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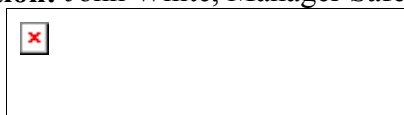
Infosheet 2.12 revision 1

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Revision: 1 ([Revision history](#))

From: Safer Vehicles Policy

Authorisation: John White, Manager Safer Vehicles Policy



Signature:

Importing light vehicles from the United States of America: Standards and document requirements

A light vehicle is defined as one that has a gross vehicle mass (GVM) less than or equal to 3500 kg and includes cars, vans, utes and motorcycles.

If you want to import a light vehicle privately or commercially from the United States of America it is your responsibility to prove that you are legally entitled to the vehicle and that the vehicle meets New Zealand safety requirements.

This infosheet will help you to determine what steps to follow and what documents you need, based on the class of the vehicle and when it was manufactured.

There is a table containing descriptions of the vehicle classes at the start of each section. If you cannot clearly identify what class of vehicle you have, [contact an Entry Certifier](#) for advice.

- Section 1: [Importing motorcycles \(Class LC, LD or LE\) from the USA](#)
- Section 2: [Importing passenger cars \(Class MA\) from the USA](#)
- Section 3: [Importing other light vehicles \(Class MB, MC, NA, MD1 or MD2 \) from the USA.](#)
- Appendices: You must have the [correct documents](#) in order to have the vehicle certified for use in New Zealand. The documents need to be presented with the vehicle to the Entry Certifier in New Zealand. We recommend that you have the correct paperwork **before** the vehicle is shipped to New Zealand.

Recent changes in requirements – section 2 and section 3

Section 3: Class MB and Class MC vehicles manufactured after 1 October 2003 must meet an **approved frontal impact standard**. If you're importing a Class MB or Class MC vehicle that was made after 1 October 2003, you **MUST** ensure that it meets an approved frontal impact standard.

Sections 2 and 3: From 1 January 2004 these vehicles must meet an **approved emissions standard** for the exhaust system if they were manufactured after 1 January 1990.

Contact details for Entry Certifiers

- Automobile Association (AA), phone +64 9 966 8800, fax +64 9 966 8893, email aatech@nzaa.co.nz
- On Road New Zealand, phone +64 9 444 6921, fax +64 9 444 1827
- Vehicle Inspection New Zealand (VINZ), phone +64 9 573 3055, fax +64 9 573 3059, www.vinz.co.nz
- Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ), phone +64 4 381 6500, fax +64 4 381 6530, technical@vtnz.co.nz, www.vtnz.co.nz.

Other sources of information

- **Factsheet 44** – Importing a light vehicle into New Zealand: summarises the process involved – who does what with the vehicle, and when. It also provides indicative prices for the different steps involved in getting a vehicle certified and registered for use on New Zealand roads.
- **Frontal impact lists for Class MA vehicles:** The LTSA's website lists, by make and model, those vehicles that manufacturers have advised as meeting (or not meeting) New Zealand's frontal impact requirements (see [Frontal impact compliance status of vehicles by vehicle make](#)). Please note that the information on these lists is supplied by vehicle manufacturers. The LTSA has taken every reasonable precaution to ensure the accuracy of this information.

Read the appropriate list carefully, because some makes and models don't comply until they reach a particular model year or chassis number.

If you can't find your Class MA vehicle in these lists, follow the steps described in the appropriate flowchart in this Infosheet to establish whether or not your vehicle meets an approved frontal impact standard.

- **Vehicle standards:** The website includes [information about vehicle standards](#) as well as a comprehensive guide to the standards required for different vehicles. This sets out the definitions of the different vehicle classes and the standards that must be met by vehicles of each class according to date of manufacture ([Vehicle classes and the standards they must meet](#)).

