

Ōtepoti Dunedin Cruise Guide 2026-27



DUNEDIN
CITY COUNCIL

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a-rohe o
Ōtepoti



site

Visitor
Information

dunedin



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Vision

To be the premier cruise destination in New Zealand, where passengers and crew want to disembark, and after a memorable experience, they want to return.



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The Cruise Sector

Help us give cruise visitors an exceptional experience in our city. As an operator, you play a key role in shaping how visitors see Dunedin - your knowledge, warmth, and professionalism make a lasting impression.

This booklet is designed to support you with practical information, helpful tips, and local insights to enhance your business and ensure every visitor feels welcome.

The Cruise Action Group - made up of Dunedin City Council, Enterprise Dunedin, Port Otago, the iSite Visitor Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin Host, and the Otago Chamber of Commerce - is committed to improving the visitor experience and supporting operator excellence across the cruise industry.

Cruise tourism presents a significant opportunity for Dunedin. Beyond the immediate economic impact from passenger and crew spending, many visitors return or recommend Dunedin to others, helping grow our reputation as a must-see destination.

Let's work together to showcase the best of Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Expected arrivals 2026-27



85 ships

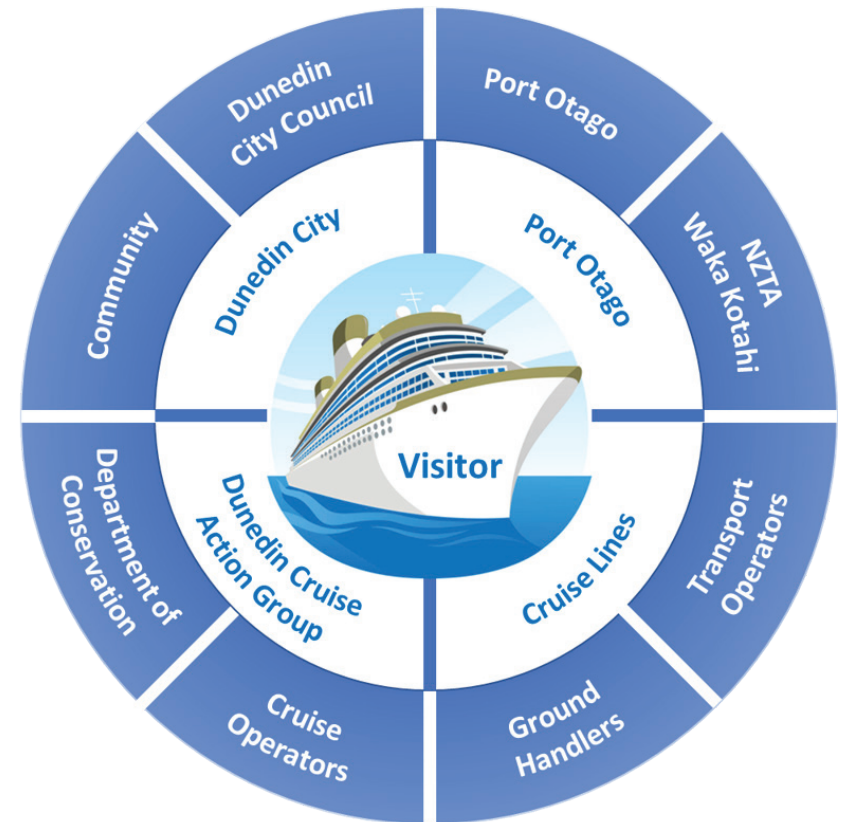


Est. 147,330 passengers



Est. 65,720 crew

- Dunedin currently receives approximately 88% of all cruise ship passengers who visit NZ.
- In Dunedin approximately 80% minimum will disembark, crew approximately 50% will disembark.



Ōtepoti Dunedin Ambassadors

The Ōtepoti Dunedin visitor industry works collaboratively to build a professional, high-quality experience for all who come to our city. As ambassadors for Ōtepoti Dunedin, we each play a vital role in ensuring cruise visitors feel genuinely welcomed and respected.

Working together to create a welcoming and professional environment for our cruise visitors by following these helpful guidelines.

