



Driving

Good Practice Guideline v1

People don't take trips, trips take people

John Steinbeck

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Introduction

It's often said that the most dangerous part of providing outdoor activities is the driving – there's a risk of a catastrophic event involving multiple people

This Good Practice Guideline (GPG) discusses what to do before, during, and after a trip. It has checklists at the end of each section.

Photocopy or customise the checklists for your own requirements.

Scope

This GPG covers driving participants to or from, or as part of, an activity.

It's relevant to schools, outdoor centres, youth and community organisations, and commercial operators who transport participants.

This includes occasions where transport is provided by a bus company; in-house vehicles driven by staff; hire vehicles driven by staff or contractors; and private cars driven by staff, parents, or volunteers.

Driving will generally be on public roads (both sealed and gravel) but may include access roads. Other off-road driving is out of scope of this GPG.

Transport via air or water is also out of scope. Providers should follow the instructions of commercial air or water transport providers.

School bus safety is covered by Waka Kotahi – [Safer journeys for schools: Guidelines for school communities.](#)

This guidance is designed to be used in conjunction with the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#) and the [Transport Plan](#) template.

Pre-trip

In addition to the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#), organisations should:

- Have a policy on driving participants and ensure everyone knows about it
- Ensure that drivers understand their responsibilities
- Develop a transport plan
- Brief participants
- Complete a [pre-trip checklist](#)

Policy

In particular, a policy should address who's permitted to drive participants and when, eg in what weather conditions, and what is expected of drivers.

Transport plan

Use the [Transport Plan](#) template.

Where an activity includes an overnight stay, ensure that a vehicle is available in case of an emergency, with the specific vehicle and driver/s identified and the location of keys known.

Organisational requirements

Organisations should:

- Designate a leader responsible for the passengers. For private cars they may have oversight of several vehicles and their occupants, especially those with specific needs.
- Understand the concept of work time and not just calculate driving times in isolation. Time spent working in other duties before the drive contributes to the calculation.
- Require a pre-trip fatigue test
- Record the driver's name and sight their licence
- Use a [Volunteer Assistant Agreement form](#) to clarify expectations of drivers and passengers
- Induct, train, and test new drivers to the organisation

Legal requirements

Drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers are secured.

- 0–6 year olds must use an approved child restraint appropriate for their age and size
- 7 year olds must be secured in an approved restraint if one is available or, if not, in any restraint or safety belt
- 8–14 year olds must use safety belts if available or, if unavailable, they must travel in the back seat
- 15+ year olds must use seat belts if available

Driver competence

Deep down inside, we all believe we're above-average drivers

Dave Barry

Skills and knowledge

Generally, driver competence is established through Waka Kotahi NZ's licensing requirements. However, it's appropriate to assess whether a driver has sufficient skills and knowledge beyond this baseline measure.

Ask questions of potential leaders and have them provide examples of training or experience. It's also appropriate to ask for references to confirm the information they provide.

However, most operators require a practical test too.

Good practice involves driving competence testing, either in-house or through a professional driving trainer

Drivers must:

- Be competent to drive in the intended traffic, road (eg gravel or icy surface), and weather conditions
- Have a good understanding of the specific requirements of their passengers and any implications for safety
- Be familiar with the intended route and any likely hazards
- Be aware of the effects that prior consumption of alcoholic drinks or drugs have on their ability to drive safely
- Have knowledge of [defensive driving techniques](#) and causes of accidents
- Be safety checked as required by the Children's Act 2014
- Prioritise sleep and avoid driving at the times that you usually sleep
- Manage prescription medication carefully to avoid drowsiness
- Have a current New Zealand driver's licence for the class of vehicle being driven
- Pay their own fines, eg for speeding

Qualifications

The following qualifications are relevant:

- A full New Zealand driver's licence
- A first aid certificate (unless passengers have access to another person qualified in first aid)
- When driving a passenger service vehicle, a P endorsement

Drivers' work times

- Shouldn't exceed 5½ hours of continuous driving and non-driving duties without taking a rest of at least 30 minutes
- Shouldn't exceed 13 hours of work time in any cumulative workday – defined as a 24-hour period starting after a continuous rest of at least 10 hours
- Should have at least 10 hours of continuous rest in any cumulative workday

Fatigue is a killer

Drivers and organisations taking young people on long-distance trips, such as sports exchanges or school camps, must manage the risk of driver fatigue.

