

FAQs – Road User Charges

Who pays road user charges?

Unless exempt, you must have a valid road user charges (RUC) distance licence if you own a vehicle that:

- runs on a fuel that is not charged fuel excise duty, or
- has a gross vehicle mass over 3.5 tonnes.

Most vehicles that pay RUC are diesel vehicles, light electric vehicles and heavy vehicles.

Read more about [RUC at NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi \(external link\)\(external link\)](#)

Who is exempt from paying RUC?

Currently some classes of vehicles are exempt from RUC, including:

- vehicles that are unsuitable for public road use, such as tractors and forklifts
- heavy electric vehicles, until 1 July 2027.

Read about [RUC exemptions \(external link\)\(external link\)](#)

How RUC works

A vehicle subject to RUC must have a distance licence that exceeds the number of kilometres travelled on the vehicle's distance recorder. Heavy vehicles must have a hubodometer attached to the wheel axle or an electronic distance recorder. For light vehicles, a vehicle's odometer is the vehicle's distance recorder.

How you pay RUC

You buy RUC distance licences from the New Zealand Transport Agency and agents, such as New Zealand Post Shops or Automobile Association (AA) Service Centres.

Read about [RUC licences \(external link\)\(external link\)](#)

If you have an electronic distance recorder, you buy your licence through electronic service providers.

Read about [RUC distance recorders \(external link\)\(external link\)](#)

You must pre-pay, but you can apply for a refund of RUC for travel on non-public roads.

Read about [RUC rates and transaction fees \(external link\)\(external link\)](#)

View the [RUC calculator\(external link\)](#)

How RUC rates are set

How much RUC you pay is based on the type of vehicle, its weight, axle and tyre configuration, and the distance you travel on a public road.

Different types of vehicles cause different levels of damage and costs to the roading network and RUC rates vary in proportion to these costs.

The Ministry uses the following cost categories to determine how costs are allocated across different vehicle types:

- space/size of vehicle
- average laden weight of the vehicle
- road wear caused by the vehicle
- common costs for the road network (such as road signs and street lights)
- policing costs for the heavy vehicle fleet.