1. **Greet with warmth** – Say “*Kia ora*” and offer a friendly welcome. Dunedin is often the first port of call in Aotearoa New Zealand, so a genuine Kiwi greeting sets the tone.
2. **Respect official representatives** – Together with Port Otago staff, the isite Visitor Centre staff and volunteers are Dunedin’s official hosts and will often be the first point of contact for visitors.
3. **Act with integrity** – Conduct yourself honestly and respectfully with all visitors, colleagues, and stakeholders.
4. **Avoid pressure tactics** – Share accurate, helpful information about your products and services, and let your marketing speak for itself. Avoid making claims that can’t be verified—building trust through honesty is key to a great visitor experience.
5. **Respect other operators** – Respect the space and conversations of other industry representatives. Allow visitors to complete their interactions before engaging, ensuring a courteous and collaborative environment for everyone.
6. **Maintain public access** – Keep footpaths clear and follow instructions from officials to ensure safe pedestrian flow.
7. **Respect the isite space** – Please allow visitors to approach the isite independently. As a neutral space for unbiased information, the isite is designed to help visitors explore all options freely. Operators are kindly asked not to enter the isite with customers or approach its entrance.
8. **Follow regulations** – Comply with all planning, regulatory, and permit requirements from local and central government authorities.
9. **No direct selling in restricted areas** – Transactions involving money must be directed to the isite. Refer to the [Dunedin City Council Mobile Trading Bylaw](#)
10. **No mobile trading permits for the Octagon** – Tour operators will not be issued touting permits for the Octagon or surrounding isite area. NZTA regulations also apply.
11. **Stay positive** – Keep personal political views private and speak positively about Dunedin.
12. **Follow Port Otago protocols** – Remain within designated areas and follow all instructions from Port Otago officials.

By following these guidelines, we can work together to ensure every cruise visitor enjoys a safe, welcoming, and memorable experience in Ōtepoti Dunedin.



Top 3 Welcome Tips

As a cruise operator, you may be the first New Zealander our visitors meet - your welcome sets the tone for their entire experience. Here are three keyways to ensure every interaction is positive and professional:

1

Make a Great First Impression

Greet visitors with a warm “*Kia ora*”, introduce yourself and your business, and help with any questions. A friendly, helpful attitude reflects the manaakitanga (hospitality) Dunedin is known for.

2

Present a Professional Image

Wear a clearly identifiable uniform and name badge. Your team’s appearance represents your brand—ensure vehicles are clean and well-presented to reinforce a high standard.

3

Invest in Training and Local Knowledge

Encourage your team to participate in customer service training such as Kiwi Host or sales workshops offered by local providers. Make sure staff are familiar with key visitor amenities (toilets, cafés, banks, internet access) and can confidently recommend local attractions.

Tips for Hosting Cruise Visitors in Ōtepoti Dunedin

As a cruise operator, local knowledge and being friendly will help shape a memorable experience for our visitors. Here are ten essential tips to help you engage effectively:

1. **Know the Ships in Town** – Stay informed about which cruise ships are visiting, where they've come from, and where they're headed next. This helps you connect with visitors and tailor your conversations. Check the latest [Port Otago cruise schedule here](#).
2. **Be Shuttle-Savvy** – Always carry a Dunedin map and be familiar with shuttle departure points and times. Visitors often rely on operators for this information, especially when planning their return to the ship. Check the latest [Cruise Calendar here](#).
3. **Recommend Local Amenities** – Have a favourite café (or two) to suggest (especially one with great coffee). Know the locations of public toilets, banks, money exchange, Wi-Fi access, post boxes, and supermarkets. This will help visitors enjoy their time in the city.
4. **Impress the Crew** – Crew members often return and influence passenger opinions. A great experience for them can lead to positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits.
5. **Watch the Clock** – Be aware of the ship's schedule and ensure your guests return in plenty of time. Missing a departure is a serious concern for visitors.
6. **Ensure your team is well-trained in customer service and cultural awareness** – Ensure staff are trained in customer service and cultural awareness. Avoid inappropriate humour and ensure staffing levels meet visitor expectations. International guests often expect proactive, attentive service.
7. **Encourage Positive Feedback** – Ask satisfied customers to share their experience online. Word-of-mouth and online reviews are powerful tools for promoting your business.
8. **Confirm Bookings** – We recommend you do not take visitors to an attraction, without a confirmed booking. Unplanned visits can lead to disappointment and damage your reputation.
9. **Follow Local Regulations** – Direct selling involving money transfer is prohibited in restricted areas. Tour operators are not permitted to trade or tout in the Octagon or near the isite. Refer to the [Dunedin City Council Mobile Trading Bylaw](#) for details.
10. **Informed and Positive** – Visit [dunedinnz.com](#), explore the Dunedin isite Visitor Centre, and ensure your team is familiar with all that Dunedin has to offer.

