

Vehicle Use Policy



Responsibility for policy: Director of Campus Operations and Risk Management

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: May 2025

Next review date: May 2030

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff and students of the University of Waikato who drive University vehicles, rental vehicles, car-share vehicles or private vehicles for University business.

Scope

2. This policy does not apply to the rental of vehicles by staff on study leave, which is governed by the [Study Leave Policy](#).

Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - a. ensure that drivers are aware of their obligations and responsibilities with respect to the use of vehicles for University business
 - b. ensure that drivers of University of Waikato vehicles, car-share vehicles and rental vehicles used for University business are appropriately licenced and authorised
 - c. ensure appropriate, equitable and cost-effective use of rental vehicles by staff for University business
 - d. provide a consistent, transparent and cost-effective framework for the use of private vehicles for University business, and for the reimbursement of associated costs
 - e. ensure that the University complies with fringe benefit tax rules with respect to the use of vehicles, and
 - f. ensure that drivers are aware of safe driving and other good road safety practices.

Related documents

4. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [New Zealand Road Code](#)
 - [PCard Policy](#)
 - [Procurement Policy](#)
 - [Purchasing and Sensitive Expenditure Policy](#)
 - [Rental Vehicle FAQs](#)
 - [Safety and Wellness Policy](#)
 - [Smoke Free Policy](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Student Discipline Regulations](#)
 - [Travel Policy](#)
 - [University of Waikato Fringe Benefit Tax Guide](#)

Related legislation

5. This policy takes account of the following legislation:

- [Income Tax Act 2007](#)
- [Land Transport Act 1998](#)
- [Land Transport \(Road User\) Amendment Rule 2009](#)
- [Land Transport Rule: Dangerous Goods 2005](#)

Definitions

6. In this policy:

authorised driver means a staff member, student, contractor or other person who has been approved by the University Vehicle Fleet Manager to use a University vehicle for University business

car-share vehicle means a vehicle accessed through a service such as Mevo on an ad-hoc basis for the purpose of conducting University business

child means a person under the age of 14 years

domestic means within New Zealand

fringe benefit means a non-cash benefit that is provided by the University to a staff member in connection with their employment; such benefits are subject to taxation

off-road means an area that is not a formed road. It includes undulating terrain, bush tracks, beaches, and riverbeds. It may or may not be a legal road. The legal definition of a road is set out in section 2(1) of the [Land Transport Act 1998](#)

overseas means outside New Zealand

rental vehicle means a vehicle rented by the University of Waikato for the purpose of conducting University business

travel management company (TMC) means the University's travel management company which has been awarded the status of preferred supplier for travel and accommodation services following a competitive tender process

University business means any activity that a staff member is expected to undertake during the course of their work

University pool vehicle means a University vehicle that is available for short-term loan to authorised drivers for the purpose of conducting University business

University vehicle means a vehicle owned or leased by the University for the purpose of conducting University business; it includes pool vehicles and work-related vehicles but excludes prototype vehicles developed in the course of teaching and research

work-related vehicle as defined in the [Income Tax Act 2007](#) for the purpose of calculating fringe benefit tax means a University vehicle that has the following characteristics:

- the vehicle is not primarily designed to carry passengers, i.e. it is not a "car", and
- the University's logo is permanently affixed to the vehicle and is prominently displayed, and
- the use of the vehicle to travel between home and work is a requirement of a staff member's employment, and
- the vehicle is not available for any private use other than travel between home and work.

Principles

7. The University is responsible for ensuring that staff have access to appropriate transport to undertake University business and that such provision is made at rates which are cost-effective for the University.
8. Staff travelling on University business must use the most cost-effective and safe mode of transportation (ensuring business requirements are met) available; this may include use of pool vehicles, rental vehicles, car-share vehicles, shuttles or public transport (bus, train, taxi etc.).
9. Personal preference is not in itself an acceptable reason for using a car-share vehicle or renting a vehicle rather than using public transport.
10. Private vehicles must not be used for University business, except where:
 - using a private vehicle costs no more than use of a car-share vehicle, rental vehicle or alternative transportation such as a taxi, or
 - using a private vehicle is necessary on disability or medical grounds.
11. Line managers have authority to determine whether circumstances are appropriate for staff to use their own vehicles for University business in accordance with clause 10 of this policy, and to approve such use; line managers must consider all associated risks and cost effectiveness before approving exemptions.

