

SuperGold Card public transport travel concessions

The SuperGold Card is available to all eligible New Zealanders aged 65 years or over and those under this age who receive the New Zealand Superannuation or the Veterans Pension. The card provides access to a wide range of business discounts, government and local authority services, entitlements and concessions. The card was launched in August 2007.

The additional benefit of free off-peak travel on scheduled public transport services within regions for SuperGold Card holders will be rolled out in most parts of the country on 1 October 2008.

The New Zealand Household Travel Survey shows most people aged 65 and over do most of their public transport travel during off-peak hours, making an estimated eight million trips per year on buses and trains.

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is the lead government agency for this project, with support from the Ministry of Transport (MoT) and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). Regional and district councils and the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) are responsible for delivering the services in their respective regions. NZTA is allocating funding for the services and working with these organisations to ensure the consistent delivery of services. Councils and ARTA are supporting this initiative and most will be ready to roll it out on 1 October 2008.

Questions and Answers

What transport concessions will be available to SuperGold Card holders?

Card holders will be entitled to free off-peak public transport services within a region.

What services will be free?

SuperGold Card holders can access free travel on scheduled off-peak bus, rail and harbour ferry services. Councils and the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) have determined which specific services will be free for SuperGold Card holders in their regions. For detailed information on the services available in your region, contact your council or ARTA.

What times are 'off-peak'?

Councils will be funded for SuperGold Card holders who travel between the hours of 9am to 3pm and from 6:30pm to the end of service on weekdays, and any time on weekends and public holidays. Councils may choose to provide free travel outside these hours at their own expense. For detailed information on the services available in your region, contact your council or ARTA.

When will I be able to use my SuperGold Card to access free off-peak public transport?

The following regional bodies intend to offer free off-peak travel to card holders from 1 October:

- Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA)
- Environment Waikato
- Environment Bay of Plenty
- Hawkes Bay Regional Council
- Gisborne District Council
- Horizons Regional Council (Manawatu/Wanganui)
- Greater Wellington Regional Council
- Nelson District Council
- Environment Canterbury
- Otago Regional Council
- Environment Southland

Northland Regional Council, Taranaki District Council and Marlborough District Council intend rolling out the scheme in November. The West Coast Regional Council may offer concessions in the future. Currently the region does not have scheduled public transport services that fit readily with implementation of this scheme.

Will I need to show any identification to travel for free?

You will only need to show your SuperGold Card to the bus driver, train or ferry conductor. No other identification will be accepted if you don't have your card.

Will I be asked to provide any other information?

The driver or conductor may ask how far you are traveling – this is to help councils monitor the use of their services by SuperGold Card holders.

What if the driver/conductor doesn't accept my card?

Drivers and conductors have been instructed to accept all valid SuperGold Cards for free travel on eligible services. If you experience any difficulties using your card on eligible services please contact your council or ARTA.

Is free travel also available for long distance travel?

No. Funding applies only to public transport travel within a region. It will have the same service coverage as a region's existing public transport services. For detailed information on the services available in your region, contact your council or ARTA.

Who will administer the free off-peak public transport services?

Councils and ARTA are responsible for administering the system, with monitoring from NZ Transport Agency.

Will there be any differences in the free services offered from region to region?

Yes. Regions already have different existing public transport services, including the availability of different modes, frequency of services and area coverage. There will also be differences in availability, particularly between urban and rural areas. For detailed information on the free services available in your area, contact your council or ARTA.

Will this mean an increase in the amount of public transport services available?

No. Public transport in New Zealand currently has spare off-peak capacity which will be able to meet increased demand in the off-peak periods.

Does this scheme apply to Total Mobility?

No. The SuperGold Card concessions target scheduled off-peak public transport services only.

What about disabled users of public transport?

While there are some SuperGold Card holders with a disability who are unable to use conventional scheduled public transport, a growing proportion of the urban bus fleet now have super-low floors which are more accessible, while train and ferry services are also increasingly accessible for people with disabilities.

Do international pensioners receive this concession?

No. This policy is only for New Zealand residents who hold a SuperGold Card.

How much is this initiative costing?

In Budget 2008 Government announced \$72 million in funding over the next four years (\$18m per year) to provide free off-peak travel for SuperGold Card holders. This funding includes a 100% transport subsidy for card holders, plus administration and set-up costs.

How can I get a SuperGold Card?

The SuperGold Card is available to all New Zealanders aged 65 years and over who are permanently resident in New Zealand. It is automatically issued to those who receive the New Zealand Superannuation or the Veterans Pension. If you have not received your card, or if you have misplaced it, call the SuperGold Card Centre on 0800 25 45 65, e-mail info@supergold.govt.nz or download a copy of an application at www.supergold.govt.nz. You can also apply for a card at any Work and Income Service Centre.