

Correct as at 26th April 2026. It may be superseded at any time.

Extract taken from: Entry certification > Technical bulletins > Immigrants' vehicles

25 Immigrants' vehicles

Situation

The following do not apply to immigrants' vehicles:

Requirement	Land Transport Rule
Frontal impact standards	Land Transport Rule: Frontal Impact 2001, clauses 2.1(5) and 2.1(6)
Exhaust emissions standards	Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Exhaust Emissions 2007, clause 2.2
Electronic stability control	Land Transport Rule: Light Vehicle Brakes 2002, clause 3.1(4)
Advanced brake system (for class LC, LD and LE vehicles only)	Land Transport Rule: Light Vehicle Brakes 2002, clauses 2.7(7)

Application

This document applies to any used vehicle that is undergoing entry certification in New Zealand, which:

- has been identified in writing by a Transport Agency entry certification agent as an immigrant's vehicle appropriate for certification to enter service in New Zealand, and
- is imported to New Zealand by an immigrant entitled to take up permanent residence in New Zealand, or
- is imported by a New Zealand citizen or resident returning to New Zealand after at least 21 months overseas.

Obtaining recognition of an immigrant's vehicle

To be eligible to register an immigrant's vehicle, an applicant must:

1. apply to an organisation appointed by the Transport Agency (such as a Transport Agency entry certification agent), before the vehicle is certified for entry into service in New Zealand (an application form is available in [Reference material 50](#)), and
2. pay the appropriate fees (if any) specified in accordance with regulations made under the Act.

Recognition of an immigrant's vehicle may be granted if:

- the applicant is a New Zealand citizen, or a New Zealand resident, or entitled to take up permanent residence in New Zealand under the Immigration Act 1987 (Note 1), and
- the applicant has lived outside New Zealand for at least 21 months continuously before arriving in or returning to New Zealand (Note 3), and
- the application is made:

- a) within 18 months of the applicant's arrival in or return to New Zealand, or
- b) for a vehicle border checked between 1 April 2002 and 8 May 2008, and
- c) the applicant has signed a declaration in accordance with the immigrant's vehicle criteria.

Note 1

Document authorising residence in New Zealand means any of the following:

- a current New Zealand passport
- a current Australian passport
- a current New Zealand residence visa or permit, or a current New Zealand returning resident's visa or permit
- a current permanent residence visa (including a resident return visa) issued by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Immigrant's vehicle declaration criteria

An applicant for recognition of an immigrant's vehicle must sign a declaration, declaring that:

- a) the applicant has resided outside New Zealand for a period of not less than 21 months before the applicant's arrival in or return to New Zealand and
- b) the applicant has personally owned the vehicle, and has registered for personal use in a country outside New Zealand for a period of at least one year before their arrival in or return to New Zealand, and
- c) the applicant has not had any other vehicle recognised as an immigrant's vehicle, and
- d) the applicant has not imported the vehicle on behalf of, or for, a third party, and
- e) the applicant will not sell or lease the vehicle to a third party for at least one year after the date that the vehicle is first registered in New Zealand, and
- f) the vehicle will not be operated in a transport service for at least one year after the date that the vehicle is first registered in New Zealand.

Conditions of use

A vehicle that is recognised as an immigrant's vehicle must:

- a) be registered in New Zealand in the applicant's name for at least one year after the date on which the vehicle is first registered in New Zealand, although additional names may also appear on the registration documents, and
- b) not operate as part of a transport service.

