



**Self-contained Vehicles**

# **Enforcement Authorities**

**Guidance document**

7 December 2023

Version 1.0

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# 1 Introduction

The Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board (**Board**) is the regulator of the self-contained vehicles system. This role includes establishing and maintaining the self-contained vehicles register (**Register**), which allows the public to search for a vehicle to understand (among other things) if it has been certified as self-contained in accordance with the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (**Act**).

The Act and the Freedom Camping Act 2011 contain rules and requirements for people wishing to freedom camp in a self-contained vehicle (**SCV**). There are infringement offences and penalties for breaching rules associated with freedom camping in an SCV. The regulatory framework gives enforcement powers to a range of authorities, including local authorities (regional councils and territorial authorities), the Department of Conservation (**DoC**), and Land Information New Zealand (**LINZ**) (together, **Enforcement Authorities**).

Under the new regulatory framework, persons appointed by Enforcement Authorities as enforcement officers in accordance with the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (**Enforcement Officers**) will have the ability to search the Register to ascertain certain information about vehicles that have been certified as self-contained under the new 'green warrant' system. If a vehicle has been used in the commission of an offence under the Freedom Camping Act 2011, Enforcement Officers will also be able to enter information into the Register about the vehicle (and review any other information entered into the Register by other Enforcement Officers about the vehicle).

Under the new 'green warrant' system, vehicles will need to meet the requirements contained in the Act and the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-Contained Vehicles) Regulations 2023 (the **Regulations**) to be certified as self-contained and receive a green warrant card. All SCVs certified under the new green warrant system will be entered into the Register, accessible at [nzscv.co.nz](https://nzscv.co.nz).

It may take some time for the public to become familiar with the new rules, particularly during the transitional period as the new rules are phased in and changes are gradually implemented over time<sup>1</sup>. Notably, until 7 June 2025 (or 7 December 2024 for rental vehicles) vehicles certified as self-contained under either the green *or* blue warrant systems can be used to freedom camp.

The Board does not regulate the blue warrant system, and vehicles certified under the blue warrant system will not be entered into the Register.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has published guidance for local authorities on [key changes to freedom camping rules](#) as well as information on [infringement offences and fines](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has published a timeline of the Freedom Camping transitional period here: <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/immigration-and-tourism/tourism/tourism-projects/supporting-sustainable-freedom-camping-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/freedom-camping-changes/>

## 2 Purpose

This guidance is for Enforcement Authorities and their Enforcement Officers. This guidance provides information about the transitional period for the changes, the Register, searching the Register and how to access the Register.

## 3 Freedom camping transitional period

There is a transitional period for the key changes to freedom camping rules to be implemented.

MBIE has published a [timeline of the freedom camping transitional period](#).

The transitional period will enable the existing 'blue warrant' SCV certification requirements to be phased out and eventually replaced with new 'green warrant' requirements (described in section 3.2 below). MBIE's guidance on [key changes to freedom camping rules](#) provides further guidance on the freedom camping transitional period.

From 7 June 2024 vehicles can only be certified as self-contained under the green warrant requirements. No new certifications under blue warrant cards will be permitted. Blue warrant cards issued *before* 7 June 2024 will still be valid until the date they expire, or 7 June 2025 (the earlier of the two dates). The exception is rental vehicles – rental vehicles must be certified under the green warrant requirements by 7 December 2024.

### 3.1 Blue warrant cards

You will continue to see blue warrants during the transitional period. As noted above, blue warrant cards are valid until 7 June 2025 (or 7 December 2024 for rental vehicles).

The Board does not regulate the blue warrant system, and vehicles with blue warrants will not be entered into the Register.

### 3.2 Green warrant cards

Self-containment certification authorities (**Certification Authorities**) are responsible for appointing motor vehicle inspectors, issuing certificates of self-containment (**Certificates**) and green warrant cards, and making entries into the Register. The Board will start to appoint Certification Authorities from 7 December 2023. Once Certification Authorities are appointed, they will be able to certify vehicles under the new system and issue green warrant cards. You will likely start to see more green warrant cards displayed on vehicles used for freedom camping from early 2024.

Every vehicle with a green warrant will have been entered into the Register. If a vehicle with a green warrant hasn't been entered into the Register, then the warrant has not been issued in accordance with the Act.

Certification Authorities will issue and print Certificates and green warrant cards, which are valid for four years.

For a vehicle to be certified as self-contained and receive a green warrant, the vehicle must meet requirements in relation to its water supply system, fixed toilet, wastewater system, ventilation system, sink, and rubbish storage. All the requirements must be capable of servicing the maximum number of occupants the vehicle is certified for, as displayed on the vehicle's Certificate and warrant card. For further information about the requirements a vehicle must meet, see: [Vehicle inspection guidance](#).<sup>2</sup>

Note: Under the blue warrant system, vehicles certified as self-contained are also issued with a sticker which is displayed at the rear of the vehicle. Under the new green warrant system, vehicles will not be issued with stickers. The easiest way to check whether a vehicle has been certified as self-contained under the green warrant requirements is to check the green warrant card displayed (in most cases) in the windscreen of the vehicle being used to freedom camp. The Register also enables the public to check if a vehicle is certified as self-contained (with a green warrant) by searching the vehicle's registration number.

For more information about Certificates and warrant cards, see: [Printing and issuing certificates and warrant cards – Guidance document](#).

