



Driving in the Waimakariri

*The Waimakariri District has just over 1500 km of roads.
Of that, 921km are sealed and 643km are unsealed.*

With a mix of land uses in the District many different road users use our roads and understanding the different conditions that exist is key to staying safe on the roads.

The following information highlights some of the different road conditions that drivers may not have previously encountered or may be unfamiliar with. It is designed to inform and remind drivers of some of the key skills and habits to ensure you stay safe on the road. However it is expected that all drivers are fully conversant with the New Zealand road code. www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode

Types of road surface

There are three main types of surface used on New Zealand's roads and highways: Asphalt, chip-seal, and unsealed surfaces.

You may need to adjust your driving to suit the particular surface you are driving on and how each type of surface can affect your vehicle's handling. You should also be alert for changes in the road surface.

ASPHALT

Asphalt has a smooth, black appearance and produces a low level of road noise when you drive over it. It is often used on busy roads and curves because it stands up well to wear caused by braking vehicles.

Asphalt provides good overall grip, but has reduced skid resistance when it is wet. This means you should slow down and take extra care when driving on asphalt in wet weather.

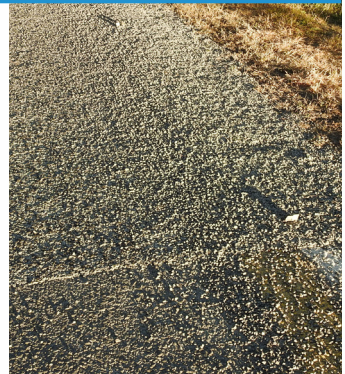


CHIP-SEAL

Chip-seal consists of a thin layer of stones set in tar. It has a rough appearance when in good condition, but may wear smooth with age and frequent use. Worn chip-seal has reduced skid resistance, so be alert for smooth patches as you drive.

Slow down on newly laid chip-seal. There may be patches of loose chips, which can increase your risk of skidding.

Loose chips can also be thrown up when vehicles drive over them and could break your windscreen.



UNSEALED SURFACES

These roads tend to be minor roads in rural areas. Because the surface of the road is loose, it can move under your wheels and offers very low skid resistance. Loose stones may also be thrown up by vehicles.

Because of this, you need to drive very carefully on gravel roads. Adjust your speed to suit the conditions.

You will also need to take extra care in dry weather, as your visibility may be reduced by dust that will be thrown up by any vehicles in front of you. Always increase your following distance to stay back from the dust cloud.

Unsealed roads can be slippery to drive on. Keep left, reduce your speed, and slow down even further when approaching oncoming traffic as dust could obscure your vision and loose stones could chip your windscreen.





FORDS



The Waimakariri District has a number of fords that cross rivers. At different times of the year some of these fords are impassable due to flooding. Information on what fords are closed is shared via the council website and social media channels.

On-road signage will warn if a ford is closed due to either flooding or unsuitable road surface.

Do not risk trying to cross flooded fords.

While you may be in a high 4WD vehicle the surface underneath the water in the ford may have changed and it can be hard to judge the depth. The water can also be very fast moving.



FLOODED ROADS

- Do not drive into floodwater that is moving or more than 10cm (4 inches) deep
- Let approaching cars pass first
- Drive slowly and steadily so you don't make a bow wave
- Test your brakes as soon as you can afterwards
- Fast-moving water is very powerful – take care or your car could be swept away
- If you are stuck in floodwater, it is usually best to wait in the car and call for help rather than try to get out.

Winter Driving

Check your vehicle is winter-ready – tyres are in good condition and at correct pressure, windscreen wipers are clean and work well, windscreens, windows and mirrors are clear of ice and moisture.



- Adjust your speed appropriately
- Allow extra time for your journey
- Leave more space between you and other vehicles
- Avoid braking or accelerating suddenly
- Pay attention to signage with warnings of ice and grit
- Avoid towing in icy conditions
- Familiarise yourself with what technology your vehicle does or doesn't have such as Antilock Braking System (ABS) and know the correct way to operate your vehicle in all conditions.

Black ice on the road is one of the most dangerous road surfaces drivers can come across and drivers will not know until they hit it.

Grit and an anti-icing agent called CMA is spread or sprayed on some roads to help travel in icy conditions. This isn't a guarantee you can drive at normal speeds so keep your speed down.

If grit has been spread, drive on it where possible and not in a wheel track to maximise it's effect.

