

Life Skills for Adulthood: Being a Road User

Content

- Car maintenance
 - Getting a warrant of fitness (WOF)
 - Oil check
- Car admin
 - Vehicle licencing (Rego)
 - Registration
 - Registered person
 - Insurance
- Emergencies and accidents
 - What to do in a car accident
 - How to jumpstart a car
 - How to change a tyre
- Mobility permits

Car Maintenance

Please note for the sake of simplicity and keeping things short, the information in this section only refers to private cars (i.e. this does not refer to taxis, or large vehicles such as trucks or trailers).

Getting a Warrant of Fitness (WOF)

Most cars need a WOF every year. Cars that were first registered before 1 January 2000 are required to get a WOF every 6 months. New vehicles that have never been registered will be issued a WoF for three years.

Getting a WOF is fairly straight forward. If you take it to a VTNZ, you can go anytime without making an appointment. Some places will require you to drive and stay in the car until the assessor comes to take your car, other places will have you park your car and sit in the waiting room. You may also choose to take it to another local garage, you will just need to check if you need to make an appointment beforehand. It's helpful to know that VTNZ does not do repairs or significant maintenance so if your vehicle fails its WOF, you will need to take it somewhere else to sort out any faults.

WoF includes:

- Tyres (pressure, tread depth, size)
- Brakes
- Lights (headlights, front and rear fog lights, indicators, reversing lights, brake lights, reflectors, etc.)
- Windscreen (Your windscreen must be safely and securely affixed to the vehicle and must be clean without obstruction to the driver's vision).
- Windscreen wipers (The wiper system must operate, must do so safely, and must be fit for purpose)
- Sun visors (must be fit for purpose)
- Rear-view mirrors
- Seat belts
- Speedometer
- Airbags
- Steering
- Wheel alignment
- Suspension
- Exhaust
- Rust and other structural conditions (if the structural integrity of the vehicle is impacted in some way, the vehicle will fail the warrant)
- Fuel system
- Doors (must be able to open and close safely).

For more information: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/warrants-and-certificates/warrant-of-fitness/#:~:text=How%20often%20a%20WoF%20is,anniversary%20of%20their%20first%20registration.>

Oil check

- It is a good idea to check your oil levels regularly. Once you've opened the bonnet of the car, you should be able to find the dip stick. The dip stick usually has a ring on the top of it, it may be yellow.
- You need to use a paper towel or rag to wipe the dipstick clean.
- Then you dip the stick back into the oil.
- Pull the stick out and look at the end.
- There will be two markings. These are the 'maximum' and 'minimum' lines. You need to check where the oil reaches between these lines.
- If the oil is too low, you need to top it up.
- If you're not confident doing this yourself, you can take it for a service or oil top up.
- But if you know what type of oil your car needs, you can use a funnel to top it up yourself.



Car Admin

Vehicle licensing (Rego)

To legally use your vehicle on the road, you must have both a warrant of fitness, and a vehicle licence (otherwise known as a rego). Both of these are displayed on the windscreen of the vehicle and it is your responsibility to be aware of when each of these expire so that you can renew them on time.

NZTA will send a reminder via email or post 6 weeks prior to your rego expiring.

You can renew your rego online and your new licence will be sent to you via post.

You can view the different fees for different vehicles here:
<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/licensing-rego/vehicle-fees/licensing-fees/>

For more information: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/licensing-rego/vehicle-licensing-rego/>

Registration

Unless you are buying a brand-new vehicle or a car that has never been registered in New Zealand, registration is not something you will need to worry about.

Registration is the process, and one-off fee to get a vehicle certified and have number plates assigned to it.

For more information: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/vehicle-registration/registering-your-vehicle/>

Registered Person

When you buy a vehicle, you are legally required to tell NZTA that you are the owner of that vehicle. You do this by completing a Change of registered person – buyer form. You can do this online. The original owner will also need to complete a form to change ownership over to you.

Once ownership has been changed, you'll receive a certificate of registration either by post or by email.

For more information: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/buying-and-selling-a-vehicle/>

Insurance

It is important to have vehicle insurance so that if anything happens to your vehicle, you are covered. This could be an accident, or your vehicle gets stolen for example. If you are buying a car, it's a good idea to insure it before you drive it anywhere. You can purchase insurance online. You may want to compare different companies and policies as there may be different costs based on your age and licence stage (i.e. learner vs. restricted).

If something does happen to your vehicle and you have to claim from insurance, you'll usually have to pay what is called an 'excess'. When you purchase your insurance, you will choose what your excess is. The lower your excess, the higher your insurance fee.

If the damage to the vehicle would cost less to repair than paying the excess, then there is no point claiming from insurance. So in some cases it's better to have a lower excess.

You can choose to pay an annual fee or monthly fees. It will cost less overall to pay it annually.

Emergencies and Accidents

What to do in a car accident

- In any road incident, firstly make sure you're okay.
- If possible, get the vehicle out of the way of oncoming traffic
- Turn on the hazard lights.
- If it is safe to do so, check that everyone else is okay. If it is not safe to do so, contact emergency services for help.
- If the vehicle is not going to be drivable, contact the towing company.
- Get the insurance details, licence plate and drivers licence details from anyone else involved in the incident. You will need this information if you are to make an insurance claim.
- If you are able to, take photos of any damage or injuries.
- Get contact information from any witnesses
- If the incident is major, someone is hurt, the vehicles are in a dangerous location such as the motorway, there is damage to structures such as traffic lights, buildings or lamp posts, or if someone flees the scene, call 111 and ask for police and an ambulance if needed.
- Once things have settled and you're safe and have tended to your injuries, contact your insurance company.

How to jumpstart a car

If your car won't start because the battery has died, you may need to know how to jumpstart it.

To do this you will need another vehicle with a charged battery, jump leads and some rubber work gloves.

- Never touch the red and black ends of the jump leads together while they are connected to a car battery as they could spark and cause damage. If you have a second person there with you, one person could hold the other end of the jump leads (not the metal part) and make sure they don't touch each other. Otherwise, you can place them on the ground while you are connecting them between the cars.

- Make sure you're not wearing anything metal that could touch the battery or the leads while you are jumpstarting the car.
- Make sure the batteries are in good condition and there is no corrosion. Trying to jumpstart a car with a damaged battery could be dangerous.

If all is safe to go ahead:

- You need to line up the vehicles so that the jump leads can easily reach between them. They should be facing each other front to front.
- The cars should be turned off.
- Open the bonnets of both vehicles
- The red lead attaches to the positive terminal (+) on each battery starting with the flat battery.
- Then the black lead attaches to the negative terminal (-) on the charged battery, and an unpainted piece of metal in the engine that is away from the flat battery. A bolt for example.
- After a few minutes, start the working car and let it run for 1-3 minutes
- Then start your car. If your car won't start, let the working car run a bit longer

Once you get your car started there are two options

- Option 1:
 - Let both cars run for 10 minutes.
 - Turn off both cars
 - Disconnect the leads in the reverse order that they were placed (so the black lead from the flat car, black lead from the charged car, red lead from the flat car, and red lead from the charged car)
 - Make sure the leads don't touch each other or the cars while you remove them.
 - Start your car again

- Option 2:
 - Leave your car running
 - Turn off the car with the charged battery.
 - Disconnect the black lead that is attached to the unpainted piece of metal, then the black lead from the charged battery, then the red lead that is attached to your car, and lastly the red lead from the charged battery.
 - Again, make sure the leads don't touch each other or the cars while you remove them. Place them on the ground.

Once you've jumpstarted your car, drive it around for half an hour so that the battery has time to charge again. It might also be a good idea to take it to a battery shop to get checked in case you do need to replace it.

How to change a tyre

- Turn on the hazard lights
- Make sure there are no passengers in the vehicle
- Put the car in park and apply the handbrake
- If you have wheel chocks, block the wheels on the side of the car not being lifted to prevent the car from rolling. If you don't have wheel chocks, you can use bricks, big rocks or a piece of wood. If you don't have access to this, you can do without in an emergency, provided you are on flat ground (i.e. not a hill).
- Remove the wheel cover/hub cap
- Loosen the nuts while the car is on the ground but don't remove them.
- Find the jacking point on your vehicle.
- Place the jack and slowly raise the vehicle.
- Remove the nuts.
- Remove the wheel.
- Put the spare tyre on.
- Put the nuts back on.
- Lower the vehicle
- Tighten the nuts
- Replace the wheel cover/hub cap



If you are using a space saver, remember you cannot drive over 80kmp/h and it is only temporary. You need to get your flat tyre repaired.

For more detailed information: <https://www.aa.co.nz/cars/owning-a-car/tyres/how-to-change-a-car-tyre/>

Mobility Permits

You can apply for a mobility parking permit through CCS disability action if you meet the below criteria:

“You are unable to walk and always require the use of a wheelchair, or

Your ability to walk distances is severely restricted by a medical condition or disability. For example, if you require the use of mobility aids, experience severe pain or breathlessness, or

You have a medical condition or disability that requires you to have physical contact or close supervision to safely get around and cannot be left unattended. For example, if you experience disorientation, confusion, or severe anxiety.”

You will also need to get your doctor to complete part of the application to confirm that you do meet the criteria.

You can download the application form online or ask your doctor if they have a copy of the full application.

Cost:

- Short term (up to 12 months): \$35 for the permit. \$10 for an extension
- 5 year permit: \$50
- Permit for people over 90 years old: free

<https://www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/mobility-parking>