Authorised drivers of University vehicles

12. Only an authorised driver may operate a University vehicle.
13. Applications to become an authorised driver must be made to the University Vehicle Fleet Manager through [Kuhukuhu](#) (Property Services: Fleet Authorised Driver Application); only the University Vehicle Fleet Manager has the authority to approve authorised drivers.
14. All authorised drivers must hold a current valid New Zealand or overseas driver licence of the correct class; this licence must be available for inspection by the University Vehicle Fleet Manager and must be carried by the driver when operating a University vehicle.
15. If at any time and for any reason an authorised driver's licence becomes invalid (i.e. is suspended, expired or revoked), preventing the licence holder from driving a University vehicle, the licence holder must advise the University Vehicle Fleet Manager immediately.

University pool vehicles

16. Staff who are required to travel on University business commencing and ending at a University of Waikato campus must use a University pool vehicle whenever one is available, rather than using a car-share vehicle, rental vehicle or private vehicle; hybrid, diesel or petrol pool vehicles must be booked through [Smartrak](#) and EV pool vehicles must be booked through [Zilch](#). Further information may be obtained by emailing fleet@waikato.ac.nz.
17. University pool vehicles are provided for the purpose of University business only; use of a University pool vehicle for private use is prohibited unless such use is determined to be incidental as set out in clause 19e of this policy.

Fringe benefit tax

18. A fringe benefit arises where a University vehicle is available for private use, whether or not it is actually used for private use, for example a University vehicle that is stored overnight at the home of a staff member is subject to fringe benefit tax.

19. A University vehicle is exempt from fringe benefit tax where:
- a. it is a work-related vehicle, as defined in this policy, or
 - b. it is used to attend an emergency call-out essential to the operation of any University asset, infrastructure or service between 6.00pm and 6.00am Monday to Friday or at any time on a weekend or statutory holiday, or at any time if related to the health and safety of any person, or
 - c. it is used for out-of-town travel on University business for a period of at least 24 hours continuously, or
 - d. it is unavailable for staff use for at least 24 hours, e.g. if the vehicle is being repaired or is parked at an airport carpark, or
 - e. its private use constitutes a minor or insignificant proportion of an overall journey on University business, i.e. incidental to a larger journey; for the removal of doubt, such use may constitute no more than 2km in total; private use that is more than incidental is subject to fringe benefit tax.
20. Data from global positioning systems installed in all University vehicles is used to assist in the monitoring of private use and for the calculation of any fringe benefit tax liability.
21. Where fringe benefit tax applies, it will be charged back to the cost centre that incurred the fringe benefit tax liability.

Approval and use of car-share vehicles and rental vehicles for University business

22. Use of a car-share vehicle or rental vehicle is subject to the approval of the relevant line manager, who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate consideration has been given to alternative forms of transport.

Preferred suppliers and insurance for domestic cars-share vehicles and rental vehicle rentals

23. The University is a party to an all-of-government agreement with preferred suppliers of domestic rental vehicles (Hertz, Avis, Exi and Hirepool), details of which are available from the University's TMC.
24. Use of a domestic rental vehicle company other than a preferred supplier will be approved only if a preferred supplier is unable to provide a suitable vehicle.
25. If the use of a domestic rental vehicle is to be a one-way trip, e.g. from Hamilton to Auckland Airport, preference must be given to a preferred supplier who will waive one-way charges.
26. Unless approved otherwise under clause 24 of this policy or in such exceptional circumstances as set out in clause 27 of this policy, staff must book domestic rental vehicles in advance from a preferred supplier through the University's TMC in order that the TMC can fulfil its duty of care responsibilities; under no circumstances may staff make bookings directly with a preferred rental vehicle company.
27. Only in exceptional circumstances where approved travel plans have been unavoidably disrupted may staff book domestic rental vehicles directly with a preferred rental vehicle company or a rental company other than a preferred supplier if a preferred supplier is unable to provide a suitable vehicle; in such cases the staff member must notify the University's TMC as soon as practicable in order that the TMC can continue to fulfil its duty of care responsibilities.
28. Staff may not rent a vehicle above class CCAR (Compact, Auto, e.g. Toyota Corolla) unless the nature of the business being undertaken is such that a people-mover,

van or 4-wheel drive vehicle is necessary and prior approval has been given by the relevant line manager.

