Rental Vehicle Operators

Best Practice guidelines for

Informing Overseas Drivers

DRIVESAFE

Introduction

The New Zealand rental vehicle sector, in partnership with Tourism Industry Aotearoa (TIA) and the Rental Vehicle Association of New Zealand (RVA), has developed safe driving best practice guidelines for rental operators in New Zealand.

The aim of the best practice guidelines is to establish a set of agreed standards and practices that operators can follow when assessing and educating overseas visitor preparedness for driving on New Zealand roads.

Whilst the responsibility for safe driving remains primarily with the hirer, the rental vehicle sector recognises that it has a role to play in informing visiting drivers and preparing them for road conditions, driving and weather, in New Zealand.

These guidelines provide a set of minimum standards that can be applied to any rental vehicle company in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Also provided are Good Practice suggestions that support the implementation of the minimum requirements.

Implementation

All rental operators in New Zealand that provide rental vehicles to visiting drivers will be asked to endorse these guidelines by adding their logo to the document.

These guidelines are voluntary, as such there is no legal mandate for enforcement. It is therefore anticipated that membership of, or affiliation with, industry bodies including TIA, RVA, the Tourism Export Council, Qualmark and Tourism New Zealand will entail rental vehicle operators endorsing and following the best practice guidelines.

Operators should make all company policies regarding Visiting Drivers available to hirers by making them easily available on site and/or via clear placement on their website.

Operators are expected to be compliant with all legal requirements relating to Visiting Drivers including certification to operate (e.g. RSL), checking (and validation) of overseas driver licences, and ensuring non-English-speaking licences are accompanied by an English translation.

By endorsing the guidelines, operators agree to be an active advocate and supporter of safe driving in NZ, including a commitment to safer vehicles through the adoption of technological improvements over time.

Guidelines - Definitions and Interpretations

Good Practice	The provision of supporting information that assists operators in implementing the guidelines
Operator	Any organisation that provides rental vehicles for hire to international drivers, operating under the appropriate licence from NZTA.
NZTA/Waka Kotahi	New Zealand Transport Agency
Third Parties	Agencies such as wholesalers who act as booking agents for the rental operator

Stage One: Pre-Arrival

Minimum requirement:
Link to Drivesafe.org.nz

Rental vehicle operators will provide pre-arrival information to visitors on the New Zealand road rules and what is different about driving in New Zealand.

1. Operators will make information on NZ road rules and driving conditions available in a prominent position on their homepage/landing page. The information will be visible and promote the DriveSafe logo. The minimum requirement is a direct link to www.DriveSafe.org.nz.

Good Practice:

- Put the information on the operator's home page
- Use the DriveSafe tile to link through to the website (tile available from TIA)
- Provide the information in the language of the hirer, if required
- Encourage the hirer to consider whether self-drive is still an appropriate option for travel, based on the information they have received
- Provide direct links to videos on safe driving in New Zealand
- Provide direct links to the ten key road rules and NZTA's 'Driving in New Zealand' (http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/driving-in-nz/docs/driving-in-nz.pdf).

2. Operators will provide educational information to the hirer upon booking confirmation. Minimum requirement is a link to www.DriveSafe.org.nz. Operators must encourage visitors who are arriving on long-haul flights to stay overnight in that destination.

Good Practice:

- Advise the hirer of the requirements for driver's licence translation (http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/driving-nz.html)
- Advise the hirer to investigate the driving conditions in NZ before arrival
- Provide information to the hirer within 3-14 days prior to arrival that re-emphasises the New Zealand road rules, plus what the hirer may need to prepare for at the vehicle check-out on arrival (e.g. bad weather, road closures, EV charging infrastructure etc)
- Provide the information in the language of the hirer, if required
- Provide information in a welcoming and friendly manner
- Use videos, pictures and diagrams to reinforce the messaging.

3. Operators will ensure educational information on safe driving in New Zealand is available for Third Parties (e.g. wholesalers, aggregators) to pass on as part of the booking confirmation process.

Good Practice:

- Provide the same information to customers via a third party as to a direct hirer (e.g. link to DriveSafe website for wholesaler/aggregator).