Our city is known as one of New Zealand's friendliest destinations - let's live up to that reputation.

Port Chalmers & Port Otago

Cruise ships have been calling at Port Chalmers since the 1960s, and today cruise tourism is a significant contributor to the local economy. To ensure a smooth and professional experience for visitors, local tour operators must follow the procedures outlined below when operating at the Port Chalmers Cruise Terminal.

Operator Management & Registration

1. **Operator Oversight**
Local tour operators are managed directly by Dunedin's isite's Visitor Centre staff.
2. **Booking Process**
isite staff handle all passenger bookings for local tours and receive standard commission for confirmed bookings.
3. **Pre-Season Registration**
Operators must register with the isite before the cruise season begins, providing details of:
 - Tour itineraries
 - Staffing levels
 - Minimum group sizes
 - Vehicles usedA familiarisation meeting with isite staff is also required.
4. **Port Otago Registration**
Operators must also register with Port Otago via the link below:
[Port Otago Operator Registration](#)
Access to the Port is restricted to approved operators only.

On-Site Procedures

5. **Waiting Area & Passenger Pick-Up**
Operators must wait outside the Port gate (e.g., Beach Street) until their tour is sold.
Entry to A Shed is permitted only to collect paid passengers from the designated pick-up area.
Operators will be called in by isite staff via cell phone when ready.
No parking or direct operations are allowed inside A Shed.
6. **Passenger Flow**
All passengers not booked on ship tours enter the terminal to:
 - Take a shuttle to the city
 - Walk into Port Chalmers
 - Join a private tour
7. **Advertising**
Operators may advertise in a designated area within the cruise terminal.

Compliance & Conduct

8. Security Requirements

All operators must comply with Port Otago's security protocols for both Port Chalmers and Dunedin facilities.

9. Follow Instructions

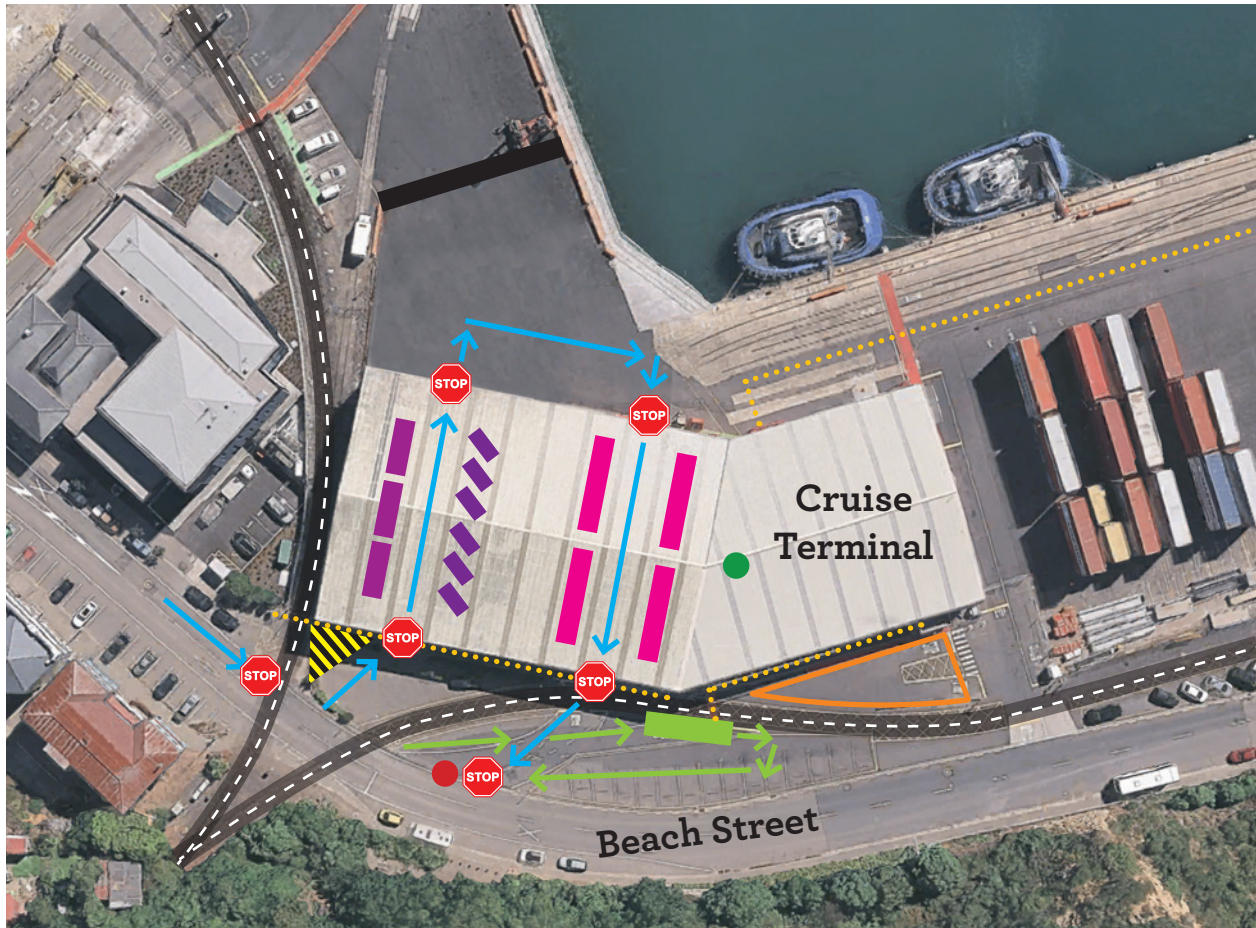
Operators must follow all directions from Port Otago staff while on site.