29. The University's insurance covers domestic car-share vehicles and rental vehicles, which means that no additional insurance cover is necessary.

Preferred suppliers and insurance for overseas vehicle rentals

30. Staff who wish to book rental vehicles internationally must do so in advance through the University's TMC and must first obtain authorisation from the relevant line manager.
31. Staff must not rent a vehicle above class CCAR (Compact, Auto, e.g. Toyota Corolla) unless the nature of the business to be undertaken requires a people-mover, van or 4-wheel drive vehicle and prior approval has been obtained from the relevant line manager.
32. Staff renting vehicles overseas must purchase the mandatory insurance cover offered by the relevant company but, because the University's travel insurance policy includes cover for rental vehicle excesses up to \$6,500, must decline any excess waiver option if offered.

Methods of payment for car-share vehicles and rental vehicles

33. The preferred payment method for car-share vehicles and rental vehicles is by chargeback to the TMC.
34. Wherever practicable, rental vehicles must be refuelled before being returned to the rental company to avoid further charges being incurred by the University; payment methods should be used in the following order of priority:
- a. fuel card
 - b. PCard
 - c. where a staff member does not hold a PCard, the cost of refuelling must be met personally and the staff member should seek reimbursement through staff claims.
35. Staff members must retain all receipts for costs to enable reconciliation of PCard charges or reimbursements.

Reimbursement of costs for the use of private vehicles for University business

36. In cases where the relevant line manager has approved the use of a private vehicle for University business, the reimbursement amount must not exceed the cost to the University of a car share vehicle, rental vehicle or return flights (including baggage) in the same circumstances (that is, for the same distance and timeframe).
37. Where a private vehicle is used for University business over a period of more than 24 hours, the staff member will be entitled to reimbursement costs calculated on the basis of the total distance travelled on University business for the authorised period.
38. Expenses associated with the use of private vehicles for University business must not be charged to a PCard.
39. The University will reimburse staff for use of private vehicles for University business at the rates specified by the [Inland Revenue Department](#), subject to clauses 36 and 37 of this policy; this rate includes a component for insurance and depreciation.
40. Claims for reimbursement under this policy must be made through [Staff Expense Claims](#) no later than 30 days after travel and are subject to approval by the relevant line manager. Claims must specify full details of individual trips, including the

starting point, destination and the reasons for the use of a private vehicle, so that the appropriate rate of reimbursement can be applied in each case.

41. Where a private vehicle is damaged in the course of its use for University business and prior written approval for that use has been granted, the University may consider an application for reimbursement of the insurance deductible/excess charges on a case by case basis; applications should be directed to the Chief Financial Officer and will require the provision of documentary evidence as to the individual circumstances.
42. All claims for the reimbursement of costs for the use of private vehicles for University business are audited by Financial Operations and may be declined partially or in full if they do not comply with this policy.

Transporting passengers

43. Children must not be carried in a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental vehicle engaged in University business unless by prior arrangement with the University Vehicle Fleet Manager.
44. Fare-paying passengers are not permitted to ride in a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental vehicle.
45. Drivers must not allow a third-party to drive a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental vehicle unless prior approval has been obtained from the University Vehicle Fleet Manager, or unless in an emergency.
46. The picking up of hitchhikers is not permitted in a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental vehicle.
47. Passengers aged 15 years and over are responsible for making sure that they wear their own safety belts correctly and that they keep them fastened while the vehicle is in motion. The driver is responsible for ensuring that passengers under the age of 15 are using an approved child restraint or safety belt.

Transporting animals and materials

48. Domestic (non-University) animals are not permitted in University vehicles, car-share vehicles or rental vehicles at any time.
49. Where University animals are required to be transported, they must be placed in an appropriate cage/container for transporting.
50. Materials being transported must be secured against movement.
51. University vehicles, car-share vehicles and rental vehicles must not be overloaded in terms of weight or bulk.
52. Hazardous substances must be transported in compliance with the relevant regulations and standards – as a minimum, in compliance with the [Land Transport Act 1998](#) and the [Land Transport Rule: Dangerous Goods 2005](#), along with the New Zealand Standard 5433:2012 – Transporting Hazardous Substances on Land.

Smoking in vehicles

53. Smoking in University vehicles, car-share vehicles or rental vehicles is prohibited under the [Smoke Free Policy](#).

Use of mobile phones

54. Drivers may use hands-free devices whilst operating a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or a rental vehicle, however they must comply with the relevant parts of Section 7.3A of the [Land Transport \(Road User\) Amendment Rule 2009](#).

Use of trailers

55. Before towing a trailer, the driver must ensure that the vehicle is capable of towing the trailer and that the tow ball and coupling are compatible.
56. The driver must ensure that any materials being transported on the trailer are safely secured against movement.

Use of forklifts and other specialist vehicles

57. Only drivers who have been appropriately trained, licenced (where required) and given prior approval by their Line Manager may use a University forklift or other specialist vehicle.

Use of 4WD vehicles off-road

58. Only drivers who have been appropriately trained and given prior approval by the University Vehicle Fleet Manager may use a University 4WD vehicle or rental vehicle off-road.

Security

59. Drivers must ensure that University vehicles, car-share vehicles or rental vehicles are parked legally and that doors and windows are locked when unattended. If a vehicle is held overnight, it should not be parked on the road if possible.
60. Personal items should not be left in University vehicles, car-share vehicles or rental vehicles; the University will not accept responsibility for any loss or damage to such items.
61. The University will not accept responsibility for damage to, or the theft of private vehicles parked on University grounds, whether or not vehicles are parked in designated parking areas; owners of private vehicles park at their own risk.

Payment of road tolls

62. Road tolls for University pool vehicles travelling on the Auckland Northern Gateway, Tauranga Takitimu Drive and Tauranga Eastern Link toll roads are billed to the University automatically; electronic road tolls for rental vehicles may be billed directly to the rental vehicle company in some cases.
63. In all other cases, the driver is responsible for the payment of any road tolls and may pay by PCard or seek reimbursement through [Staff Expense Claims](#); the driver must retain all receipts for tolls to enable reconciliation of PCard charges or reimbursements.

Breakdown procedures

64. In the event of a breakdown involving a University vehicle, the driver must:
 - a. hybrid, petrol or diesel vehicles - in the first instance, notify [AA Roadservice](#) for breakdown assistance and tow assistance, if required (details are provided in each vehicle)
 - b. EVs – notify Zilch for breakdown assistance and tow assistance, if required (details are provided in each vehicle)
 - c. have the vehicle taken to the nearest franchise garage for repair (Bridgestone or Firestone, if the breakdown involves tyres), and
 - d. report the breakdown to the University Vehicle Fleet Manager as soon as possible.
65. Repairs to University vehicles can be paid for by PCard, if appropriate.

66. In the event of a breakdown involving a car-share vehicle or rental vehicle, the driver must follow the procedures provided by the car-share provider or rental company.

Accident procedures

67. In the event of an accident involving a University vehicle, the driver (if able to do so) must follow the following motor vehicle accident procedures (details are provided in each vehicle):

- a. notify the Police if anyone is injured
- b. obtain the name, vehicle registration, insurance details and make of any other vehicle involved
- c. record details of what occurred including a plan of the accident site
- d. if possible, photograph damage to the vehicles involved (e.g. mobile phone camera)
- e. if required, arrange for the vehicle to be removed
- f. report the accident to the University Vehicle Fleet Manager as soon as possible
- g. if the accident involves an EV, notify Zilch as soon as possible
- h. report the accident using the University's [Safety Event Reporting Form](#) as soon as possible.

68. In the case of an accident involving a car-share vehicle or rental vehicle, the driver (if able to do so) must follow the accident procedures set out in clause 67 of this policy, and notify the car-share provider or rental company as soon as possible.

Insurance

69. University vehicles, car-share vehicles and rental vehicles used in the course of University business are covered by the University's motor vehicle insurance policy.