Stage Two: Vehicle Check-Out

The vehicle check-out is a critical stage in the DriveSafe process. Operators are able to confirm directly with the hirer that they have been informed of the New Zealand road rules and driving conditions, and can undertake an assessment of the driver's preparedness.

1. Operators will have a mandatory policy to assess driver preparedness. Operators will require at-risk hirers[1] to acknowledge the receipt and understanding of road safety material provided to them which must include NZTA's 'Driving in New Zealand'[2].

2. Operators will advise drivers about useful apps and resources to stay informed about changing road and weather conditions. For example:

    - https://www.google.com/maps/
    - Highway conditions | Waka Kotahi Journey Planner (nzta.govt.nz);
    - Travel time and distance calculator | 100% Pure New Zealand (newzealand.com)
    - Traffic & Incidents | AA Roadwatch | AA New Zealand;
    - National Severe Weather Information - MetService is New Zealand's only authorised provider of Severe Weather Alerts

Good Practice:

- Use the recommended questions (refer appendix) for assessing driver preparedness
- Hand out road rules to all visiting drivers
- Provide information about apps and resources to keep up to date with changing road and weather conditions.
- Ask hirer to sign a declaration that they have received road safety material
- Provide suitable training to staff re providing advice and information.

2. Operators will have an internal process for managing situations where there are concerns about driver preparedness, from providing more information (for example, driving an EV in NZ) through to denying hire and suggesting alternative transport.

Good Practice:

- Ensure staff have the ability to escalate concerns to a supervisor and/or are provided sufficient support to make decisions as required.

[1] At-risk hirers include all first-time visitors with the exception of those driving on Australian and UK licences

[2] Copies can be ordered from NZTA/Waka Kotahi, here: Driving in New Zealand | Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency (nzta.govt.nz)

Stage Three: On-Road

1. Operators will, within all hire vehicles for overseas drivers, place 'Keep Left' stickers in a location visible for the driver and include the NZTA brochure 'Driving in New Zealand' (if not already provided at Check-out Desk).

Good Practice:

- Display a "Keep Left" sticker in a location visible for the driver.

2. When contacted by Police in relation to poor driving behaviour of a visitor, operators should consider cancellation of the hire contract as a response.

3. When advised by the Police of a driving complaint about the hirer (as reported through the *555 network), operators will forward the information to the hirer as soon as practicable and provide further information/material on New Zealand road rules.

Good Practice:

- Contact the hirer by phone prior to forwarding information by email, as the hirer may not be checking emails frequently.
- Advise the hirer that the operator and the NZ Police take unsafe driving practices very seriously and the potential consequences of further complaints or direct observation by the Police e.g. risk of having their rental agreement terminated.
- Have a procedure for suggesting alternative forms of transport to the visitor in the event that their contract is cancelled at check-out or when on-road.

Driving an EV in New Zealand/Aotearoa

New Zealand/Aotearoa has been rapidly transitioning to a zero-emissions transport network over recent years.

For overseas tourists wanting to experience New Zealand/Aotearoa at the wheel of a battery electric vehicle (EV), a number of options are available from rental operators.

New Zealand has an EV charging network spanning most main New Zealand tourist routes, and at key tourist destinations. As with any road trip, journey planning is important. With EV's however, it's even more so.

It is recommended that drivers plan their journey carefully according to the charging infrastructure available, both fast (e.g. en-route) and slow charging (e.g. overnight). There are apps available that show both the charging stations around New Zealand/Aotearoa and the status of the chargers available. Demand may be high in some areas so they will need to plan for that.

Finally, ensure customers consider safety and security when planning their journey, particularly in remote areas. They must stay up to date with weather and road conditions during their trip. Things can change quickly!

