

NEW ZEALAND POSTAL NOTES WITH SURCHARGED COMMISSION – DECIMAL ISSUES

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Recent publication of the catalogue, *New Zealand Postal Notes 1886-1986*, included mention of locally surcharged decimal issues, but did not attempt to list them individually. After examining a modest sample of surcharged issues, it is now possible to provide a beginning listing. Perhaps other members can add to the census.

Several things should be noted. Decimal issues were introduced in July 1967, when New Zealand converted to decimal currency. All Postal Notes were withdrawn from circulation on 31st July 1986. During the 20-year period of use of decimal postal notes, five basic “face-different” designs were issued, and three of them had “sub-types” showing minor changes in text or printed commission. Commission increases were instituted in 1971, 1976, 1978, and 1986. This information, plus catalogue numbers and all other basic information, are from the catalogue mentioned above.

Table 1 shows commission rates throughout the lifespan of decimal issues. Note that commission on 10c-40c postal notes did not change in January 1971, and thus no surcharges on those items were needed. Likewise, the commission on the \$3.00 postal note did not increase in January 1978, so no 1978 surcharge should be found on that denomination. The majority of denominations were withdrawn on 31 May 1979, leaving only the 10c, 50c, \$1, \$2, \$3, \$4 and \$5 available. Thus, in February 1986, surcharges were applied only to those seven remaining denominations.

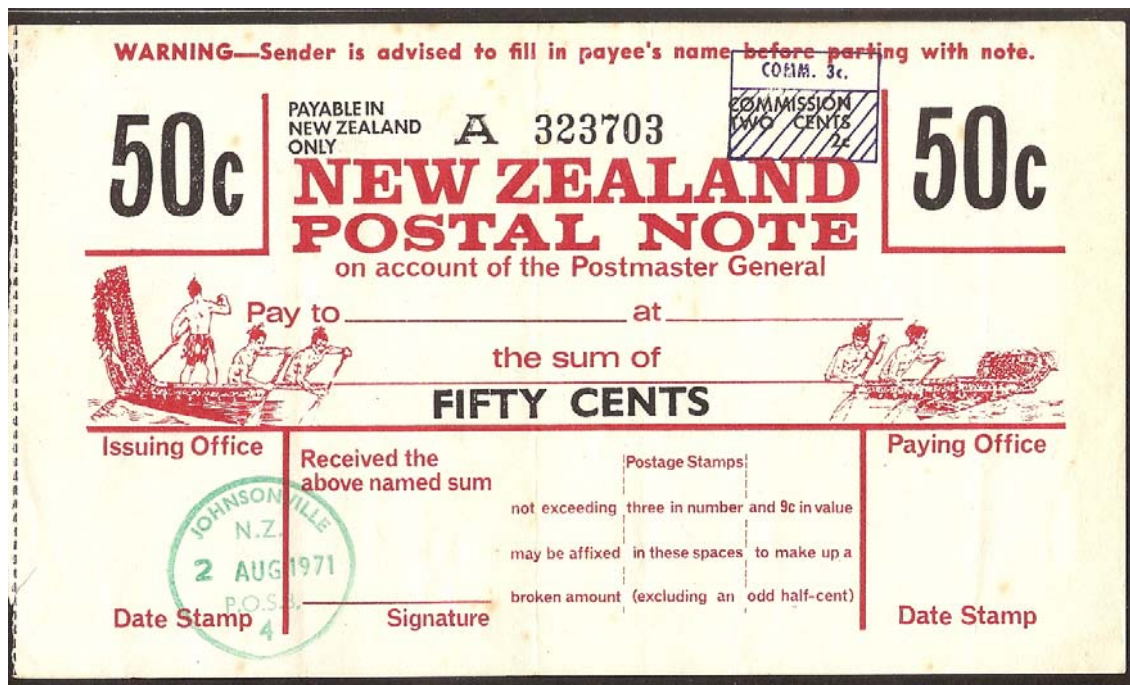
Table 1. Decimal Issue Commission Rates.

| <u>Denomination</u> | <u>July 1967</u> | <u>Jan 1971</u> | <u>Jan 1976</u> | <u>Jan 1978</u> | <u>Feb 1986</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 10c | 2c | 2c | 4c | 6c | 25c |
| 20c, 25c, 30c, 40c | 2c | 2c | 4c | 6c | withdrawn |
| 50c | 2c | 3c | 6c | 8c | 25c |
| 60c, 70c, 75c | 2c | 3c | 6c | 8c | withdrawn |
| 80c, 90c | 3c | 4c | 8c | 10c | withdrawn |
| \$1.00 | 3c | 4c | 8c | 10c | 25c |
| \$1.10, 1.20, 1.30, 1.40, 1.50 | 3c | 4c | 8c | 10c | withdrawn |
| \$1.60, 1.70, 1.80, 1.90 | 4c | 5c | 10c | 12c | withdrawn |
| \$2.00 | 4c | 5c | 10c | 12c | 25c |
| \$3.00 | 4c | 5c | 12c | 12c | 25c |
| \$4.00, 5.00 | 5c | 6c | 12c | 14c | 25c |

It appears that post office headquarters supplied virtually identical rubber handstamping devices to most post offices when commission rates changed. These handstamps were used to apply the new commission rate and obliterate the previous rate on Postal Notes held in inventory at each office. Because most surcharges can be found in a wide variety of colours, and most handstamps are identical in size and makeup, and can be found on items issued by very small post offices, they apparently were supplied to post offices from a single source. Even though no records have been located confirming the source, it is likely to have been post office headquarters or their contractor.