Grit and CMA, which are sometimes used at the same time, lessen the severity of winter road conditions but do not completely stop ice and snow from affecting journeys, so remember to drive to the conditions. However, the speed at which ice and snow can occur means that there will be times when grit and CMA have not yet been spread.

For further information on winter driving, see the links below:

www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/safer-winter-driving/docs/safer-winter-driving.pdf

www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/winter-tyres/docs/winter-tyres-pamphlet.pdf

FOG



To ensure you can be clearly seen by other vehicles in fog, turn your headlights on, not just your parking lights.

Rural Roads

STOCK ON ROADS

It is quite common to see stock (cows or sheep) being shifted on rural roads in Waimakariri.

- If you see animals on the road, slow down and proceed carefully
- Watch for instructions from the farm staff
- Keep left and slowly drive through
- If you have the head lights on, turn them off
- If the stock prevent you moving forward, do NOT blow the horn or make other loud sounds.



STOCK CROSSINGS

Some farmers cross their stock across roads from one part of the farm to the other. Should you come across stock crossing the road under control of the farmer:

- Stop 10-15 metres away
- If you have the head lights on, turn them off
- Do NOT blow the horn or make other loud sounds
- Wait for the instructions from the farm staff to drive on.

DRIVING PAST HORSE RIDERS

Please show courtesy when sharing the road with horse traffic.

Horses can take fright easily, so adjust your driving as soon as you see horses on the road ahead of you.

- Slow down and pass carefully, giving the horse and rider plenty of room
- Do not sound your horn, rev your engine or pass at speed, as this could frighten the horse
- If the horse appears frightened, stop
- If the horse and rider are on a bridge or narrow road, be very careful – slow down or stop
- At night, dip your headlights when approaching a horse
- Two vehicles should avoid passing near a horse.



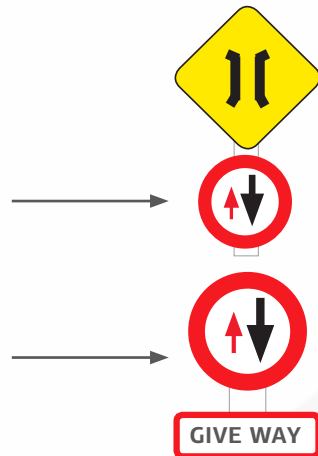
ONE-LANE BRIDGES

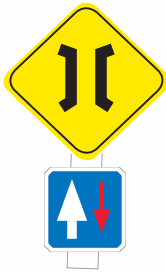
There are a number of one-lane bridges in the Waimakairi District.

If you have to give way at a one-lane bridge, you should see one or both of the warning signs shown.

The first warning sign has a yellow diamond-shaped sign to tell you that you are coming up to a one-lane bridge and a round sign with a red border to tell you that you must give way to vehicles coming towards you.

The second warning sign reminds you that you must give way.





One lane Bridges (cont.)

If other drivers should give way to you on a one-lane bridge, you will see the sign shown as you come up to the bridge.

The big white arrow on the blue rectangle shows that you can go onto the bridge first.

Slow down and check for vehicles that may already be on the bridge, before driving on.



RAILWAY CROSSINGS

The District has a number of railway crossings. Some of these are controlled by barrier arms, however, a number are only controlled by either lights and/or stop signs.

- Never enter a level crossing if red lights are flashing. Wait for the lights to stop flashing before driving across railway tracks
- Never drive under ascending or descending boom gates as an oncoming train is in the vicinity or a second train may be approaching
- Never drive around boom gates when they are down - it is very likely that an oncoming train is close to the crossing

Never queue on a railway crossing - if you have stopped on a crossing and a train is approaching, immediately drive off the track or get out of your car and move clear. It is likely that the train will not be able to stop in time.

SPEED LIMITS PAST SCHOOL BUSES



Either way it's 20k!

Waimakariri has several school bus runs which are in rural areas and bus stop areas, many of which won't be marked, which are on 100km/h roads.

If a school bus is stopped and is picking up or setting down passengers, the speed limit past it is 20kph regardless of what the normal speed limit is for that road and regardless of which side of the road you are on.



Reporting problems

Problems with roads and footpaths can be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week to our Customer Services Team on 0800 965 468 (0800WMKGOV) or use the Snap Send Solve app.

If there has been a serious crash please contact emergency services on 111.

If you wish to report road incidents which are urgent but not life threatening dial *555. This includes such things as non-injury crashes, traffic congestion, breakdowns and obstructions on the highway.