70. In the event that a University vehicle or rental vehicle is involved in an accident or is stolen or damaged, the driver must complete an insurance claim form giving details of the accident or incident and forward it to the University Fleet Manager as soon as possible; the excess payable (or deductible) will be charged to the driver's School or equivalent.

71. The owner of a private vehicle being used for University business must carry adequate insurance cover for their protection and for the protection of any passengers.

Responsibilities of drivers

72. Drivers are personally responsible for any parking fines, speeding tickets and other infringement notices; under no circumstances may such charges be claimed back from the University or charged to the rental company. Any further charges incurred by the University as a result of the non-payment of fines are also the responsibility of the driver.

73. Drivers on University business must follow [safe driving practices](#).

74. Drivers on University business must not:

- a. use alcohol, non-prescription drugs, recreational drugs or other intoxicating substances that exceed the legal limit or that are illegal while in charge of a vehicle; the use of prescription drugs prescribed by an approved New Zealand registered medical practitioner is permitted as long as it does not impair the ability of the driver to drive safely and within the law
- b. drive a vehicle if suffering from fatigue or any condition which inhibits their ability to drive safely and within the law.

75. Drivers of University vehicles and rental vehicles must:
- a. ensure that a vehicle booking is made through [Te Hononga](#) before a University pool vehicle is used
 - b. remove rubbish and belongings, and clean up any food or drink spills from the vehicle before it is returned to the University or the rental company
 - c. report vehicle defects to the University Vehicle Fleet Manager or rental company as soon as practicable
 - d. wherever practicable, refuel vehicles before they are returned to the University or the rental company; University hybrid, petrol or diesel vehicles should be returned with their fuel tank at least three quarters full and EVs should be returned with at least 40% charge and placed on charge
 - e. report to the University Vehicle Fleet Manager, Zilch or rental company any incidents that resulted in damage to the University vehicle, EV or rental vehicle, whether or not they resulted in injury
 - f. comply with the [New Zealand Road Code](#) and all traffic laws, rules and regulations set out in the [Land Transport Act 1998](#) and the [Land Transport \(Road User\) Amendment Rule 2009](#)
 - g. obtain prior approval from their line manager for a University vehicle or rental vehicle to be stored at their home overnight prior to early morning travel on University business or overnight on the day of travel on University business, and notify the University Fleet Vehicle Manager of that approval in writing prior to travel
 - h. where required to store a University vehicle at their home for security and safety reasons as a condition of their employment, agree in writing that the vehicle will not be used for private use, unless such use is determined to be incidental as set out in clause 19e of this policy
 - i. EVs must only be charged using a dedicated EV charging station or installed charging unit; the cable supplied with the EV is for emergency use only.
76. Drivers of University vehicles, car-share vehicles and rental vehicles must not use a University vehicle or rental vehicle for private use unless such use is determined to be incidental as set out in clause 19e of this policy.

Responsibilities of line managers

77. Line managers must encourage [safe driving practices](#) and not require staff to drive under conditions that are unsafe.
78. Line managers must be satisfied that in their opinion the reasons given by a staff member under clause 75g of this policy are valid before giving approval for a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental car to be stored at the staff member's home overnight prior to early morning travel on University business or overnight on the day of travel on University business; as set out in clause 18 of this policy, a University vehicle, car-share vehicle or rental vehicle held at a staff member's home overnight is subject to fringe benefit tax and, as set out in clause 21 of this policy, the tax will be charged back to the cost centre that incurs the liability.

Responsibilities of the University Vehicle Fleet Manager

79. The University Vehicle Fleet Manager must:
- a. ensure that drivers of University vehicles are authorised to do so

- b. ensure that University vehicles are maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition in order to ensure the safety of the driver, occupants and other road users at all times
- c. ensure that registration, servicing, Warrant of Fitness, Certificate of Fitness and insurance requirements of all University vehicles are met
- d. ensure that University vehicles are maintained and presented in a state that reflects the standards of the University, and
- e. provide opportunities for driver training and education where appropriate.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

- 80. The Director of Campus Operations and Risk Management is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 81. Breaches of this policy by staff may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).
- 82. Breaches of this policy by students may result in disciplinary action under the [Student Discipline Regulations](#).