A driver can be fatigued enough to impair their driving long before they nod off. Fatigue can affect a driver through slowing reactions, reducing concentration, and poor judgement. Fatigue assessment

The tool below is used by Outward Bound, adapted from an ACC example.

Fatigue Assessment Tool (FAT)

Complete this assessment with the Duty Manager if:

- You're planning to drive a bus in the next 3 hours
- You're planning to drive a car or van but you are out of logbook hours
- You or the DM think you should

Risk factor	Points weighting	Your score
Less than 6 hours sleep in the past 24 hours?	3	
Less than 14 hours sleep in the past 48 hours?	2	
Awake for more than 16 hours?	3	
Any Active Duty between 10pm and 6am in the past 3 days?	2	
Have a sleep disorder?	3	
Intending to drive between 1pm and 3pm?	1	
Intending to drive between midnight and 6am?	3	
Had any alcohol or drowse-inducing prescription drugs in the past 6 hours?	2	
Do you have any fatigue warning signs – blinking frequently, restlessness, yawning, lack of focus etc.	3	

If you score ≥ 5 , or feel too tired to drive, talk to the Duty Manager about an alternative plan that does not require you to drive

Managing passengers

You need to ensure that passengers will help keep themselves and the driver safe.

Transport organisers should consider whether passengers can be trusted to follow instructions. If they can't, a second leader may need to sit in the back to manage any distractions.

Briefing

A passenger briefing should include:

- Follow the driver's instructions
- Put their bag in the luggage compartment, under the seat in front of them, or on the floor
- Stay in their seat and wear their seatbelt – wait until the vehicle has stopped and permission has been given before removing their seatbelt and leaving their seat
- Leave the vehicle from the footpath side and stay there until otherwise instructed
- Where the emergency exit is and how to open it
- Tell the driver if they have any concerns or feel unwell
- Avoid putting their arms or head out of the windows or throwing anything out
- Refrain from eating in the vehicle
- Avoid distracting the driver or annoying other passengers – understand that if they misbehave they may have to move seats or vehicles
- Pay for damage that they cause to the vehicle

We want to move further forward than just accepting that a licence will automatically deliver driver competency

St John of God Hauora

Private vehicles

When teachers, leaders, parents or volunteers use private vehicles to transport participants, there should be a clear agreement on expectations, including that:

- Vehicles are registered, roadworthy, and have a current warrant of fitness
- Drivers have their full driver licence even when they're transporting their own children
- Vehicles' seating capacity isn't exceeded
- Drivers and passengers are seated and restrained
- Vehicles are insured
- Passengers get out of the vehicle only on the footpath side
- No one smokes, vapes, or uses alcohol or illegal substances in the vehicle

Commercial vehicles

The Land Transport Act 1998 and associated rules set out the requirements for commercial vehicles.

Drivers receiving payment or reward for carrying passengers must:

- Have passed a [fit and proper person check](#)
- Have been safety checked as required by the Children's Act 2014
- Have a valid driver licence with a passenger endorsement (P endorsement)
- Display their driver identification card

When an external operator, eg a bus company, is contracted to provide transport, ask for evidence that the operator:

- Maintains awareness of, and complies with, all applicable laws and regulations including the Land Transport Rule: Passenger Service Vehicles 1999
- Ensures that vehicles have a current Certificate of Fitness (CoF) and display a relevant transport service label such as a Small Passenger Service Licence
- Employs qualified and experienced drivers
- Monitors drivers' compliance with the law , eg licensing, speed, and work-time rules

Pre-trip checklist

Vehicle #	Checked by:	Date:
Vehicle		OK
Petrol checked		
Tyre pressure checked visually		
Lights and indicators work		
Brakes work		
Windscreen clean on the outside and inside		
First aid onboard		
Chains onboard		
Trailer coupling and load secure		
Trailer brake light and indicators work		
Driver		
Signed off by the organisation to drive		
Physically and mentally capable of driving safely		
Licence carried		
Cellphone carried		
Sun glasses carried		
Fuel card and AA card carried		
Passengers – or see the transport plan		
Passengers have permission to travel		
Passenger list and contact details carried		
Any specific passenger behaviours or conditions checked		
Front seat passenger available to help the driver		
Planning – or see the transport plan		
Weather checked		
Route organised		
Refuelling and rest stop places planned		
Contingency plan in place		
Intentions left – signed out		

During the trip

What should drivers do?

