

# Online trial for Household Travel Survey

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The Ministry of Transport is undertaking a three month trial to see whether using online methods and GPS is more accurate, user-friendly and cost-effective when surveying New Zealanders' day-to-day travel.

The trial will involve 500 households using an online diary to record travel details. Some people taking part in the trial will also use a GPS device or smartphone application to gather information about their travel.

The Household Travel Survey collects information about day-to-day travel in New Zealand to give an overview of travel patterns, and has been running continuously since 2003. The survey is carried out on a rolling basis throughout the year.

Survey participants currently fill out a paper diary detailing two days worth of travel and are visited twice by an interviewer. As part of the trial, participants will instead complete an online diary for five consecutive days a month, for three months.

"The information collected online and by the GPS device or app is the same information we have been collecting manually for the past ten years," Ministry of Transport Deputy Chief Executive Andrew Jackson says.

"The trial will help us assess whether new technology can make the survey easier and more convenient for participants and give us better information at a lower cost."

Information gained from the Household Travel Survey helps planners understand how transport systems are working, and is used to guide decisions about New Zealand's transport network, including roads, cycle and walkways, as well as public transport. It is also used to help develop road safety policy.

Participants for the online trial have been chosen from a pool of people who have either already completed the travel survey, or who belong to the online community SmileCity.

Currently 4,000 households complete the household travel survey annually.

"If the online trial proves successful, it may mean that we can survey more participants for longer, for less cost. A larger sample size and more travel information will increase the quality of the data gathered," Mr Jackson says.

“In addition to this, a web-based survey allows the Ministry to add questions on a variety of transport topics that can be used to help inform policy advice and make it more responsive to the public’s views.”

Information gathered as part of the trial will only be used to assess the viability of the online methods. Until the results of the trial have been assessed, the Household Travel Survey will continue to be carried out using the traditional approach.

In both the survey and the trial, privacy, security, and confidentiality of information are paramount. Results will be reported at an aggregate level only, with no information that can identify any individual or household.