Here are seven best practice tips for a great EV driving experience in New Zealand:

1. Plan the charging stops around activities or meal breaks	Whenever on a road trip, the driver needs to ensure they take regular breaks to avoid fatigue, stretch their legs and stay refreshed. Recharging takes more time than refuelling. If they match their breaks with charging stations, they can then make their trip more enjoyable (less waiting around!). There are around 350 charging sites available throughout New Zealand. With more being added regularly. They can be found on the live NZTA/Waka Kotahi EV charger map. NZTA/Waka Kotahi also has a journey planner tool that can help.
2. You may get variations in range	To get the best range from an EV, drivers need to drive it in optimal conditions. Sadly, in real life, they won't be. They'll be driving in varied conditions and circumstances, which will reduce their range. The range will be **less** if: • They drive fast and brake heavily • There's very hot or very cold weather • They're driving over hilly terrain • They're towing something • They're running their air conditioning

	• They're carrying roof-racks • They have heavy loads like extra passengers and luggage With all these things in mind, drivers should allow for a decent margin of error when working out their range. Don't rely on the car's stated range.
3. Make sure there is always a backup option	It's possible a customer will arrive at a charging station and find it's unavailable or out of order, or there will be a queue of EV owners also waiting. It is relatively uncommon, but it would be frustrating if they were relying on that charger to get them to their destination. Never rely on a specific charger, always have enough charge to get to several other charging sites in the vicinity. Always have a back-up.
4. Make sure they check what type of charger your car uses	They'll need to match their charger type (e.g. AC or DC) with the stations that can accommodate it. DC chargers will usually have a cable which they can connect to the vehicle, but AC chargers will often require drivers to use their own cable and plug. For information on home and fast charging see the Genless government website.
5. Encourage them to sign up for different charging apps to map out their trip in advance	Drivers can use various apps to help them plan their EV trip. EVRoam is Waka Kotahi's live database of the nation's EV charging infrastructure. It has real-time information from all New Zealand/Aotearoa public charging sites, and for automated chargers it shows availability. It's the database that feeds into most other provider apps. The ChargeNet app may be useful. ChargeNet is the country's largest EV charging network, with 280-plus chargers. Its app shows drivers any network issues. There is also: • The AA time and distance calculator — tick 'charging stations' to add them to the time and distance map. • Plugshare(external link) — crowd-sourced map and chargers from all networks.

6. Be smart with the charging	Ensure the driver knows to charge the EV to 100% before they leave on their road trip. It's cheaper and it can be done overnight. Then, when they're on the road, tell them to charge it to 80%. It will save a lot of time. It takes much longer to add the last 20% to a battery than the first 20%, as the more charge a battery has the longer it takes to get to 100%. Getting to 100% wastes time. In fact, it wastes so much time that some charge suppliers only ever allow customers to reach 95% **If they stick to the 80% rule while travelling on the road, they will save time and free up the charger for the next person.** When they reach their destination (i.e. accommodation), that's the perfect opportunity to charge their car back to 100% while they're sleeping. Most places will have somewhere available for them to plug in, which is often free. Do that, and they'll be nicely set up for the day's driving ahead!
7. Stay safe and secure	They're on holiday, so encourage them to get the most out of it by, above all, driving safely and driving to the road conditions. Encourage them to be security wise, lock their valuables away when leaving their vehicle. Park their vehicle in a secure and well-lit place when charging at night. Follow these tips and they will have an enjoyable and memorable experience. Check out sites like the AA Traveller for more travel ideas or ways to explore New Zealand/Aotearoa.

For more top tips on your electric road trip visit the Genless website.

Appendix - general information

1. **Resources & Educational Material**

   A wide range of educational material and resources for educating drivers is available. These resources have been developed by government agencies, industry bodies and commercial operators. Information on the material and resources is available in the New Zealand Rental Vehicle Operator Guidelines for Communicating with Visiting Drivers developed by TIA and RVA.

   https://www.drivesafe.org.nz/

   http://www.rentalvehicle.co.nz/

2. **Recommended assessment questions**

1. I am familiar with NZ road rules	Yes	No
2. I am familiar with the DriveSafe website	Yes	No
3. I have driven regularly in the past year	Yes	No
4. I feel well prepared to drive in NZ	Yes	No
5. I have driven on the left-hand side of the road before	Yes	No
6. I have driven a vehicle of similar size or in the same transmission	Yes	No Auto ☐ Manual ☐

   If a driver answers NO to any of the above questions, further information and guidance must be provided. This could include the Drive Safe video to watch, a test drive or other support.

The recommended questions are available in English, Mandarin, German and French. Please contact info@drivesafe.org.nz for copies.

The following New Zealand rental vehicle operators all support and endorse these guidelines: