



Freedom Camping changes

INFORMATION FOR IWI, HAPŪ AND MĀORI

Purpose: This fact sheet seeks to inform Iwi, Hapū and Māori what the changes to freedom camping in a vehicle will look like for them. It also includes answers to some potential questions or areas of interest for Iwi, Hapū and Māori.

The Government acknowledges Iwi, Hapū and Māori in allowing Government the opportunity to engage and work collaboratively to date, including on this topic and while supporting efforts to ensure all people of Aotearoa are vaccinated and protected from COVID-19.

The changes at a glance

On 30 November 2021, the Government announced changes to strengthen the regulatory system for freedom camping so that freedom camping undertaken in New Zealand is sustainable and respects the needs of the local environment and communities.

These changes will mean:

- › Freedom camping in a vehicle on local authority land must be done in a self-contained vehicle. This rule does not apply to land managed by the Department of Conservation.
- › There is regulatory oversight over the system used to certify self-contained vehicles, including a vehicle register.
- › All certified self-contained vehicles will have a fixed toilet.
- › There is a stronger infringement system that equips local authorities to enforce the rules.
- › Freedom camping rules can apply to land managed by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ).

Key changes: 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 authority land must now be done in a certified self-contained vehicle. The voluntary Standard NZS:5465:2001 (blue warrant card) will still be used to certify self-containment.
- › Any new vehicle certification will only be valid if a vehicle has a fixed toilet.
- › Councils can now pass bylaws that designate sites appropriate for non-self-contained vehicles.
- › 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.
- › Land managed by Waka Kotahi and LINZ may now be subject to freedom camping rules.

WINTER 2023



- › Vehicles can now be certified to the new requirements (green warrant cards), but vehicle owners can still choose to certify their vehicles with blue warrant cards if their vehicle has a fixed toilet.
- › The vehicle register for self-contained vehicles is operational and accessible to the public.
- › Higher fines for rule breaking are introduced.

SUMMER 2023/24



- › Any self-containment vehicle certification or recertification must now be to the new requirements.
- › Existing blue warrant cards will still meet the requirements for self-containment.

WINTER 2024



- › All rental vehicles used for freedom camping must now be certified with a green warrant card.

SUMMER 2024/25



- › All vehicles used for freedom camping must now have a green warrant card.
- › Blue warrant cards no longer meet the minimum requirements for demonstrating that a vehicle is self contained.

Frequently asked questions

What is freedom camping?

The Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act) defines freedom camping as staying for free in a vehicle or tent, within 200 metres of where you can drive, the coast or a Great Walks Track.

Why is Government making these changes now?

These changes will ensure everyone who freedom camps in a self-contained vehicle does the right thing and respects our environment and communities.

It is important that councils and the Department of Conservation have the tools they need to appropriately manage freedom camping so that local communities and the natural environment do not disproportionately bear the costs of hosting freedom campers.

Since 2018 the Government has provided funding for camping ambassadors, infrastructure, waste management and technology pilots. However, there is still evidence of visitors camping in places without the appropriate infrastructure to host them.

What land is covered by the new rule requiring freedom camping in a vehicle to be done in a certified self-contained vehicle? Does this cover land subject to a treaty settlement?

The new rule only applies to land controlled or managed by local authorities and which are subject to the Act. This can sometimes include land subject to a Treaty Settlement, where that land is managed or partly managed by a local or regional council.

Will I still be able to sleep in my vehicle on marae, Māori land or whānau land?

Yes. Privately owned land is not subject to the Freedom Camping Act 2011.

Will I still be able to go camping with my whānau in a tent?

Yes, where permitted by your local council or the Department of Conservation.

What constitutes a tent? Can I use a tent if it is attached to my 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.

How have Māori been engaged throughout this work?

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment held several meetings with Māori and iwi during the public consultation period between 9 April and 16 May 2021.

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.

What changes to infringements are being made?

A tiered infringement framework will be developed and consulted on in the first half of 2022. This will set out what the new offences and infringement levels will be.

Other changes being made include allowing infringement notices to be emailed, shortening the notice and notice reminder period to 14 days, and making the vehicle owner liable for payment of any infringement a vehicle receives (regardless of who is using the vehicle at the time).

FURTHER INFORMATION

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