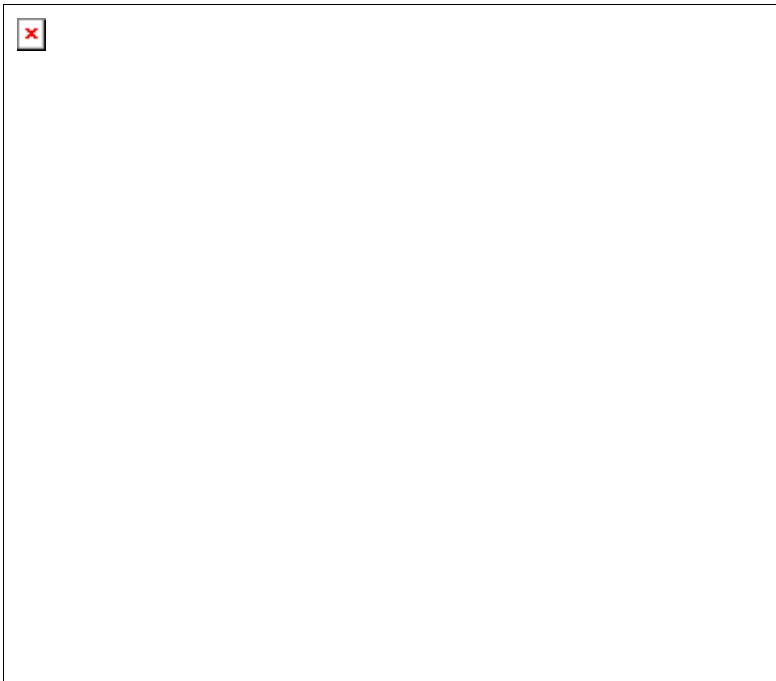
If you think you have a valid reason for your vehicle to be exempted from the requirement to meet one or more approved vehicle standards, you may apply for an exemption. See [Application for an exemption from vehicle standards rules](#).

- **NZ Customs Service:** www.customs.govt.nz
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF):** www.maf.govt.nz

Section 1: Importing motorcycles (Class LC, LD or LE) from the United States

Class	Description
LC (motorcycle)	A motor vehicle that has two wheels, and either has an engine cylinder capacity exceeding 50 ml or has a maximum speed exceeding 50 km/h.
LD (motorcycle and side-car)	<p>A motor vehicle that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has three wheels asymmetrically arranged in relation to the longitudinal median axis; and b. either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. has an engine cylinder capacity exceeding 50 ml; or ii. has a maximum speed exceeding 50 km/h. <p>Definition: side-car. A car, box, or other receptacle attached to the side of a motorcycle and supported by a wheel.</p>
LE (motor tri-cycle)	<p>A motor vehicle that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. has three wheels symmetrically arranged in relation to the longitudinal median axis; and b. has a gross vehicle mass not exceeding one tonne; and c. either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. has an engine cylinder capacity exceeding 50 ml; or ii. has a maximum speed exceeding 50 km/h. <p>An LE 1 motor vehicle has one wheel at the front and two wheels at the rear. An LE 2 motor vehicle has two wheels at the front and one wheel at the rear.</p>

This flowchart applies to motorcycles (Class LC, LD or LE) imported from the United States. Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.



Motorcycles flowchart notes:

A: START: Does the motorcycle have an FMVSS plate?

An FMVSS (US Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards) compliance plate on the motorcycle proves that it was made to meet standards that are acceptable in New Zealand. The motorcycle **MUST** also have original documentation confirming that it was first registered in the USA or, in the case of a new motorcycle, documentation confirming that it was manufactured for the US market and would be permitted for use on public roads in the USA.

B: If the motorcycle was manufactured on or after 1 October 2002 get a Statement of Compliance

Motorcycles manufactured before 1 October 2002 may have to meet approved standards for some of their parts, but these parts can all be fitted once the motorcycle is in New Zealand (eg reflectors).

Motorcycles manufactured on or after 1 October 2002 will have to meet a standard for their brakes. Without an FMVSS plate the only way you can prove it meets the standard is with a [Statement of Compliance](#).

C: Get proof you own the motorcycle

You will need evidence that you're legally entitled to the motorcycle. You must have original documents that establish an ownership trail back to the last registered owner in the United States (eg deregistration or change of ownership papers) and invoices, bills of sale, receipts etc.

See also:

Appendix 1: [What's a Statement of Compliance?](#)

Appendix 2: [Sample FMVSS plates/label](#)

Section 2: Importing passenger cars (Class MA vehicles) from the United States

Class	Description
MA (passenger car)	A passenger vehicle (other than a Class MB or Class MC vehicle) that has not more than nine seating positions (including the driver's seating position).
<p>Note: A passenger vehicle is a motor vehicle that is constructed primarily for the carriage of passengers, and either has at least four wheels, or has three wheels and a gross vehicle mass exceeding one tonne.</p>	

A Class MA vehicle is defined as a passenger vehicle (other than a Class MB or Class MC vehicle) that has not more than nine seating positions (including the driver's seating position).

There are three flowcharts for Class MA vehicles. If the Class MA vehicle you want to import is over 20 years old (based on the date of first registration anywhere), go straight to the [ownership](#) flowchart. Otherwise, work through the:

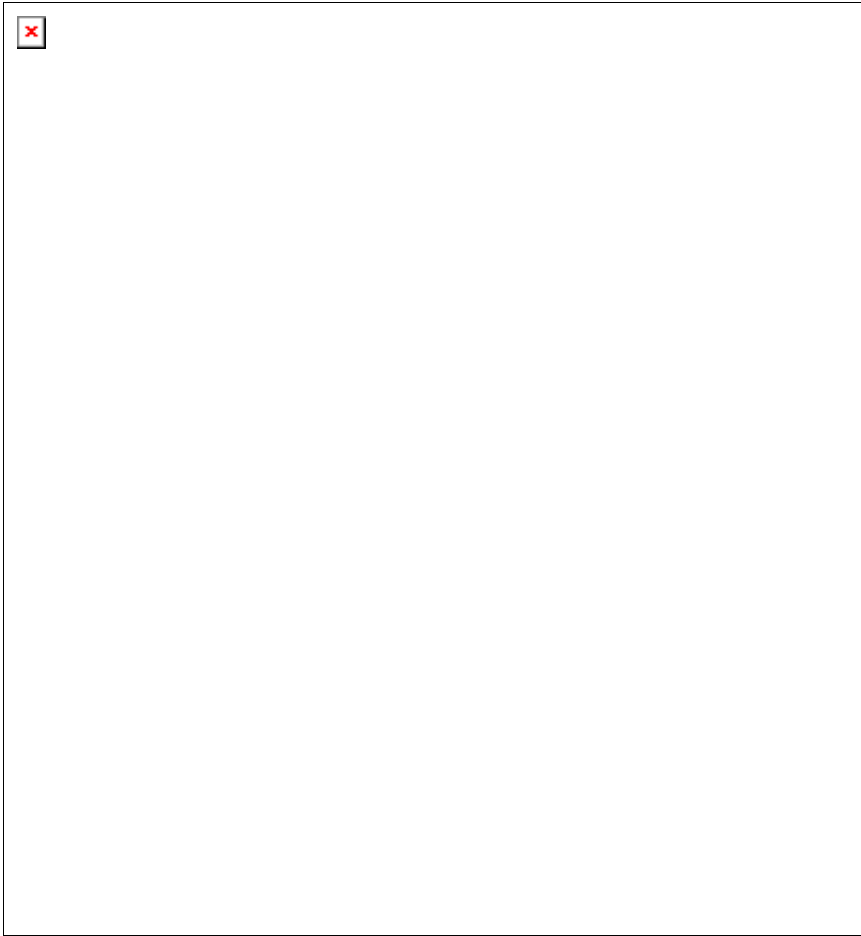
- **frontal impact** flowchart, then the
- **other standards** flowchart, then the
- **ownership** flowchart.

You will need to read the supporting notes for each flowchart you use.

Frontal impact flowchart

This flowchart applies to passenger cars (Class MA vehicles) imported from the United States and less than 20 years old (based on the date of first registration anywhere). Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.

Please note: New Zealand has restrictions on left-hand drive vehicles. If you wish to import one of these we strongly recommend you read [Factsheet 12](#) on left-hand drive vehicles before you go any further. The factsheet is available on the LTSA's website and from the helpdesk, phone 0800 699 000.



Frontal impact flowchart notes:

A: START: Is the car listed on one of the frontal impact lists?

The LTSA's website lists, by make and model, those vehicles that manufacturers have advised as meeting (or not meeting) New Zealand's frontal impact requirements (see [Frontal impact compliance status of vehicles by vehicle make](#)). Please note that the information on these lists is supplied by vehicle manufacturers. The LTSA has taken every reasonable precaution to ensure the accuracy of this information.

Read the appropriate list carefully, because some makes and models don't comply until they reach a particular model year or chassis number.

B: Does the vehicle have an FMVSS plate?

An [FMVSS \(US Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards\) plate](#) on a vehicle will be accepted as proof that the vehicle was manufactured to meet a frontal impact standard acceptable in New Zealand. The vehicle must also have original documentations confirming that it was first registered in the USA or, in the case of a new vehicle, documentation confirming that it was manufactured for the US market and would be permitted for use on public roads in the USA.

C: Do you have a Statement of Compliance including an approved frontal impact standard?