10. Wharf Access

No tour operators are permitted access to the wharf area.



Layout plan for Port Chalmers Cruise Terminal Building



Key

- Private Tours Travel Route
- Taxi Travel Route
- █ Large Parking Bay
- █ Medium Parking Bay
- █ Small Parking Bay
- Blocking Boxes
- Taxi Stands (x3)
- Rail Line
- Government Official Parking (Police, MPI, Customs)
- ⋯ Pedestrian Walkway
- No Parking Zone
- Security Entry & Exit
- isite Counter

FAQs

1. **What commission does the isite charge?**

The isite charges a standard 12.5% commission on bookings. Additional charges apply for poster display advertising.

2. **Do I have to register with the isite?**

Yes. All local tour operators must complete the isite agreement and provide details about their product.

Note: You must also register with **Port Otago Security** for terminal building access.

3. **Do local tour operators need to set minimum numbers for their tours?**

Yes. You must advise the isite of the minimum number of passengers required for your tour to operate.

4. **Is there signage on the wharf directing passengers to private tours?**

Yes. Port Otago provides signage at the start of the walkway to the Cruise Terminal, directing passengers to the isite for private tour information and bookings.

5. **Where can local tour operators park?**

Operators may park in **A Shed** only when called in by the isite team to collect booked passengers.

6. **How does the isite communicate with private tour providers?**

isite staff will contact operators via mobile phone when a tour is ready to depart.

7. **Where are the cruise terminal building pick-up areas?**

All local tour groups must collect passengers from inside the Cruise Terminal Building. Vehicles are parked in A Shed, and operators must walk through to meet their passengers.

8. **What happens if an operator gains access without bookings?**

Port Otago reserves the right to permanently exclude any operator who enters the site without confirmed bookings.

9. **What about operators with pre-booked online customers?**

Operators with pre-booked tours may enter the terminal **15 minutes before the tour start time**.

They must notify Port Otago Security **the day before**, providing:

- Passenger names
- Tour time
- Booking confirmation

10. **What about operators offering rental vehicles?**

Rental vehicle operators are managed by the isite in the same way as other tour operators.

11. **What access do taxi operators have?**

Taxis operate outside the terminal area. A dedicated taxi stand is located outside A Shed (Beach Street side), with signage directing passengers.

Drop-offs are permitted only with Ship Master approval and if the driver is on the Port's Access List.

12. **What access do passenger shuttles have?**

Shuttles organised by ground handlers retain access to the area just outside the terminal building, as per usual arrangements.