Drivers should:

- Avoid driving in marginal weather conditions, eg high winds with trailers
- Ask a person outside the vehicle to assist when reversing in tight areas or areas of high people use
- Be aware of mountain driving etiquette, eg uphill has right of way
- Avoid driving when tired
- Avoid driving alone – have someone primed to make sure you stay alert
- Drive defensively – identify escape routes and be ready to take evasive action if required
- Keep the speed down – don't treat the speed limit as a target
- Swap drivers every 100km if possible
- Apply the handbrake and remove the keys when leaving the vehicle
- Avoid distractions
- Snack on light food and drink water regularly
- Get fresh air into the vehicle
- Take regular breaks
 - Aim for a 5–10 minute stop every 60 minutes. It may be okay to drive a little longer for the first 2–3 hours but, after four hours, make the driving time between stops about 45 minutes
 - Avoid pushing through when tired – swap with another suitable driver if available or take a short nap before continuing (this is only a short-term solution)

It's estimated that fatigue accounts for up to 30 percent of single-vehicle crashes in rural areas

Managing fatigue

Managing fatigue is a key factor in driving safely.

Warning signs

Warning signs include drowsiness, restlessness, yawning, frequent blinking, braking late, forgetting the last few kilometres travelled, excessive speed changes, and drifting out of line.

Fatigue cards

Prepare fatigue cards for people supporting the driver, as in the example on the next page used by Adventure Specialties.

Hey Amigo, Your Job is Really Important!

You must stay awake and check that your driver is not showing any of the following signs. If they do show any of these signs, then you need to tell them. They will probably pull over and have a break. If you get sleepy, also tell your driver ...we must have someone awake at all times.



Vans

Whether driving the organisation's own vehicle or a hired vehicle, drivers don't require a special licence, as long as they have a full, current car licence, and transport no more than 11 passengers.

Commercial vehicles

Be prepared to raise any concerns with the driver whoever they are, including professional drivers, eg if you feel they're speeding or should fit chains.

Legal position

Drivers aren't permitted to remove young people. Generally, the route must be completed and all participants delivered to the destination.

In extreme cases, if the driver decides it's unsafe to continue, they can pull over, call their employer, and follow their instructions, eg calling the police or the organisation to remove the participants concerned.

During the trip checklist

Vehicle
Fuel level sufficient
Trailer coupling and load secure
Windscreen clean
Exits clear
Have no large or sharp insecure items inside
Driver
Sufficiently alert
Has an alert front-seat passenger
Has taken an appropriate break
Called base if late
Passengers
Driver or other leader checked on the passengers' comfort
Driver or other leader checked that following covid-19 requirements in the vehicle
Documentation
Followed covid-19 scanning requirements at stops

After the trip

Trips don't usually end when you pull into the base. What needs to be done will depend on the organisation's policies.

After the trip checklist

Vehicle	OK
Refueled	
Parked in the right place	
Key returned	
Passengers	
Passengers able to get home	
Behavioural matters reported	
Documentation	
Driving log updated	
Signed in	
Vehicle defects reported	

Monthly checklist

Vehicle #	Checked by:	Date:
Vehicle		OK
WoF or CoF up to date		
Road User Charges up to date		
Registration up to date		
Services up to date		
Water level checked		
Oil level checked		
No fuel or oil leaks		
Windscreen fluid topped up		
Licence plates clean and legible		
Fire extinguisher onboard and service up to date		
First aid kit complete		
Snow chains fit the tyres		
Tyre tread looks good		
Tyres match		
Wheel nuts are tight		
Spare wheel onboard and pressure looks good		
Jack and wheel brace onboard		

Note: Vehicles include trailers if they're used

Further information

You can get more information from the websites listed below.

Child restraints

www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/what-waka-kotahi-is-doing/education-initiatives/child-restraints/using-child-restraints-in-new-zealand

Fatigue

www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/factsheets/24/docs/24-fatigue.pdf

Transport rules

www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/rules/

Planning the route

www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic-and-travel-information/

www.aa.co.nz/travel/roadwatch/