



Freedom Camping changes

WHAT THEY MEAN FOR COUNCILS

Purpose: This fact sheet seeks to show councils what the changes to freedom camping in a vehicle will look like for them. It also includes answers to some questions raised by stakeholders during public consultation.

Key changes and timing: Please note these timeframes are subject to Cabinet and Parliament processes – any deferrals to timeframes will be communicated on MBIE’s website.

SUMMER 2022/23



- › Parliament amends the Freedom Camping Act 2011.
- › Vehicle-based freedom camping on local council land must now be done in a certified self-contained vehicle.
- › Councils can designate sites as appropriate for non-self-contained vehicles through bylaws. Freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles can only be done at those designated sites.
- › Existing bylaws that designate areas as suitable for non-self-contained vehicles will continue to apply.
- › Councils can apply for transitional funding for this summer.
- › Only vehicles with a fixed toilet (not portable) will be able to be certified as self-contained from now but vehicles with a portable toilet already certified can still freedom camp.
- › Blue warrant cards will still be evidence of self-containment.
- › New freedom camping offences are introduced, and infringements can now be emailed.
- › The payment period and reminder notice period is changed from 28 days to 14 days.
- › The Freedom Camping Act 2011 can now be applied to land managed by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

WINTER 2023



- › Blue warrant cards will still be evidence of self-containment.
- › Certification authorities will start issuing green warrant cards (showing certification to the new requirements).
- › The register of self-contained vehicles is operational and accessible to enforcement officers to verify whether a vehicle has been certified as self-contained.
- › Higher infringement fines may be issued for non-compliance with freedom camping rules.

SUMMER 2023/24



- › Councils can apply for transitional funding for this summer.
- › Vehicles can no longer be certified to the old voluntary standard with blue warrant cards. However, existing blue warrant cards are still evidence of self-containment.

WINTER 2024



- › Rental vehicles used for freedom camping must now be certified with a green warrant card.
- › Blue warrant cards on rental vehicles will no longer be evidence of self-containment.

SUMMER 2024/25



- › All vehicles used for freedom camping must now have a green warrant card.
- › Blue warrant cards will no longer be evidence of self-containment.



Frequently asked questions

Will councils still be able to make freedom camping bylaws?

Yes. Councils will still have the ability to set freedom camping bylaws. Councils will now be able to designate sites as appropriate for freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles.

What will happen to existing freedom camping bylaws?

Existing freedom camping bylaws will continue to apply. Areas designated as suitable for freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles will continue to have that status. Councils do not have to amend these bylaws to permit freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles.

Will there be criteria under which a council can designate a site as appropriate for freedom camping in a non-self-contained vehicle?

No. Councils are best placed to understand and reflect the needs of their community and region in designating a site as appropriate for freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles.

Will councils be able to ban freedom camping in their jurisdictions?

No. As with the current rules, councils cannot issue a blanket ban or prohibition on freedom camping within its borders.

Can freedom camping still be done in a tent?

Yes, except where councils have prohibited the use of tents through a bylaw.

What constitutes a tent? Can freedom campers use a tent if it is attached to their vehicle?

Any tent must be standalone and separate from any vehicle when assembled. So that the new requirements are easy to understand and be enforced, any tent that is attached to a vehicle will be treated as a vehicle. If this is the case, the vehicle must be certified self-contained in order to have the tent attached to it.

Are other Government-managed lands affected by the new rule?

Yes. Waka Kotahi land will be subject to the new rule if the relevant council and Waka Kotahi agree to the land being designated as 'local authority land' for the purposes of a freedom camping bylaw and enforcement.

Public conservation land managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) is not subject to the new rule. DOC can however issue notices that make a site or area subject to the new rule.

Freedom camping on land managed by Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) is prohibited, except at locations permitted through a freedom camping notice. Like DOC, LINZ will have the ability to appoint officers to enforce the rules on its land.

Will enforcement of freedom camping rules be easier?

Yes. Enforcement officers will be able to access the national register of self-contained vehicles to verify whether or not a specific vehicle is self-contained. Enforcement officers can also use the register to record interactions with a specific vehicle so that repeat offenders can be identified.

In addition, several changes will strengthen the infringement process:

- › infringement fees will be tiered rather than defaulting to \$200, to reflect the different impact of offences
- › freedom camping infringements will need to be paid sooner (within 14 days)
- › enforcement authorities will be able to email infringement notices to offenders rather than posting them.



How much funding will councils receive? How will this funding be accessed?

Government has set aside \$10 million over two years for transitional funding.

The fund will be similar to the successful [Responsible Camping Fund](#). The final fund design, including how and when councils will receive funding, will be communicated to councils in the first half of 2022.

At this stage it is envisaged that funding will be prioritised towards camping ambassadors and supporting councils without a bylaw to develop one.

Will those that are experiencing homelessness be impacted by the proposed changes?

The Freedom Camping Act 2011 should not be applied to those experiencing homelessness. The Government is working with local councils to ensure there are referral pathways for those experiencing homelessness, and that there is appropriate guidance available for enforcement officers to ensure those experiencing homelessness do not receive infringements.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the changes can be found at www.mbie.govt.nz/freedomcampingchanges