. Rear reflectors must be fitted to the following vehicles:
 - a) Class LD vehicles must be fitted with two red rear reflectors symmetrically mounted as far towards each side of the vehicle as practicable, no further than 400mm from the extreme outer edges of the vehicle.
 - b) Class LC, LE1 and LE2 vehicles must be fitted with one red rear reflector symmetrically mounted as far towards each side of the vehicle as practicable, no further than 400mm from the extreme outer edges of the vehicle.
 - Rear reflectors must be visible from 100m in normal darkness when illuminated by means of two main-beam headlamps.

Permitted equipment

7. A motorcycle may be fitted with direction indicators as follows:
 - a) a moveable arm protruding beyond each side of the vehicle and illuminated by a steady amber light when the arm is in the horizontal position, or
 - b) a constantly blinking or flashing amber light mounted on each side of the vehicle, or
 - c) a constantly blinking or flashing light at each side of the front and rear of the vehicle. These lights must be white or orange towards the front of the vehicle, and red or orange towards the rear of the vehicle.
-

Lighting requirements for trailers

Mandatory equipment

1. A trailer at the end of a combination of vehicles must be fitted with at least one red rearward-facing position lamp, visible from 150m from the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.
2. A trailer must be fitted with a rear registration plate illumination lamp that illuminates the figures and letters of the plate so that they are visible from 20m to the rear of the vehicle in normal darkness.

3. A trailer must be fitted with two red rear reflectors visible from 100m in normal darkness when illuminated by means of two main-beam headlamps.
4. A trailer at the end of a combination of vehicles must be fitted with a least one red or amber stop light mounted at the rear of the vehicle, unless the stop light of the towing vehicle is visible from the rear. A stop light must operate when the service brake is applied. If the stop light is red, the intensity of the light output must be greater than that of the rearward-facing position lamps.

Permitted equipment

5. A trailer may be fitted with direction indicators as follows:
 - a) a moveable arm protruding beyond each side of the vehicle and illuminated by a steady amber light when the arm is in the horizontal position, or
 - b) a constantly blinking or flashing amber light mounted on each side of the vehicle, or
 - c) a constantly blinking or flashing light at each side of the front and rear of the vehicle. These lights must be white or amber towards the front of the vehicle, and red or amber towards the rear of the vehicle.
-

Other technical requirements for temporarily imported group M and N vehicles

Mandatory equipment

1. A vehicle must be equipped with a strong steering system that allows the vehicle to be turned easily, quickly and with certainty.
 2. A vehicle must be equipped with at least one driving mirror of adequate size and location to provide the driver with a clear view to the rear of the vehicle.
 3. A vehicle must be fitted with at least one audible warning device (horn) that is not:
 - a) a bell, or
 - b) a gong, or
 - c) a siren, or
 - d) any other loud-toned device.
 4. Windscreens, where fitted, must be made of a stable, transparent material that is not likely to produce sharp splinters if broken. Objects must not appear distorted when viewed through this material.
 5. Where a vehicle is fitted with a windscreen, it must have at least one efficient windscreen wiper that operates without constant control of the driver.
 6. A vehicle must be fitted with an exhaust silencer system that operates constantly and cannot be interrupted by the driver while on the road.
 7. A vehicle must be fitted with pneumatic tyres.
-

General safety provisions

1. The construction of a vehicle must not obstruct the driver's vision to the front, right or left of the vehicle.
2. As far as possible, the machinery or equipment of a vehicle must not:

- a) be at risk of fire or explosion, or
- b) cause the emission of noxious gases or offensive fumes, or
- c) produce excessive or disturbing noise, or
- d) increase the risk of a collision and/or damage caused in a collision.

Note 3

Temporarily imported vehicles do not have to meet requirements for modification, therefore, low volume vehicle (LVV) or heavy vehicle specialist certification is not required. However, if a vehicle inspector feels that a vehicle is unsafe to operate, he/she may seek advice from a low volume vehicle or heavy vehicle specialist certifier.