Port Otago Security for Cruise Vessels Only

The introduction of the New Zealand Maritime Security Act 2004 and regulations has placed a number of responsibilities and requirements on all who wish to enter those ports that service international shipping.

The access requirements as applicable to the Port Otago facilities at Port Chalmers and Dunedin for all Cruise Ship Visits are outlined on [Port Otago's website here](#).

APPLICATION FOR SECURITY ACCESS LIST MUST BE RENEWED EACH YEAR STARTING AT THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER.

Local tour operators seeking access to the Cruise Terminal Building must advise the Port Security team (cruise@portotago.co.nz) by:

- 0500 hours on the day of the vessel arrival
- Receipt of the above information outside these times may result in port entry being denied.
- Arrival/departure times for local tour operators – vehicles arriving to pick up passengers at a scheduled departure time should not be earlier than 15 minutes before scheduled time. All operators' vehicles arriving early should wait outside the port area; otherwise, they will be turned away.
- All operators are to depart the Cruise Terminal Building once they have picked up their assigned customers or at their time of agreed departure time.
- All pickups for local tour operators will be from Cruise Terminal Building including when two vessels are berthed at Port Chalmers (unless this changes for specific operational reasons or as directed by security staff).

- Taxis can still park along Beach St or outside on the A Shed apron and wait to be called in to collect passengers from the designated collection point.

As a condition of entry to Port Otago Limited Wharf Areas, your vehicle or any bags you are carrying in may be subjected to a random search by the security staff. Failure to comply with this request by security staff will result in entry being denied.

Active private retailing is not permitted on Port Otago Property.

- Operators without authorization, found retailing within Port Otago property will have their entry rights revoked and trespass orders may be issued.
- All operators must conduct the business for which they have advised Port Security as reason for entry to the Port (such as taxi, tour operator, etc). No changing is permitted from one business operation to another.

Port Otago contact:

Phone: 021 947 984

Email: cruise@portotago.co.nz



Dunedin isite Visitor Centre – Port Chalmers Cruise Terminal

Located inside the Port Otago Cruise Terminal Building, the Dunedin isite Visitor Centre is the first point of contact for many cruise passengers arriving in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Its role is to provide impartial, high-quality advice to help visitors make the most of their time in Dunedin and across Aotearoa New Zealand.

The terminal space offers a vibrant environment where passengers can:

- Explore a wide range of local tour options
- Purchase souvenirs
- Access free Wi-Fi
- Receive expert guidance from trained isite staff



Poster Display Opportunity for Tour Operators

Tour operators have the opportunity to advertise and sell their products through the isite at Port Chalmers via a poster pay-to-display arrangement.

Key Details:

- Display Fee: \$125 (incl. gst) for the season
- Poster Size: A3 portrait orientation
- Requirement: Posters must include “Book Here” and promote tours that are available for sale through the isite
- Support: isite staff can provide tips to help you design an effective poster

Please Note:

Port Otago and the Dunedin isite reserve the right to decline posters for display which are non-compliant for any of the reasons (as outlined in the Terms and Conditions/Agreement). Cancellation of poster display during the season will incur a cancellation fee.

- Poster space is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis
- Only tours bookable through the isite are eligible for display (unless otherwise agreed)
- Non-compliant posters may be declined, and cancellations during the season may incur a fee
- If you have any questions or would like to discuss your poster layout, then please contact:

Izumi Nakamura (Team Leader)

Dunedin isite Visitor Centre

Dunedin City Council, 50 The Octagon, Dunedin.

Phone: 03 474 3300

Email: cruisedunedin@dcc.govt.nz

Customer Service Top Tips

Exceptional customer service is the foundation of a successful tourism business. When you truly listen to your customers and respond with care, you create memorable experiences that encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.