Note 2

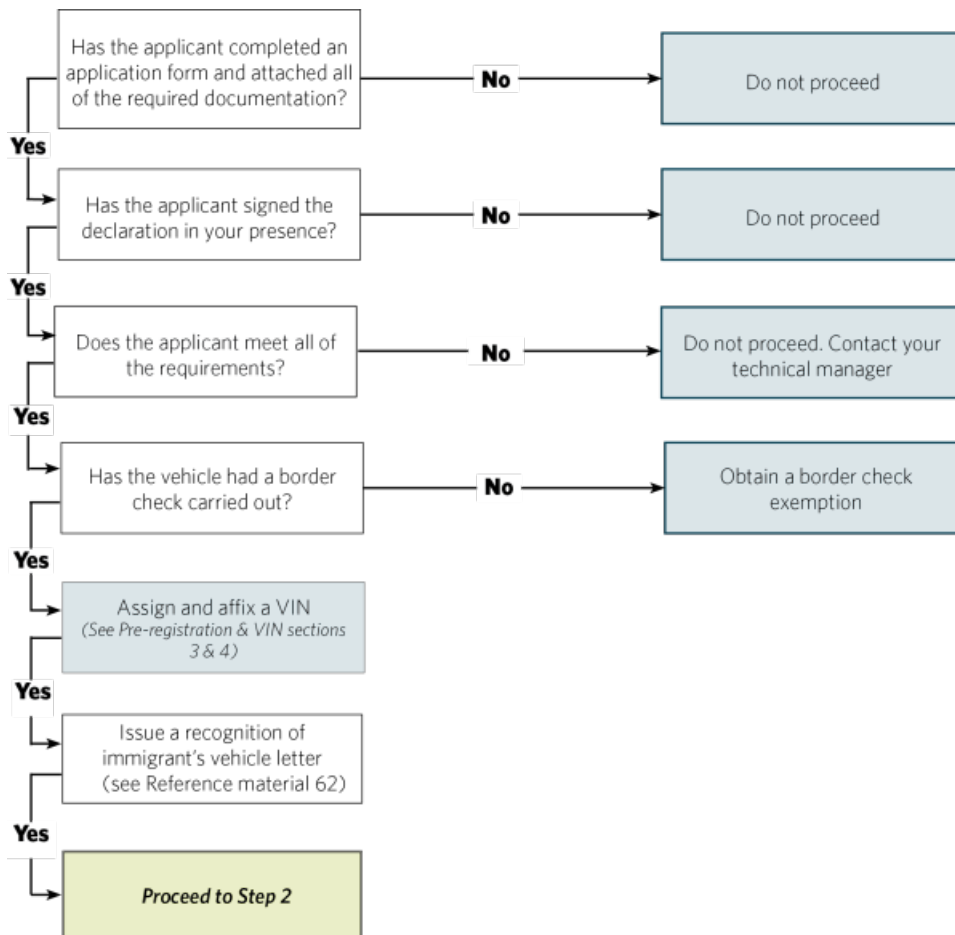
Those persons 'entitled to take up permanent residence in New Zealand under the Immigration Act 1987' includes those in New Zealand under the 'Talent Visa' scheme.

Note 3

Customs document (Deed of Undertaking) can be accepted as proof of a person residing outside of New Zealand for a period of not less than 21 months, before their arrival in or return to New Zealand, and as proof that they hold a document authorising residence in New Zealand (see [Reference material 66](#))

Inspection

The following flowchart explains the procedure for processing an immigrant's vehicle for entry certification.



Step 1 – Documentation

Immigrants' vehicles must still meet those standards applicable to the vehicle (according to age, etc).

The VIRM: Entry certification details the standards a vehicle and its components are required to meet. See [Inspection & certification Table 1-1-1](#) for methods to demonstrate compliance with required standards.

Where compliance with an approved standard can not be proven by these methods, the following methods are acceptable alternatives:

- visual confirmation and recording of standards for items such as lighting, glazing, tyres and so on
- low volume vehicle (LVV) certification for modified components, such as brakes, steering and suspension
- a letter of exemption from the Transport Agency for specific items not covered above. Application forms for exemptions can be obtained from the the Transport Agency website.

Step 2 – Compliance inspection

Immigrants' vehicles must be inspected according to the requirements outlined in the VIRM: Entry certification.

If a vehicle has been modified, it must have LVV certification.

If there is evidence of previous structural repairs or structural damage to a vehicle, it must be referred to a repair certifier for inspection and certification.

Ensure the vehicle meets all other required standards.

Step 3 – MR2A completion and vehicle registration

1. Any original letters must be sighted, copied and returned to the vehicle owner.

2. The following note must be recorded in the LANDATA notes screen:

'Vehicle must remain registered in the name of >vehicle owner< for at least one year from the date of registration in New Zealand'.

The applicant's name must match the name shown on the letter of recognition as an immigrant's vehicle.

If the vehicle does not meet an approved frontal impact standard, the FIS (frontal impact standard) field must be set to >N<.

3. Update LANDATA with special permit code IM.

4. The MR2A must be completed and printed in the name of the person registering the vehicle. This must be the same as the name shown on any exemption letter.

5. The entry certifier must retain a copy of the immigrant's approval letter on the vehicle file.

If an entry certifier wishes to deviate from these instructions, written approval from the Transport Agency must be obtained.

Page amended **10 April 2025** (see [amendment details](#))

Page updated 4 July 2025 (see [details](#))