



New motorhomes

Information for importers, traders and private purchasers

The purpose of this document is to clarify the requirements for registering a new motorhome for use on New Zealand roads. This guidance is directed to importers, traders and private purchasers.

Gross vehicle mass (GVM)

GVM is the total weight capacity of the vehicle, as determined by the original manufacturer or modifier. Total weight capacity means the sum of the unloaded weight of the vehicle plus the allowable extra weight of occupants, equipment and liquids (including fuel). It is not safe or legal to operate a vehicle beyond its GVM.

Some motorhomes have their GVMs set particularly close to their unloaded weight, so it is very important to keep both the unloaded weight and GVM in mind when loading the vehicle, to avoid fines or dangerous situations by carrying too much equipment or liquids in addition to the occupants. A motorhome is a light vehicle if its GVM is **3500kg or less** or a heavy vehicle if its GVM is **greater than 3500kg**.

Depending on the GVM of the vehicle, different requirements apply. They include:

- whether the vehicle is required to have stability control
- how many seatbelts can be added, if required
- the type of driver licence you'll need
- the maximum speed at which the vehicle can be driven
- whether the vehicle will require a WoF or CoF
- standards that must be met for towing
- what kind of road user charges (if any) will apply.

Electronic stability control (ESC)

Electronic stability control is **mandatory** on new light vehicles (and on some imported used vehicles).

Note: Not all overseas jurisdictions require the fitment of ESC. It is very important to ensure that a vehicle is fitted with ESC prior to importing it, as retrofitting ESC is generally not possible.

Seatbelts and berths

At a minimum, there must be as many standards-compliant seatbelts as there are berths. If a motorhome is imported or constructed that has more berths than seatbelts, either additional seatbelts must be added or excess berths must be permanently removed. It is the manufacturer, not the importer or trader, who determines the number of berths.

Note: The installation of seatbelts must be certified by a specialist certifier. If an increase in passenger seating capacity is likely to cause the vehicle to be overloaded, it may be impossible to add seatbelts unless the vehicle is also modified to permit an increase in its GVM.

Not all overseas jurisdictions require a seatbelt per berth, so when selecting a motorhome to import, it is important to factor in the cost of having them installed, if needed, and the subsequent certification.

Driver licences

A Class 1 driver's licence allows the driver to operate a vehicle up to a GVM of 6,000kg. A Class 2 licence is required if the total combination mass (on-road weight of both motorhome and trailer) is greater than 6,000kg or for motorhomes with a GVM of up to 18,000kg and Class 4 for up to 25,000kg. More information is available on our website.

There are special licence requirements for towing. More information is available on our website for licence requirements if you wish to tow a trailer.

Speed limits

The maximum allowable speed for a light motorhome towing a trailer, and any heavy motorhome towing or not towing a trailer, is 90km/h – even in a 100km/h zone. A light motorhome not towing a trailer can travel up to 100km/h provided that is the posted limit and road conditions allow.

Periodic vehicle inspections

Light motorhomes: warrant of fitness (WoF)

A new light motorhome's first WoF is valid for three years after entry certification. After that, WoF inspections are required annually.

Heavy motorhomes: certificate of fitness (CoF)

A new heavy motorhome is required to have CoF inspections. CoFs are valid for six months.

Towing connections

There are no specific requirements for the towing connection on a light motorhome but it is recommended that the towing connection be designed to meet NZ Standard NZS5467 or an equivalent international standard. **Note:** Not all motorhomes have adequate structural strength to allow a tow bar to be fitted and it is recommended to engage a professional to discuss suitability.

A heavy motorhome already equipped with a towing connection must have its towing connection certified by a heavy vehicle specialist certifier, regardless of international approvals. If the motorhome will never be towing, the towing connection can be removed instead of seeking certification. If you wish to add a towing connection to a motorhome, a heavy vehicle specialist certifier should be contacted to discuss options.

Road user charges (RUC)

All diesel light motorhomes and all heavy motorhomes (no matter if petrol or diesel) are subject to RUC. These must be **purchased in advance** for kilometres to be travelled. Light petrol motorhomes are not required to have RUC purchased against them.

RUC rates depend on the GVM and wheel configuration of the motorhome. A heavy motorhome will also require the installation of a hubodometer. Please visit our website for more information and the current RUC rates.

Proof of compliance to standards

Overseas compliance (European, Japanese, Australian, American, etc.) should be verified prior to importing a new built-up motorhome. Prior to importing, it is recommended to discuss the vehicle with your local vehicle entry certifier. Compliance to standards is required from the headlamps to the exhaust and everything in-between.

New Zealand compliance (Low Volume Vehicle Certification, Heavy Vehicle Specialist Certification) should be obtained if building a motorhome locally.

Vehicle size

There are several requirements to consider. For all motorhomes, the maximum width is 2.55m and the maximum height is 4.3m. If the motorhome will be towing, its length is limited to 11.5m, otherwise it can be up to 12.6m long. Some overseas constructed motorhomes may exceed New Zealand dimension requirements and are not allowed on New Zealand roads. **Note:** maximum dimensions includes awnings and other accessories.

Questions

If you have any vehicle specific questions, call us on 0800 108 809, or email info@nzta.govt.nz.

See also the Transport Agency website www.nzta.govt.nz.



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