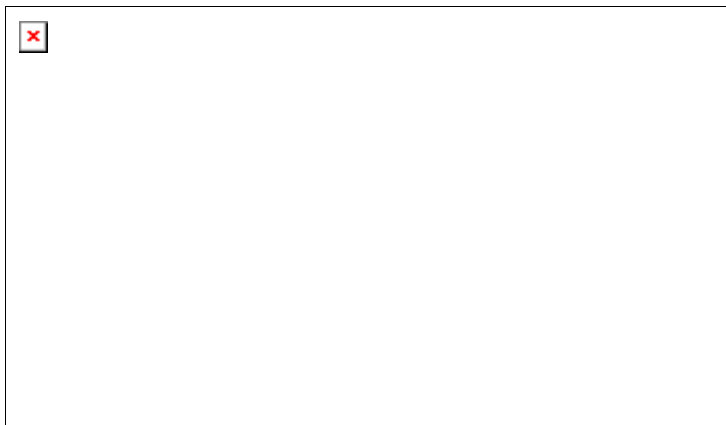
If you don't have other proof, you need to get a [Statement of Compliance](#) (see later in this Infosheet) testifying that the vehicle meets one of the required frontal impact standards.

D: STOP

Don't ship the vehicle to New Zealand. Frontal impact protection systems can't be added in after a vehicle has been manufactured. If a vehicle wasn't designed, manufactured and certified as meeting an approved frontal impact standard there is nothing that can be done to change this. The vehicle simply won't meet our frontal impact requirements.

Other standards flowchart

This flowchart applies to passenger cars (Class MA vehicles) imported from the United States and manufactured after on or 1 January 1991. It follows on from the [frontal impact](#) flowchart. Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.



Other standards notes:

E: START: Does the vehicle have an FMVSS compliance plate?

An [FMVSS \(US Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards\) plate](#) fixed to the vehicle can be used as evidence that the vehicle meets New Zealand standards requirements. Note that an FVMSS plate will not prove frontal impact compliance in all cases (see [frontal impact](#) flowchart). The vehicle must also have original documentation confirming that it was first registered in the USA or, in the case of a new vehicle, documentation confirming that it was manufactured for the US market and would be permitted for use on public roads in the USA.

F: Get a Statement of Compliance

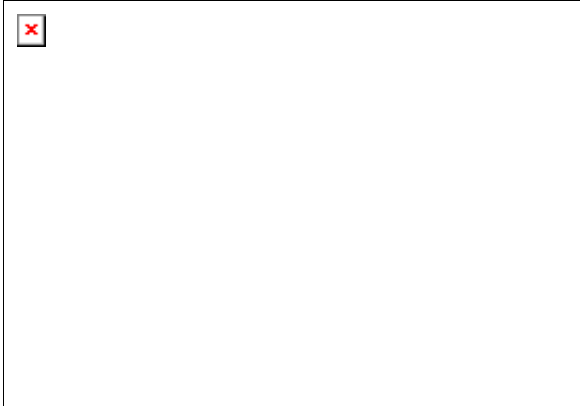
If there's no FMVSS plate on the vehicle you need to get a [Statement of Compliance](#) (see later in this Infosheet) to prove your car meets the required standards.

Ownership flowchart

This flowchart applies to passenger cars (Class MA vehicles) imported from the United States. Either:

- the car is over 20 years old (based on the date of first registration anywhere), or
- you have proof that the car complies with the required standards.

Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.



Ownership flowchart notes:

G: START: Can you prove the vehicle is legally yours?

You will need evidence that you're legally entitled to the vehicle. You must have original documents that establish an ownership trail back to the last registered owner in the United States (eg deregistration or change of ownership papers) and invoices, bills of sale, receipts etc.

H: STOP

Don't ship the vehicle to New Zealand. If you can't prove that the vehicle is legally yours, you won't be able to register it for use on New Zealand roads.

See also:

Appendix 1: [What's a Statement of Compliance?](#)

Appendix 2: [Sample FMVSS plates/label](#)

Section 3: Importing other light vehicles (Class MB, MC, NA, MD1 or MD2) from the USA

Class	Description
MB (forward control passenger vehicle)	A passenger vehicle (other than a Class MC vehicle): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> that has not more than nine seating positions (including the driver's seating position), and in which the centre of the steering wheel is in the forward quarter of the vehicle's total length.

