Otago Regional Council

2026

Otago Total Mobility Scheme Handbook



Contents

What is Total Mobility? 3

Who is eligible? 3

How can I join? 4

Do I need to provide evidence of my disability? 5

How does the Total Mobility system work? 6

Reviews 7

What happens once I've applied? 8

What does ORC do with the information? 8

Can I use Total Mobility if I get other financial assistance? 10

Where and when can I use my Total Mobility Card? 10

What happens if the rules are broken? 11

Resources 11

Contact ORC 12

What is Total Mobility?

The Total Mobility scheme is a part of public transport, providing subsidised door to door transport using approved taxi companies. Available nationwide, the scheme's aim is to provide appropriate transport for individuals with permanent disabilities and long-term impairments who cannot safely and reliably use public transport, giving registered users a 65% subsidy up to a $45 cap. The user pays for the remaining 35% and any additional cost above the $45 fare cap. Users must carry a valid Total Mobility photo ID card to access the discounted fare.

Total Mobility started in 1981 and not only allows people with long-term impairment to access medical or social services, but also promotes community participation and gives them the same access to society as those without permanent disabilities or long-term impairments.

Who is eligible?

The scheme is available to individuals who have an impairment or disability lasting longer than six months that prohibits them from using public transport unaccompanied. Components of using public transport are broken down into the following categories. If someone is unable to reliably complete any component of the journey, they are eligible for Total Mobility.

- Get to the place where transport departs
- Get onto the transport
- Handle ticketing/money
- Ride securely
- Get off the transport
- Get to final destination

The impairment or disability can be permanent, temporary (lasting longer than six months), or fluctuating (able to use public transport some of the time, but not all the time).

An impairment can be physical, psychological, neurological, intellectual, sensory, or other.

Total Mobility does not consider ability to drive. As part of public transport, the Total Mobility scheme only looks at an individual's ability to use public transport such as buses, ferries, or trains. In areas where there is not a bus network, eligibility must be determined using a hypothetical bus network and if the individual could use the bus network if there was one present.

Children over 5 years, with long-term impairments which prevent them from using public transport, are eligible for the Total Mobility scheme.

It is not intended that the scheme should substitute other transport that is the responsibility of other government agencies such as ACC, WINZ, Workbridge or Ministry of Education.

How can I join?

To access the Total Mobility scheme in Otago, you'll need to confirm your eligibility through an assessment at one of our approved agencies.



Check out our approved agencies on the ORC Total Mobility webpage:

www.orc.govt.nz/orbus/travel-with-us/accessibility/total-mobility/#assessment-agencies-in-your-area

One of our accredited assessors will go through the assessment criteria with you and collect the required information about how your impairment prohibits you from using public transport in a safe and reliable manner. The assessor will also take an ID photo for the card, using the general rules of passport photos.

Some agencies may require a one-off fee or annual membership to book an assessment, which helps cover the resourcing involved.

Do I need to provide evidence of my disability?

You may need to provide evidence of your disability if the assessor doesn't know your history. The assessor will get your permission if they need to gather more information about your disability so you can be properly assessed. If requested, please give them the name of your caregiver, ACC assessor, GP, specialist, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, social worker, or occupational therapist. Without more information you may not be able to participate in the scheme.

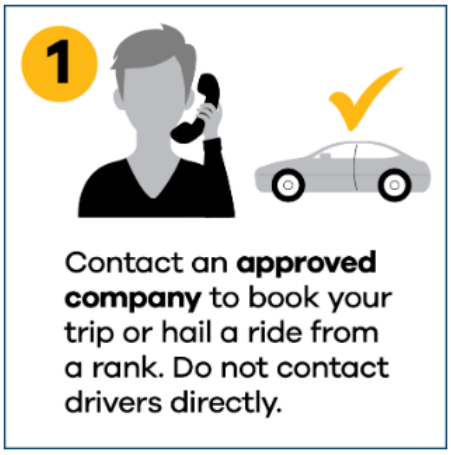
How does the Total Mobility system work?

Let your approved taxi company know you are a Total Mobility card holder at time of booking. At the beginning of the taxi trip, the driver will confirm your ID and check the expiry date, then swipe your card.

