

Windscreen claims and costs are on the rise – especially during Covid-19

AA Insurance gears up for busy summer holidays

Auckland – 29 November 2021 – With more Kiwis likely to be on the roads this summer, AA Insurance is preparing for more windscreen claims, and the costs that come with them.

“Typically, we see a rise in windscreen claims when Kiwis are on their Christmas and New Year’s holidays,” says Simon Hobbs, GM Operations at AA Insurance. “However, while we saw usual seasonal trends with windscreen claims increasing through December to the end of March 2021, this year it has not tapered off to the usual degree through May, June, and July.”

This has meant that over the 12 months ending 30 June 2021, AA Insurance handled over 25,000 windscreen claims worth almost \$10 million – a 20% higher volume than in 2020 and 12% higher than in 2019. The average cost for a windscreen is currently between \$430-470; the average cost five years ago was about \$100 less at \$350.

“As we head towards the summer months, it’s likely people will be travelling around the country – COVID protection framework permitting - and we will see more cars on the road,” he says. “This generally means more windscreen claims and, with the technological enhancements in modern cars, an increase in the cost of the average glass claim.

“Although New Zealand has a comparatively aging fleet of vehicles, this is gradually being replaced by newer models, which means we’ve seen an increase in the number of windscreens claims with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) technology - a standard feature in new cars - from 7% of claims to 12% in the 12 months to 30 June 2021.”

In the past, fixing a windscreen was a relatively straightforward procedure and literally just involved replacing the glass, whereas in modern vehicles, this may now include recalibrating cameras or sensors and ensuring these are aligned and function properly. As a result, windscreen replacement could now cost up to \$4,000.

Simon says that AA Insurance’s main glass suppliers are having no difficulty keeping up with the high demand of replacement windscreens. However, there is the occasional exception where dealerships do not have windscreens available locally and the time to procure overseas can be between six and 16 weeks, mainly as a result of global COVID-related supply chain issues.

In addition, many businesses close over the summer holidays, or operate with a skeleton staff, so the sooner drivers get their windscreen sorted the better.

“If you’re planning to hit the road this summer, ensure your car is in tip top condition early, including seeing to any windscreen chips and scratches,” Simon continues. “It’s also worth checking your insurance policy before you leave. Increasing windscreen repair complexity and costs really highlight the benefit off having the right cover for your car, such as Excess-Free Glass Cover, so you don’t end up paying more than you must.

“Forward planning could save you money and time,” he says, “which could be better spent with family and friends.”

AA Insurance tips for taking care of your windscreen.

1. **If your windscreen has any chips**, get them repaired immediately. Not only will it prevent a chip becoming a crack – and the time spent to have it replaced rather than repaired – it’s also better for our environment.
2. **If there’s any rust** on the surround of your windscreen or it’s looking worn or cracked, this may weaken its integrity or prevent it from remaining watertight, so get it repaired or replaced.
3. **Give yourself time should your windscreen need replacing, especially if its equipped with ADAS.** Contact your insurer about who would be best to carry out the replacement (major glass company vs dealership for some cars). Now’s a good time to check your policy to see what benefits are, or could be, included such as Excess-Free Glass Cover.
4. **If you notice arc shaped scratches** on the glass, then consider cleaning or replacing your windscreen wipers, which may be pulling trapped dirt or sand across the glass. Don’t forget the rear wiper as well.
5. **For maximum visibility**, clean your windscreen and windows, inside and out, with the right fluid like water and vinegar, or special car window cleaner.
6. **Take care and go easy** - vibrations caused by driving, hitting a pothole or even slamming your car doors will encourage a chip to expand. Reduce speed on gravel roads and give the car in front more space to avoid any gravel flying up.

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About AA Insurance

AA Insurance is an independently operated, New Zealand-based joint venture between the New Zealand Automobile Association (NZAA) and Vero Insurance New Zealand Limited (VINZL). Since 1994 we have demonstrated trusted expertise in home, contents and car insurance in New Zealand, and in 2018 introduced commercial small business insurance. We underwrite our own policies and sell direct to New Zealanders. Our 930+ staff look after over 480,000 customers with 970,000 policies.

We proudly partner with Eden Park and have been consistently recognised by: Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brands (11 consecutive years since 2011) and Quality Service Awards for Car, and Home and Contents Insurance (since 2015), Kantar Customer Leadership Index (since 2019), Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers (2011-2018), and the Colmar Brunton Corporate Reputation Index (since 2015) that recognises New Zealand's most successful companies. Last year, AA Insurance was also named Consumer NZ People's Choice award winner for car, home and contents (since 2019).

AA Insurance has an A+ (Strong) Insurer Financial Strength Rating given by Standard and Poor's (Australia) Pty Ltd. For further information visit aainsurance.co.nz.

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