MC (off-road passenger vehicle)	<p>A passenger vehicle, designed with special features for off-road operation, that has not more than nine seating positions (including the driver's seating position), and that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. has four-wheel drive, and b. has at least four of the following characteristics when the vehicle is unladen on a level surface and the front wheels are parallel to the vehicle's longitudinal centre-line and the tyres are inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended pressure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. an approach angle of not less than 28 degrees ii. a breakover angle of not less than 14 degrees iii. a departure angle of not less than 20 degrees iv. a running clearance of not less than 200 mm v. a front-axle clearance, rear-axle clearance, or suspension clearance of not less than 175 mm.
MD (light omnibus)	An omnibus that has a gross vehicle mass not exceeding 5 tonnes.
MD 1	An omnibus that has a gross vehicle mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and not more than 12 seats.
MD 2	An omnibus that has a gross vehicle mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and more than 12 seats.
NA (light goods vehicle)	A goods vehicle that has a gross vehicle mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes.
<p>Note: A passenger vehicle is a motor vehicle that is constructed primarily for the carriage of passengers, and either has at least four wheels, or has three wheels and a gross vehicle mass exceeding one tonne.</p> <p>An omnibus is a passenger vehicle that has more than nine seating positions (including the driver's seating position).</p> <p>A goods vehicle is a motor vehicle that is constructed primarily for the carriage of goods, and either has at least four wheels, or has three wheels and a gross vehicle mass exceeding one tonne.</p>	

If your vehicle is a light vehicle of Class MB, MC, NA, MD1 or MD2 (see the [table of vehicle classes](#) above) and it was manufactured before 1 January 1991, go straight to the [ownership](#) flowchart.

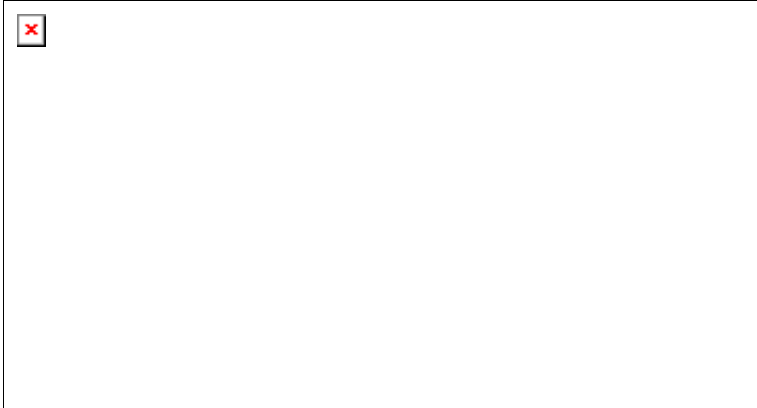
If your vehicle was manufactured on or after 1 January 1991 there will be standards it has to meet – start at the [standards](#) flowchart.

Standards flowchart

This flowchart applies to Class MB, MC, NA, MD1 or MD2 vehicles imported from the United States, and manufactured on or after 1 January 1991. Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a

letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.

Please note: New Zealand has restrictions on left-hand drive vehicles. If you wish to import one of these we strongly recommend you read [Factsheet 12](#) on left-hand drive vehicles before you go any further. The factsheet is available on the LTSA's website and from the helpdesk, phone 0800 699 000.



Standards flowchart notes:

A: START: Does the vehicle have an FMVSS plate?

An [FMVSS \(US Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards\) plate](#) fixed to the vehicle can be used as evidence that the vehicle meets New Zealand standards requirements. The vehicle must also have original documentation confirming that it was first registered in the USA or, in the case of a new vehicle, documentation confirming that it was manufactured for the US market and would be permitted for use on public roads in the USA.

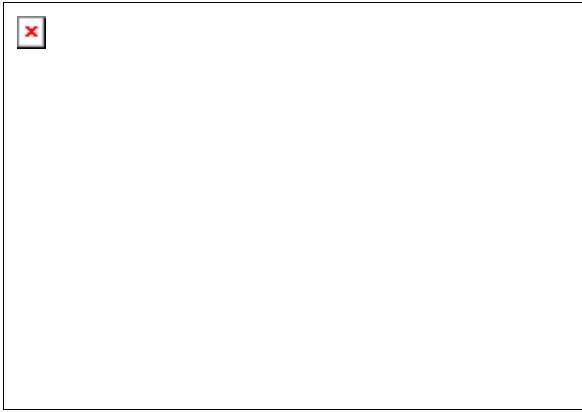
B: Get a Statement of Compliance

If there's no FMVSS plate on the vehicle you need to get a [Statement of Compliance](#) to prove your vehicle meets the required standards.

