

## **ADVISORY NOTE: NZ POST PAXSTER MAIL DELIVERY VEHICLES**

**8 May 2017**

### **To: Road Controlling Authorities**

Road Controlling Authorities should proceed with caution in considering applications for new approvals for Paxster vehicles.

NZ Post has been progressing the introduction of new Paxster mail delivery vehicles for local deliveries in areas suitable for their use.

The NZ Transport Agency circulated a notice on 18 May 2016 that it considered that these vehicles are safe for use on roads, especially in urban areas with speed restrictions, based on the evidence produced from trials in New Plymouth and elsewhere.

The Agency also considers that the Paxster can be safely used on a footpath, subject to factors such as the width of the footpath and volumes of pedestrians. The responsible road controlling authority shall determine which parts of their area can be serviced by these vehicles.

While the Road User Rule 2002 allows mopeds to operate on a footpath when delivering mail, the Paxster is not included in that provision and the Agency has issued exemptions to allow their use by NZ Post on footpaths. These exemptions are valid only if the relevant road controlling authority has given permission for that use.

There have been recent informal reports circulating in the media relating to the Paxster that suggest that road controlling authorities should proceed with caution in considering applications for new approvals.

One report identifies that the brake lights on the vehicle are not activated by the normal braking operation and are illuminated only by application of the handbrake. The vehicle equipment and performance is within the role of the NZTA Access and Use team and not part of the Local Authority permission.

There is also an emerging issue reported in the media of health and safety for operators and footpath users related to the steering responsiveness of the vehicles, with operators reporting neck and shoulder stress and injury from the unassisted steering.

The permission granted by Waitaki District Council for Paxter use in the Oamaru footpath network has been in operation for approximately 12 months. There have been no Paxter incidents reported in this time. There have been no reported incidents in other trial areas. There has been a suggestion in media reports that incidents involving the vehicles have not been properly reported. Prompt and accurate incident reporting should be a condition of any approval and non-reporting should be regarded as a serious breach of the conditions of approval for these vehicles.

The local authorities that have approved the use of Paxters in their network have considered the limitations of their footpath network infrastructure and relied upon the NZ Post operator training and operational rules when providing the approval. Conditions that could limit the area of the network approval are included where required.

The Shared Footpaths Working Group therefore urges road controlling authorities to be cautious with approving any new use of Paxster's on their networks and include reasonable conditions in limiting areas subject to factors such as the width of the footpath and volumes of pedestrians until a clearer understanding of the safety risks is available. The working group encourages authorities to inform the group when Paxter approval is granted, and to provide feedback on operational performance after 12 and 24 months of Paxter operation.



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