

Licensing, Endorsements and Compliance for Community Transport Providers - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Important Disclaimer:

The Waikato Regional Council's Community Transport Fund is intended to enable **community-led transport responses**. Community transport services operate within a diverse legal environment.

Waikato Regional Council's (WRC) sole function is as funder of the Community Transport Grant and:

- **Is not responsible for the regulation of passenger service licensing**
- **does not determine which licences or endorsements may apply**
- **does not provide legal advice**

Any information we provide about licensing, endorsements, safety, or insurance is **general guidance only**.

You are responsible for confirming and meeting all legal obligations that apply to your service. Our Grant or guidance does **not** alter or interpret statutory requirements.

If you are unsure of your obligations, you should refer to the relevant legislation or seek independent advice.

Frequently asked questions

▼ Licensing

▼ Who determines licensing requirements?

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is the regulator for passenger service licensing and driver endorsement requirements. They set and enforce these requirements. If you have further concerns we encourage you to seek independent advice, or guidance from [NZTA](#).

▼ Do we need a Small Passenger Service Licence (SPSL) or P-endorsements to operate our service?

Some community transport services **may be legally required** to hold an SPSL and/or use P-endorsed drivers. This depends on factors such as how your service is funded, the receipt of grants or contracts, whether donations are solicited, and how your service is structured.

It is your responsibility as the operator to check which requirements apply. WRC is **not** the regulator but can point you to NZTA resources, and has included some indicative guidance below.

▼ Does this mean we will be shut down?

WRC is not the regulator and does not have the authority to close services. Further, the Council's goal is to support you to operate safely and sustainably, not to remove services.

While recent legal advice has clarified where certain requirements may apply, these legal obligations are not new. If you are not yet compliant with NZ licensing law, you are encouraged to become compliant as soon as practicable, and you may apply to our fund to seek support with associated compliance costs.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is the regulator for passenger service licensing and driver endorsement requirements. They set and enforce these requirements, along with police. If you have further concerns we encourage you to seek independent advice, or guidance from NZTA.

▼ **When applying for the 2026 Community Transport Fund, will we be declined if we are not yet compliant?**

While WRC expects providers to understand and meet their legal obligations, you will not be automatically declined if you are not yet compliant when applying for the 2026 Community Transport Fund. You are encouraged to apply and should provide details about your plans and timeline to achieve compliance. A clear and practical pathway to meeting your obligations would be viewed positively.

Funding decisions will consider how you are maintaining overall safety and risk, including whether a realistic pathway towards compliance has been indicated. The Waikato Regional Council's goal is to support you to operate safely and sustainably, not to remove services.

▼ **Do all drivers need their own SPSL?**

No – each driver does not need their own Small Passenger Service Licence (SPSL). The SPSL can be held by one person *or* by the organisation itself. Multiple drivers can operate under that licence as long as:

- The vehicles they drive are operating under the SPSL (with the label displayed).
- Drivers meet any driver requirements (such as holding a P endorsement if required) or genuinely fall within an exemption.

Contact NZTA or visit <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/commercial-driving/transport-service-licences/small-passenger-service> to learn more about passenger service licensing.

▼ **How do we apply for a Small Passenger Service Licence (SPSL)?**

To apply for a Small Passenger Service Licence (SPSL), follow these steps:

1. **Decide who will hold the licence:** The licence can be held by an individual or an organisation (e.g., a trust or incorporated society). This licence holder is the 'small passenger service operator.'
2. **Complete the application forms:**
 - TL01 – Application for transport service licence
 - TL02 – Personal details supporting an application for transport service licence (one for each person 'in control' of the service, such as trustees, directors, or senior managers)
3. **Apply at a driver licensing agent:** Take your completed TL01 and TL02 forms and required ID to a driver licensing agent (e.g., AA, VTNZ).
4. **Pay the fees:**
 - \$439.00 if there is **one** person in control
 - \$583.80 if there is **more than one person** in control
 - Police vetting fee of \$9.70 **per** person in control
5. **Wait for processing:** Standard processing time is around 20 working days, providing all information is in order.

Ongoing costs include an annual TSL fee of \$98.87 per vehicle operated under your licence. Each vehicle must display a TSL label.

For more information and to access forms, visit [NZTA passenger service licensing information](#).

✓ **Do volunteer drivers need a P endorsement to drive for our community transport service?**

Generally anyone driving in a passenger service would need a *P* endorsement.

Under the *Land Transport (Driver Licensing) Rule 1999, clause 26(2) (e)*, a volunteer driver assisting an incorporated charitable organisation (or a hospital) **can be exempt** from needing a *P* endorsement for that volunteer driving.

If the driver is **paid** for their time driving passengers (for example, a paid administrator who occasionally steps in for a transport run when volunteers are unavailable), that driver **must** hold a *P* endorsement, regardless of the organisation's charitable status.

This volunteer exemption applies **only to the P endorsement requirement**, however, the service itself may not be exempt from needing an SPSL. Separate rules in the **Operator Licensing**

Rules determine whether a service must hold an SPSL or qualifies for a service-level exemption.

Contact NZTA or visit <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/commercial-driving/transport-service-licences/small-passenger-service> to learn more about passenger service licensing and endorsements.

✓ **How do we apply for a passenger (P) endorsement for drivers?**

To apply for a passenger (P) endorsement for your drivers, follow these steps:

1. Check eligibility:

- The applicant must have held a full New Zealand car licence (class 1) for at least 2 years and pass a 'fit and proper person' check (police and background vetting).
- A medical certificate may be required if one hasn't been provided to NZTA in the last 5 years, the applicant is 75 or older, or has a medical condition affecting safe driving.
- Citizenship is not required, but a full NZ licence is, and overseas documents may be needed if the applicant has lived outside NZ for 12+ months.

2. Get a medical certificate (if required): Obtain this from your GP using NZTA's approved format.

3. Complete the P endorsement form (DL20A): Fill out the application for a new passenger (P) endorsement.

4. Visit a driver licensing agent (e.g., AA, VTNZ): Bring the completed DL20A form, identity documents (NZ licence or passport), any required medical certificate, and any foreign documents if applicable.

5. Pay the fees: \$213.90 application fee plus \$9.70 vetting (\$223.60 total) for 1 year, or \$262.40 for a 5-year term.

6. Wait for processing: Standard applications are processed in about 10 working days, providing all information is in order. The driver must not perform transport duties until their new licence with the P endorsement is issued.

7. Once approved: Small passenger service drivers also need a driver ID card linked to their P endorsement to be displayed in the vehicle.

For more information, visit the [NZTA passenger service licensing page](#) or

✓ **If we get an SPSL, can we add more vehicles later?**

Yes. Once you have a Small Passenger Service Licence (SPSL), you can add more vehicles to your service at any time. Each new vehicle must be added to your TSL fleet through its registration and payment of the TSL fee per vehicle. Every vehicle operating under your SPSL must display a TSL label showing the licence it is operating under. You do not need to apply for a new SPSL each time you add a vehicle, but you may need to update NZTA if there are changes to the *persons in control* of the service.

For more details on licensing, visit [NZTA passenger service licensing information](#).

▽ **How does licensing affect our insurance?**

Operating without required licences or endorsements **may affect the validity of your insurance**. You should check your policy wording and confirm with your insurer or broker about any risks and how to mitigate them.