Ownership flowchart

This flowchart applies to Class MB, MC, NA, MD1 or MD2 vehicles imported from the USA.

It applies if you've got proof the vehicle complies with the standards required in New Zealand, or if the vehicle was manufactured before 1 January 1991. Follow the steps in the flowchart. Steps marked with a letter in a circle have [supporting notes](#) that you need to read.



Ownership flowchart notes:

C: START: Can you prove the vehicle is legally yours?

You will need evidence that you're legally entitled to the vehicle. You must have original documents that establish an ownership trail back to the last registered owner in the United States (eg deregistration or change of ownership papers) and invoices, bills of sale, receipts etc.

D: STOP

Don't ship the vehicle to New Zealand. If you can't prove that the vehicle is legally yours, you won't be able to register it for use on New Zealand roads.

See also:

Appendix 1: [What's a Statement of Compliance?](#)

Appendix 2: [Sample FMVSS plates/label](#)

Appendix 1: What's a Statement of Compliance?

A Statement of Compliance is a statement from an authorised representative of a vehicle's manufacturer listing the standards to which the vehicle was certified when it was made. If these standards are approved vehicle standards, as listed in New Zealand Rules and Regulations, the Statement of Compliance is acceptable proof that the vehicle meets the required standards.

Follow these steps to get a Statement of Compliance:

1. **Contact an authorised representative** of the company that manufactured the vehicle. The representative must be either a New Zealand representative, or an overseas representative of the vehicle manufacturer who is authorised by the manufacturer to issue Statements of Compliance.

A list of New Zealand representatives authorised to issue Statements of Compliance can be obtained from the LTSA website (www.ltsa.govt.nz/importing/mia-list.html) or via the LTSA helpdesk (free phone 0800 699 000).

2. Ask the authorised representative **to complete a Statement of Compliance** (either their own form or as shown in the [sample at the end of this Infosheet](#)), and provide you with a covering letter on

company letterhead. The authorised representative must sign both the Statement of Compliance and the covering letter. You must present the original documents to the Entry Certifier.

The manufacturer's authorised representative is not obliged to do this for you, but if they do offer this service they will probably charge a fee.

Vehicle manufacturers can attach a schedule to the Statement of Compliance, listing the standards to which the vehicle was certified. However, the Statement of Compliance must still be completed and signed. They should write the words "see attached schedule" on the part of the table specifying the standards.

Before you ship a vehicle to New Zealand, we **strongly** advise you to get confirmation from an [Entry Certifier](#) that your Statement of Compliance lists standards that are accepted in New Zealand.

Statement of Compliance

Make	
Model	
Model code(s)	
Date of manufacture	
VIN(s)/chassis number(s)	

Component/system	Standard(s) met [e.g. UN/ECE Regulation No. 16 for seat belts]
Door retention systems	
Interior impact	
Steering systems	
Seats and seat anchorages	
Frontal impact	
External projections	
Head restraints	
Seatbelts	
Seatbelt anchorages	
Glazing	
Windscreen wipe and wash	
Rear-view mirrors	
Brakes	

Headlamps	
Side lamps	
Rear reflectors	
Stop lamps	
High mounted stop lamp	
Direction indicators	
Reversing lamps	
Registration plate illumination	
Auxiliary lamps	
Front fog lamps	
Daytime running lamps	
Tyres	
Side impact	
Emission	

Name and title	
Company	
Address	

1. I confirm that the components and systems listed above comply with UN/ECE Regulations, EEC/EC/EU Directives, ADRs, Japanese domestic standards, or other approved standards for which type approvals are issued by the controlling jurisdictions or certification bodies at the time of manufacture.
2. I also confirm that where test certificates necessary to claim compliance with the above standards are required by the controlling standards authority, these are in existence for the vehicle(s), components and systems identified above and explicitly cover the production facility/facilities where the vehicle(s), components and systems were manufactured.
3. I also confirm that, for any components and systems complying with FMVSSs:
 - a. test results are in existence demonstrating compliance of the components and systems with FMVSSs; and
 - b. arrangements are in place to ensure conformity of production to cover all stages of manufacture of the vehicle(s), components and systems; and
 - c. the components and systems are designed and manufactured for use in the USA.

Signed

Dated

Appendix 2: Sample FMVSS plate/label



[Infosheet series](#)

Land Transport Safety Authority of New Zealand
Te Mana Marutau Waka Whenua o Aotearoa