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your licence, which shows you can carry passengers. This involves:

- passing a medical exam
- passing a course that shows you understand the law relating to passenger drivers
- a background check, which includes a police check.

The P endorsement must be renewed regularly.

Secondary education: There are no specific secondary educational requirements, but geography, history, te reo Māori and foreign languages may be useful.

Tertiary education: Tertiary courses in hospitality and tourism may be useful, but are not essential.

Pay and job outlook

Pay varies according to the company, the driver's skill and experience and the sort of trip. Tour coach drivers may earn between \$13 and \$19 an hour, or up to \$60,000 a year. The higher rates are earned by drivers who are able to give good quality commentaries and have story-telling ability. Living costs while on tour are paid by the company, which may also meet the costs of driver's licences. Drivers may receive tips, and free rides on tourist attractions if there is a spare seat. Some tour coach drivers are employed on contract for the duration of each trip, and some work only during the tour season, which runs from October to May. These drivers may face periods without work and may not receive all the benefits of a full-time permanent employee, such as holiday pay and sick leave.

Tour coach drivers are in demand but vacancies may not always be for permanent, full-time positions. Tour coach operators may be employed on contract for the tour season (October to May) or for individual tours. Many companies prefer to start drivers off on a casual basis to see if they are ready for the lifestyle of a tour coach driver. This gives the driver a chance to see if they enjoy the work.

Tour Coach Driver

Kaitaraiwa Pahi Tāpoi

Other names for this job

Coach Captain, Coach Tour Driver, Driver (Tour Coach), Driver/Guide, Long-distance Coach Driver, Scenic Tour Driver

What people in this job do

Tour coach drivers drive a tourist or long-distance coach and escort tourists and local people on sightseeing, educational or other tours. Some tour coach drivers may describe points of interest to passengers.

Tour coach drivers may do some or all of the following:

- ensure each day that the coach is in good working order, fully fuelled and clean
- liaise with the tour company or tour guide about the party's itinerary
- load luggage into the bus and check the number of luggage items is correct
- drive the coach safely according to a tour itinerary or timetable
- answer any questions passengers or the tour guide may have, and hand out tour material
- deliver a commentary to passengers on the areas the coach is travelling through and explain points of interest
- be involved in tour activities
- help passengers with further travel information
- help passengers solve problems such as needing to contact home urgently or arranging accommodation
- maintain a coach log book, which includes work start and finish times and rest periods during each day.

Personal requirements

Tour coach drivers need to have:

- excellent driving skills and knowledge of defensive driving techniques
- the ability to drive safely and talk at the same time
- an understanding of the Road Code and transport regulations
- knowledge of their route and local attractions, as well as knowledge of New Zealand culture and history
- good communication and people skills
- organisational, planning and time management skills to ensure the tour keeps to the itinerary.

Tour coach drivers need to be:

- courteous, helpful and friendly
- honest and reliable
- able to relate well to people from different cultures, lifestyles and age groups
- able to deal with difficult passengers
- able to remain calm in emergencies
- able to work well under pressure.

Tour coach drivers need to pass a medical exam every five years (although some employers may require exams more often), so they need to be reasonably fit and healthy. They must not have any heart conditions, and they need to have good hearing and good eyesight (with or without corrective lenses). Tour coach drivers also need to have a neat and tidy appearance.

How to get into this job

To become a tour coach driver you need to have held a Class 2, and probably a Class 4 driver's licence (depending on the size of the bus) for at least six months. You also need to have a P (Passenger) endorsement on