## 4 Register of SCVs

The Register is accessible at [www.nzscv.co.nz](http://www.nzscv.co.nz). The public can search a vehicle's registration number to find out if a vehicle is certified as self-contained (with a green warrant), and to find a Certification Authority local to them. The Register has additional functions and permissions for Enforcement Officers appointed by Enforcement Authorities.

Using the Register, Enforcement Officers will be able to:

- search for SCVs (by registration or VIN / Chassis number) to confirm the vehicle is on the Register and certified in accordance with the Act
- view vehicle details and check the status of Certificates (including whether Certificates have been revoked or have expired)
- view details contained on a SCV's Certificate (which include more details than are on the warrant card)
- create 'events' relating to enforcement actions (including locations of events)
- view events associated with individual SCVs, and
- cancel events they have entered

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<sup>2</sup> All guidance documents can be accessed from the Board's website: [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz).

The Register will support Enforcement Officers' compliance and enforcement functions relating to self-contained vehicles across the country but will not replace an Enforcement Authority's internal compliance and enforcement systems. Enforcement Officers will be able to create and view events in relation to a particular vehicle, including recording/ascertaining if:

- the vehicle has a valid Certificate
- the Certificate has expired or been revoked, and
- the vehicle has been used in the commission of an offence under the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (where that information has been entered into the Register by an Enforcement Officer).

Actively using the Register to log events will help Enforcement Officers to carry out their role and inform their enforcement decisions. For example, if an Enforcement Officer records (as an event) that they have issued a warning in relation to a particular vehicle (i.e. the vehicle has been used in the commission of an offence under the Freedom Camping Act 2011), another Enforcement Officer will be able to view this event and may choose to issue a fine if the vehicle is being used in a similar way in another location.

## 4.1 Searching the Register

As an Enforcement Authority you should have processes and training in place to ensure the Register is being used, and searches are being performed, appropriately in accordance with the Act.

Enforcement Officers must only search the Register in accordance with the Act. Enforcement Officers must only search the Register, in relation to a specific vehicle, to ascertain:

- whether a vehicle holds a current Certificate
- whether a vehicle has previously held a Certificate that has subsequently expired or been revoked
- the expiry date of a vehicle's current, expired, or revoked Certificate
- all the information contained in a vehicle's Certificate, and
- any information entered into the Register about the vehicle by an Enforcement Officer.

**Note:** Section 87ZH of the Act provides that a search of the Register for personal information that has not been carried out in accordance with sections 87ZF and 87ZG of the Act constitutes an action that is an interference with the privacy of an individual under section 69 of the Privacy Act 2020.

When you are provided access to the Register, you will be provided with guidance documents and instructional videos to help Enforcement Authorities and Enforcement Officers navigate the Register.

## 5 Getting access to the Register

Enforcement Authorities will need to complete the Enforcement Authority application form and send it to the Board to gain access to the Register. Once access is given, Enforcement Authorities will be able to add their Enforcement Officers to the Register.

We aim to process your application within 10 working days following receipt of all of the necessary information. You will need to provide the following details:

- name and contact details of your council or agency
- name and contact details of the person responsible for the application. For example, a manager in your council or agency with operational responsibility for enforcement activities under the Freedom Camping Act 2011, and
- name and contact details of the person in your council or agency who will be responsible for setting up and administering Enforcement Officers or other Enforcement Authority admin users in the Register. (Note: you can provide contact details for more than one administrator).

We also encourage Enforcement Authorities to enter into the memorandum of understanding (**MOU**) attached to the application form. The MOU helps to ensure the respective roles and responsibilities of Enforcement Authorities (and their Enforcement Officers) and the Board are well understood and facilitates co-operation and communication between Enforcement Authorities and the Board.

You should review the MOU, complete it, and return it to the Board with your application form.

If we need further information we will contact you by email.

Once we have processed your application we will write to you confirming that you have access to the Register and add the people you nominated on your application form. We will send you and your nominated person or people details of how to access the Register, and associated guidance material to help you add your Enforcement Officers to the Register.

## 6 Complaints to the Board

You may complain to the Board about Certification Authorities or notify the Board about an offence you consider has been committed.

### 6.1 Complaints about Certification Authorities

Certification Authorities' core functions are to:

- appoint vehicle inspectors
- issue Certificates (including warrant cards), and
- make entries into the Register.

The Board can consider complaints about a Certification Authority that has:

- failed (or is failing) to carry out one or more core function
- been, or is, negligent in carrying out one or more core function, and
- been, or is, carrying out one or more core function improperly.

If the Board receives a complaint about a Certification Authority it must follow the process contained in the Act. This includes notifying the Certification Authority about the complaint, deciding whether to accept the complaint, and where appropriate investigating the complaint.

Following investigation, the Board may (if it considers the Certification Authority has breached one of its core functions) take disciplinary action against the Certification Authority and impose a penalty.

**Note:** The Board can only consider complaints (in relation to the above) under the green warrant system. The Board cannot help with any complaints under the blue warrant system.

You can make a complaint from the Board's website: [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz).

## 6.2 Notifying us about an offence

You may also notify us about an offence you consider has been committed under s125A of the Act, including if a person:

- has issued a Certificate, or a warrant card, without being appointed as a Certification Authority (or when their appointment was suspended or revoked)
- has represented that they are a Certification Authority when they are not.

You can notify the Board from the Board's website: [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz).