

Road safety on Fraser Island

New laws

A number of new road safety measures have been introduced to make Fraser Island a safer place to visit. You need to know and follow these laws to avoid a fine. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

From 28 February 2011, 4WD hire vehicles driven on Fraser Island must:

- have all seats facing forward or rearward (not side-facing)
- have a maximum of eight seats
- have all items stored securely inside the vehicle – below the top level of the door frame
- be fitted with seatbelts that meet Australian Design Rule standards.

This means that troop carriers or other large 4WD hire vehicles that do not meet these specifications will require modification or replacement. Please note, these new rules do not apply to private 4WDs (non-hire vehicles) due to their reduced crash risk.

Fines: the driver of the vehicle may face a fine of \$300 and 3 demerit points for not adhering to restrictions.

Why are these changes necessary?

Road safety initiatives have been introduced on Fraser Island in response to community and government concerns about 4WD crashes on the island.

Two crashes occurred on Fraser Island in April and December of 2009, resulting in the death of three overseas tourists.

During 2003 to 2007 there have been 106 casualties from crashes on Fraser Island due to 4WD crashes. Crashes on Fraser Island typically result in higher rates of serious injury than elsewhere in Queensland. Crashes also occur more frequently on Fraser Island than elsewhere in Queensland.

Additionally, the Department of Transport and Main Roads undertook computer modelling to better understand the road safety risks for 4WDs. The results found that the rollover stability of a Toyota Landcruiser troop carrier would be improved by restricting the number of passengers and ensuring that no luggage was placed on the roof.

Clarifying amendment prohibiting the carrying of loads in the roof cavity inside the vehicle

The 28 February 2011 regulatory amendments include a clarifying amendment expressly prohibiting the carrying of any load inside the roof of Fraser Island hire vehicles.

This was necessary due to a further crash which occurred on River Heads Road enroute to Fraser Island which involved a 'hi-top' 4WD carrying a load stored in the roof cavity inside the vehicle. Carrying a load in this manner increases vehicle instability in much the same way as carrying a load on the roof of the vehicle.

The new amendment will address this problem by prohibiting the carrying of any load at a height above the level of the top of the door frames in a hire vehicle used on Fraser Island. The amendment also prohibits any apparatus being attached to the roof or ceiling of the vehicle which could carry a load inside the vehicle.

What other initiatives have been introduced to improve road safety on Fraser Island?

Other measures already introduced include:

- maximum speed limit on Fraser Island beaches reduced from 100 km/h to 80 km/h
- maximum speed limit in townships and inland roads on Fraser Island reduced from 50 km/h to 30 km/h
- speed limit signs installed
- advisory signs installed at each barge entry point
- targeted police patrols to enforce speed limits
- random inspections of 4WD hire vehicles and enforcement activities by the Department of Transport and Main Roads' Inspectors on Fraser Island and on the mainland near the entry point of Fraser Island.

Will these changes be happening anywhere else?

Crash data on Moreton Island, Cooloola, Teewah and Rainbow Beaches has been examined to understand if there are similar road safety issues in these areas. The analysis found there were not the same high number of crashes and casualties in these areas between 2003 and 2007. Therefore, there are no proposed changes for these areas. The department will continue to monitor road crash data for any possible changes to the crash risk in these areas.

Removal of roof racks

As no load is to be carried on the roof of any hire vehicles it is recommended that roof racks be removed to ensure that hirers do not carry any luggage on the roof of the hire vehicle.

Modifying an existing vehicle

If you have to modify your hire vehicles to comply with the new laws you must have the modifications certified. It is a legal requirement that any installation of seats, seatbelts and any change to a vehicle category must be certified by an *Approved Person* or *Approved Engineer* who is approved by the Department of Transport and Main Roads for *LK1*, *LK2* and *LO1* approvals (depending on the modifications performed).

You can engage the services of any *Approved Person* certified in the previously mentioned modification codes to commence the modification process. It is critical to speak with the *Approved Person* before any modifications take place, particularly if the modifications will change the vehicle category.

Vehicle category changes

A vehicle category change will occur when changing the seating capacity and configuration of an 11 seater (MD1 category) version Toyota Troop Carrier to forward or rear facing seats. The number of the seats installed in the vehicle will affect its subsequent vehicle category.

You must check that the *Approved Person* you have chosen to certify the modifications is either an *Approved Person Engineer* or has had the design and any vehicle category change approved and certified by an *Approved Person Engineer* (with *LK2 codes* and *LO1 code*).

Fines: modifications performed without the correct certification are invalid and are an offence under the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010* and you could be fined a maximum of \$4,000.

Once the modifications have been certified and approved, a modification plate will be attached to the vehicle and you will be issued with a *Modification Certificate*. You must take a copy of the *Modification Certificate* to a Transport and Main Roads Customer Service Centre where the vehicle seating capacity details will be updated.

More information

The contact details for businesses in the Approved Persons Scheme are available from Transport and Main Roads Customer Service Centres or you can contact the Modifications Help Desk, during business hours, on 07 3114 5844.

Public enquiries:

For information about tag-along tours phone the Department of Environment and Resource Management on 1300 130 372.

For information about road safety issues on Fraser Island contact the Manager (Road Safety, Southern Region) from the Department of Transport and Main Roads on 4639 0718 or email southernrs@tmr.qld.gov.au.

Media enquiries

For media enquiries about tag-along tours contact the Department of Environment and Resource Management on 3224 7792 or email media@derm.qld.gov.au.

For media enquiries about road safety issues on Fraser Island contact the Department of Transport and Main Roads on 3306 7753 or email CCRmedia@tmr.qld.gov.au.