

Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about a vehicle on the beach, please get as many details as possible without putting your own safety at risk, such as:

- Date, time and length of time the incident has taken place.
- The make, model and registration of the vehicle involved (OR the registration of a trailer if it is being used to transport motor cross bikes).
- A house address if the vehicles are coming from a property.
- A description of the driver (or their name if possible).
- The effects (actual or potential) that you saw or experienced personally.
- Photographs.

Who to contact about ...

- ... Dangerous driving – **Police**
- ... Driver posing a risk to other beach users – **Police / Northland Regional Council**
- ... Vehicle is unregistered or unwarranted – **Police**
- ... Driver appears to be underage ... **Police**
- ... Driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol – **Police**
- ... Driver abusing other beach users – **Police**
- ... Noise complaint – **District Council**
- ... Rubbish dumping – **District Council**
- ... Vehicle destroying vegetation / damaging sand dunes – **Northland Regional Council**
- ... Vehicle endangering marine life – **Department of Conservation**
- ... Destruction of archaeological sites – **Department of Conservation**
- ... Disturbance of birds – **Department of Conservation**
- ... Driving in DOC conservation reserve – **Department of Conservation**

Contacts

Northland Regional Council
24/7 Environmental Hotline 0800 504 639

Department of Conservation Hotline 0800 999 005

District Councils

Whangarei District Council 09 430 4200

Kaipara District Council 09 439 7059

Far North District Council 09 405 2750

Police

Please contact your local Police station. Refer to the blue 'Government pages' in the front of your phone book's white pages.

Further information

If you have questions about the planning process to review management of vehicles on beaches, contact **Northland Regional Council** on 0800 002 004 or go to www.nrc.govt.nz

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CARING FOR NORTHLAND AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

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Driving on the Beach



Four-wheel drives and motorbikes are becoming an increasingly common sight on our beaches

People take four-wheel drives, dune buggies and motorbikes onto the beach for a variety of reasons - including driving to a favourite fishing spot, speeding on the hard sand or climbing up and down the dunes. Most use their vehicles responsibly, but a minority are causing problems and posing a safety risk to other beach users and themselves. Vehicles - and the sheer volume of traffic at some spots - are also damaging Northland's coastal environment.

Environmental damage

Sand dunes are narrow, but important bands of sand between the land and sea. They act as buffer areas which help protect the land, people and houses from storm surges, cyclones and even tsunamis.

The 'building blocks' of a dune system are its grasses, which keep the sand from drying out and being carried away by the wind. These native plants give us our distinctive coastline and are crucial to the survival of birds, lizards and insects that live, eat and nest in them.

Sand dunes are very sensitive to vehicles driving over them. All motor vehicles and bikes can kill plants with a single pass - even the wide flotation tyres of quad bikes or small wheels of kids' motorbikes can crush and kill plants and the creatures that live in them.

- Keep vehicles off the dunes and where possible stick to existing tracks and access ways.
- Park your vehicle away from traffic areas and at an angle to the water so you can be seen by other drivers.

Remember! Do not park or drive on the sand dunes as this destroys vegetation.

Invisible victims

The beach is also home to rare birds which nest in the soft sand on the beach and lower dunes. Shorebird nests are often well camouflaged which makes them vulnerable to being run over by vehicles whose drivers do not see them. Each year many eggs and chicks are unintentionally crushed by vehicles.

- Stay on the harder sand between the waterline and the high tide mark and stay clear of nesting birds.
- Drive around flocks of birds (they are often resting after long periods of flying) and avoid driving close to marine mammals.

Safety of other beach users

The increasing number of vehicles on beaches is also causing problems for other beach users. People using popular beaches for activities such as swimming, sunbathing, fishing, and playing sports are encountering vehicles driving at unsafe speeds and too close to children and other beachgoers.

The safety of the vehicle drivers themselves is also important. Driving a four-wheel drive along the beach is different to driving on the road. Drivers without the necessary skills or caution risk damaging their vehicle and injuring themselves. There have been a number of deaths from vehicle crashes on New Zealand beaches in recent years.

Tips for driving safely on the beach

By following these tips you can help protect the coastal environment and have a safe and enjoyable visit.

- Always use established vehicle access routes onto the beach and then stick to the hard sand below the high tide mark to minimise your impact on the dunes and beach.
- Drive with care near the water as vulnerable shellfish beds tend to be there.
- Always slow down and drive carefully where there are pedestrians as they may not be able to hear you approaching.

- Watch for dogs, horses and fishing lines.
- Keep motorbikes (including kids' bikes) off the dunes. Motorbikes can do just as much damage to sand dunes as bigger vehicles.
- Avoid making sharp turns at speed - front wheels can dig into the sand and cause your vehicle to flip.
- Keep below the speed limit for your own safety and obey the road rules such as wearing a seat belt at all times, using indicators, keeping your vehicle road worthy and not driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Note: The rules that apply to vehicles on the road also apply to vehicle use on the beach!

Which agency is responsible for monitoring driver behaviour?

No one organisation is responsible for the use of vehicles on the beach. The following organisations all share some responsibility for managing vehicles on beaches:

- **The Northland Regional Council (NRC)**, which sets regional rules for the use of the tidal section of beaches and also has a role in setting policies for managing the wider coastal environment.
- **Northland's three District Councils** - Kaipara, Whangarei and Far North - which are responsible for the management and use of vehicle access routes to beaches within their respective Districts and on their reserves.
- **The Department of Conservation (DOC)**, which sets national policies on coastal management, manages its local coastal reserves, and protects native birds and animals that are threatened or endangered.
- **The Police**, who regulate dangerous behaviour and illegal vehicle use (like speeding, drink driving, licences), on beaches as well as on roads. Police can prosecute criminal behaviour and bylaw breaches.