1. **Greet with Warmth**
 - Smile, be sincere, and offer a genuine “*Kia ora*”.
 - First impressions matter - be a proud ambassador for Dunedin.
2. **Know Your City**
 - Be familiar with Dunedin’s attractions, amenities, and layout.
 - Your knowledge helps visitors feel confident and cared for.
3. **Show Pride**
 - Be proud of your city, your product, and your team.
 - Positivity is contagious - share it generously.
4. **Treat Customers as Individuals**
 - Focus on their needs, not just your product.
 - Personalised service builds trust and loyalty.
5. **Engage Early**
 - Acknowledge potential customers with eye contact and a friendly greeting.
 - Don’t wait for them to approach you - be proactive.
6. **Say Yes When You Can**
 - If a customer makes a special request, do your best to accommodate it.
 - Flexibility shows you care and builds goodwill.
7. **Handle Complaints Professionally**
 - Be trained and prepared to manage difficult situations.
 - Listen actively, show empathy, and apologise when needed.
 - Resolve issues quickly and clearly - complaints are opportunities to improve.
8. **Keep Your Promises**
 - Reliability builds trust. Only make promises you can keep.
 - Communicate clearly if plans change.
9. **Be Helpful**
 - Even if there’s no immediate benefit, offer assistance.
 - Visitors remember kindness and helpfulness.
10. **Take the Extra Step**
 - Don’t just point- show. Use maps, walk with them, or offer extra detail.
 - Small gestures make a big impact.

11. **Add a Little Extra**

- A free smile, a helpful tip, or a small token of appreciation goes a long way.
- Think about what makes your service stand out.

12. **Anticipate Needs**

- Understand that most customer needs are emotional.
- Use names, offer sincere compliments, and communicate regularly.
- Make customers feel valued and appreciated.

13. **Ask for Feedback**

- Use short feedback cards or ask directly.
- Listen to what customers liked, what could be improved, and act on it.

14. **Team Culture & Customer Service**

- Treating customers well starts with treating your team well.
- Appreciation and respect within your team culture directly influence how your staff interact with visitors.



Baldwin Street Care Code

Respecting Our Shared Spaces

Help us treasure and protect Dunedin's iconic spaces for everyone to enjoy. Baldwin Street is a unique destination and a residential neighbourhood - please help us care for it.

Respect Our Cultural Heritage

Dunedin City Council land is for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

Please:

- Keep safe – Pedestrians must stay on footpaths. Drivers may not expect people on the road. Always look before crossing.
- Be tidy – Use public rubbish bins.
- Respect private property – Baldwin Street is a residential area. Please be mindful of those who live there.
- Park safely and legally – Avoid blocking road ends, driveways, or private accessways.
- Be considerate – Look after other users and share the space respectfully.
- Use public toilets – Facilities are available at the bottom of Baldwin Street and open 24/7. Find other [Dunedin public toilets here](#).

Report issues such as graffiti or damage to:

Phone: 03 477 4000

Email: dcc@dcc.govt.nz or the [DCC Fix it form here](#).

Let's work together to ensure Dunedin remains welcoming, safe, and beautiful for all.



New Zealand Transport Agency

The New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi maintain and operate the state highway network in Dunedin, and the Dunedin City Council are responsible for the local roading network.

Information about roadworks, incidents, and road closures are loaded onto NZTA's [Journey Planner](#) in real time for the state highway network. You can use this tool to plan your journey and know what delays you can expect. You can also report issues that impact travel, such as crashes or obstructions, on state highways to 0800 4 HIGHWAYS.

NZTA and the DCC work together and with Port Otago to coordinate roadworks and minimise disruption to cruise ships. This includes work by NZTA and DCC as well as other parties who require access to the road such as utilities.

There is an incident management plan that would be activated if an unplanned incident closed State Highway 88 anywhere from the Parry St roundabout to Port Chalmers on a cruise ship day so that passengers would be able to return to the ship. This involves the coordination of emergency services, NZTA, DCC, and Port Otago.

NZTA can help with advice if you want to set up as a tour operator.

New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) monitors the compliance and safety levels of passenger service operators who provide transport for cruise ship customers.

Historically the Agency has carried out several operations at Port Chalmers to ensure that cruise ship customers are provided with a safe experience. Our monitoring includes all types of commercial operators from pre-arranged, pre-booked tours to large buses ferrying people into and out of the city. As new providers emerge, NZTA see the monitoring of transport of cruise ship passengers to be an increasingly important part of the work we carry out with the transport industry.

NZTA staff often work in conjunction with the Police Commercial Vehicle Safety Team (CVST) at Port Chalmers to ensure that the highest standards in passenger transport are maintained. During the upcoming cruise ship season, NZTA and CVST will carry out operations that involve vehicle inspections to ensure all passenger service vehicles are mechanically sound and in a good state of repair. Checks will also be carried out to ensure that all drivers are appropriately licensed and operating within the relevant legislative requirements contained within the Operator Licensing Rule and all requirements of the Work time & Logbooks Rule.

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Inspections of Passenger Service Vehicles would include the following:

- The driver has a current passenger endorsement.
- The driver has the correct driving licence for the vehicle that is being driven (Class 2 for a Bus).
- The vehicle is operated under a relevant Transport Service Licence.
- The vehicle has a current Certificate of Fitness (COF) and Registration (Vehicle Licensing).
- The vehicle has up to date Road User Charges if required.
- The driver has a logbook, and it has been filled out correctly and met all requirements outlined in the Worktime and Logbook Rule 2007.
- The driver has had sufficient rest prior to starting their shift.
- Current Driver Identification Card displayed centrally and visible to all passengers.
- That the vehicle is at COF standard, (that is, have a minimum of 1.5m of tyre tread).

Worn tyres are an example of a vehicle fault which we sometimes identify during our inspections. This is a fault that could easily be eliminated by implementing a daily walk-around inspection prior to arriving at Port Chalmers.

Some additional requirements for Small Passenger Service Vehicles being used for 'taxi' type trips will also be checked, and they include:

- The in-vehicle security cameras are operating and there is signage to advise passengers that a security camera is operating.
- A fare schedule is displayed, or the fare must be negotiated before the start of the trip

- Child safety lock warning sticker is displayed, if applicable.

If any of the above faults are located, consideration will be given to ordering the vehicle off the road to correct the faults before the commencement of duty. Also, the drivers concerned could also be subject to the relevant infringement for the offence.

NZTA and CVST are determined to ensure that the passenger service industry operating from Port Chalmers maintain high standards and deliver excellent service to international visitors to Dunedin.

If you have any additional questions or require clarification on any matters, please don't hesitate to contact the Dunedin office of NZTA situated on the 2nd Floor of the AA Building, 450 Moray Place or phone on 03 951 3009.

NZ Transport Agency

Level 2, AA Centre 450 Moray Place
PO Box 5245, Moray Place Dunedin 9058
Phone: 64 3 951 3009 Fax: 64 3 951 3013
www.nzta.govt.nz



Incident Management

Keeping Visitors Safe and Informed

Cruise days are busy and dynamic, and being prepared helps ensure a smooth experience for everyone. Here are key steps to follow in case of unexpected events:

Cruise Ship Schedule Updates

Stay informed via the official Port Otago schedule:

[Cruise ships | Port Otago](#)

The isite team will email and text any updates promptly after receiving official confirmation of any changes.

Roadworks, Closures & Detours

Check current road conditions using the NZTA Journey Planner:

[Highway conditions | NZTA Journey Planner](#).

If SH88 closes and you're first on the scene:

1. Contact Police immediately.
2. Call 03 474 3300 to notify the isite so they can inform other operators of detour routes (e.g., via Upper Junction Road or SH1).

Health Incidents (e.g., Norovirus)

Ensure your business has a Health and Safety Plan in place to manage illness or outbreaks effectively.

Passenger Accidents or Incidents

Always have a Health and Safety Plan ready and notify Port Otago immediately:

Phone: +64 021 947 984

Email: cruise@portotago.co.nz

Before calling, please gather:

- Passenger's full name
- Cabin number
- Ship name (especially if two ships are in port)
- Summary of injury or first aid required
- Contact person on board (if passenger is unaccompanied)

This helps the ship and agents respond quickly and appropriately.

Reporting Local Issues

If you notice graffiti, damage, or anything needing attention, let the Dunedin City Council know:

via the [DCC Fix it form](#) or email dcc@dcc.govt.nz or 03 477 4000

Your vigilance helps keep Dunedin looking fantastic and welcoming for all visitors.

Helpful Websites

Cruise Calendar and Shuttle Stop Schedule

[Cruise Calendars - Ōtepoti | Dunedin New Zealand official website](#)

Dunedin isite Visitor Information

[Dunedin isite Visitor Centre - Dunedin City Council](#)

Parking Regulations

[Parking regulations - Dunedin City Council](#)

Dunedin's Official Visitor Site

[Visit - Ōtepoti | Dunedin New Zealand official website](#)

Cruise Ship Arrivals

[Cruise ships | Port Otago](#)

New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

[Highway conditions | NZTA Journey Planner](#)

