



Freedom Camping changes

WHAT THEY MEAN FOR FREEDOM CAMPERS

Purpose: This fact sheet seeks to show freedom campers 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 land must now be done in a certified self-contained vehicle, unless at a site specifically designated for freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles.
- › Owners seeking to renew or get a new certification for their vehicle must ensure that their vehicle has a fixed toilet in order for it to be certified self-contained.
- › During this phase-in period, vehicles with a current blue warrant can still freedom camp.
- › Blue warrant cards will still be evidence of self-containment.
- › There will be new freedom camping offences, and infringements can now be emailed.
- › The infringement payment and reminder notice period is changed from 28 days to 14 days.
- › Freedom camping rules may now be enforced on land managed by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

WINTER 2023



- › Certification can be done by either existing issuing authorities (using the voluntary standard, and issuing blue warrant cards) or new certification authorities (using the technical requirements in Regulations, and issuing green warrant cards).
- › Blue warrant cards will still be evidence of self-containment.
- › Campers may access the register of self-contained vehicles to see whether a vehicle has been certified as self-contained.
- › The new infringement framework will be in place. Any infringements that are issued may be higher than the previous \$200 amount.

SUMMER 2023/24



- › Only certification authorities will be able to certify vehicles.
- › Only green warrant cards can be issued.
- › Blue warrant cards can no longer be issued from now but existing blue warrant cards will still be 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

What changes are proposed?

There are five main changes:

- › A new rule that vehicle-based freedom camping on land managed by local authorities must be done in a self-contained vehicle unless at a site specifically designated for freedom camping in non-self-contained vehicles.
- › A new regulatory system for the certification of self-contained vehicles.
- › Requiring self-contained vehicles to have a fixed (not portable) toilet.
- › Strengthening the infringement regime.
- › Extending the Freedom Camping Act 2011 to land managed by Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency and Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand.

Why is Government making these changes now?

Prior to 2020, the number of people freedom camping in New Zealand increased substantially – from the low tens of thousands in the early 2000s to just over 250,000 in 2019.

While many freedom campers in New Zealand camp responsibly, New Zealand's image is being tarnished by irresponsible freedom camping, particularly by the inappropriate disposal of waste and littering at popular tourist sites and local amenities.

Local communities are disproportionately bearing the costs to manage freedom camping and are beginning to see tourism generally as an issue. Despite trialling non-regulatory approaches, such as investment in infrastructure and camper education, there are still issues relating to inappropriate disposal of waste. This was borne out in recent public consultation, where 60 percent of respondents agreed there was an issue.

As such, making these changes now will ensure freedom camping in New Zealand is sustainable – and protects New Zealanders' ongoing enjoyment of natural spaces.

Will all freedom camping have to be done in self-contained vehicles?

No – freedom campers will be able to use non-self-contained vehicles on DOC land (unless this is explicitly prohibited).

People will also still be able to freedom camp in tents (where permitted) as this form of camping is not the problem that the proposed changes are addressing.

Non-self-contained vehicles can continue to be used on land not subject to the Freedom Camping Act 2011, such as private land or commercial camping grounds.

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.

Will my vehicle used for freedom camping need to have a fixed toilet?

Yes, if you want your vehicle to be certified as self-contained, allowing you to freedom camp in designated areas. A fixed toilet may have either a removable (cassette) or permanent black water tank.

Vehicles with portable toilets will not be able to be certified as self-contained. Vehicles with a portable toilet and current blue warrant card will meet the requirements of self-containment up until summer 2024/25, or when the blue warrant card expires (whichever is earlier).

What will happen with blue warrant cards and stickers?

Blue warrant cards and stickers will be phased out over the two year transition period.

By summer 2024/25, blue warrant cards and stickers will not be evidence of self-containment – only green warrant cards will be evidence.

What happens if I receive an infringement notice for freedom camping?

If you receive an infringement notice, you will need to pay the infringement within 14 days. If you fail to pay within this period, you will be issued a reminder notice. Infringement notices and reminder notices will set out how to pay the fee and the consequences of not doing so.

If you have hired a vehicle from a vehicle rental company, the company may debit any infringement fees you obtain from your credit card.

Hirers will still have right to challenge the issuing of an infringement notice with the enforcement authority.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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