For each trip, details of the taxi journey are electronically collected, including the cost of the fare and the discount.

The Total Mobility subsidy is used for each trip you make. A return trip in the same taxi – for instance, to the shops and back home again – is counted as two trips.

We cannot reimburse you for any trip you undertake without having handed over your valid Total Mobility ID card at the start.









Each trip entitles you to a 65 % discount on your taxi fare, up to a maximum fare amount. Please ensure you pay your portion of the fare at the time of the trip. The maximum subsidised fare varies throughout the region. In Otago the fare cap is $45 but is subject to change at ORC's discretion.

Total Mobility entitlement is non-transferable

The Total Mobility ID card can only be used by the registered Total Mobility member. Unauthorised use could mean the cancellation of your membership. Your family, friends and caregivers can share your taxi, but you must be in the vehicle for the entire journey.

Reviews

Total Mobility cards do not expire but do require a **review every three years**. At which time an assessor will get in touch to confirm your details are still correct and that you still meet the criteria for the Total Mobility scheme.

Your card will become suspended if not used in a taxi within 2 years, and will be cancelled after 3 years of non-use. Expired cards cannot be reactivated, and you will need to reapply and be assessed again to determine ongoing eligibility.

Please keep us up to date with your contact details. If your address or phone number changes, please contact **totalmobility@orc.govt.nz** or **0800 474 082**.

What happens once I've applied?

Your application will be evaluated and processed by ORC to ensure you meet the criteria to become a Total Mobility user. If your application is successful, you will receive a photo ID card at no charge.

If your application is unsuccessful, the assessor will be informed. You can appeal this decision if you believe your application was declined unjustly.

It takes about two to three weeks to register a successful applicant and issue a photo ID card. We are unable to process urgent requests.

What does ORC do with the information?

All information provided from your application will be held in ORC's database. We will ensure that all names and personal information remain private and confidential. Internal access to the database is restricted to appropriate staff.

We collect statistical information so we can report on the Total Mobility scheme and plan for its future, but this information is held separately from the information used to assess your eligibility.

If a card is not used for three or more years, the account is cancelled, and the data anonymised. This means that all personal details and information are deleted from our database. This is to make sure we comply with Privacy Act 2020 and that we are not holding on to information that is not required.

For more information on how we use your information, please go to our Total Mobility Privacy statement orc.govt.nz/totalmobility-resources

Can I use Total Mobility if I get other financial assistance?

The Total Mobility taxi scheme may only be used for journeys that are not covered by assistance from another official source. Using financial assistance as well as the Total Mobility scheme, or 'double-dipping', is not permitted. Tell your assessor if you get travel income or assistance from another source or what journeys you get financial assistance for. You may not be eligible for Total Mobility if you get other general financial assistance from other organisations such as ACC, Ministry of Education, Workbridge or Work and Income.

Where and when can I use my Total Mobility Card?

Total Mobility cards can be used nationwide. You must hold a Total Mobility card of the region you reside in. If you move to a different region, contact ORC to request a transfer. You will not have to get a new assessment for most regions, and your new region will send you a new Total Mobility card for their region.

Your Total Mobility card can be used at any time, although there are some restrictions to the hours that taxi companies operate.

- The scheme is not valid to use in association with work related travel, but it can be used to get to and from work
- Residents of rest homes (not apartments) cannot use the scheme to pay for taxis for any transport that is already covered by your residential provider.

If you move to a different region for longer than six months, contact ORC to have your account transferred to your new region. Some regions may require re-assessment.

To find our participating taxi companies or approved agencies for assessments, see the Total Mobility webpage at or call **0800 474 082.**

What happens if the rules are broken?

It's important that you follow the policies and rules of the Total Mobility scheme, or you could be suspended or excluded from accessing the subsidy.

Resources

For more information about the Total Mobility scheme, see our webpage www.orc.govt.nz/totalmobility

For more information on policies and guidance from New Zealand Transport Agency: www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/total-mobility-council-guide/

For information on the Total Mobility review: www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/review-of-the-total-mobility-scheme

For more information on Total Mobility conditions of use, see our Terms and conditions, and for more information on how we use personal information, see our privacy policy. Both are available on: orc.govt.nz/totalmobility-resources

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