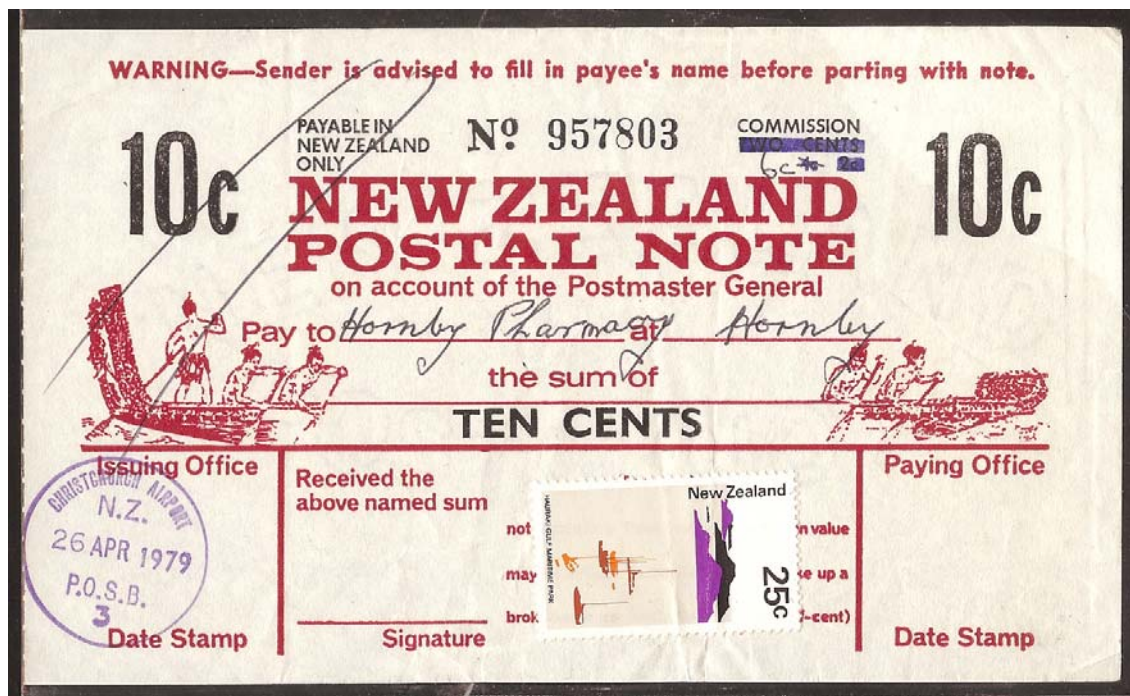
Four different handstamp types have been identified, designated Types A, B, C and D, for this article. Manuscript surcharges applied in ink are frequently seen, but are not part of this discussion.

The Type A handstamp, applied to the Postal Note at the top of the next page, is a rectangular box, approximately 22 x 16 mm. The top one-third of the box contains the wording COMM. 3c. (or the appropriate amount). The bottom two-thirds of the box consists of diagonal lines intended to obliterate the previous commission amount. Type A was evidently used only for the 1971 commission increase.



Type A surcharge in purple on PN9-6, reflecting the 1971 commission increase.

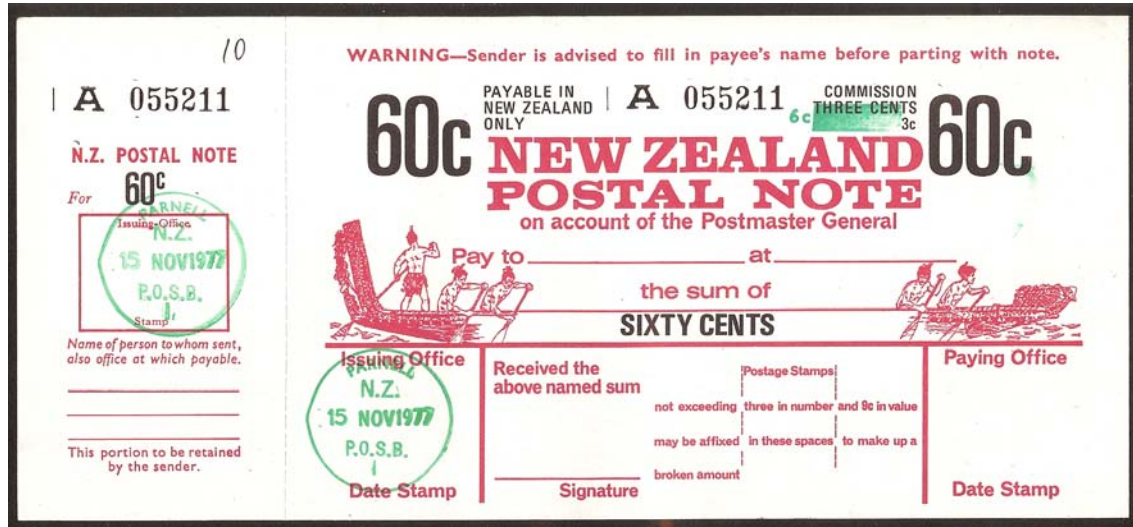
To date, only a single example of the Type B surcharge has been reported. This handstamp consists of two horizontal bars, with the new commission (4c) to the left of the lower bar. The upper bar, 19 x 2 mm, obliterates the commission amount in words (TWO CENTS in the item pictured below). The lower bar, 4 x 2 mm, obliterates the commission amount in numbers (2c in this case). This type is known only for the 1976 commission increase. Whether it was prepared locally, or prepared for use by more than one post office, is not known.



Type B surcharge in purple on PN11-1, reflecting the 1976 commission increase, issued Christchurch Airport, 26 APR 1979. The surcharge has been amended in manuscript for the 1978 increase.

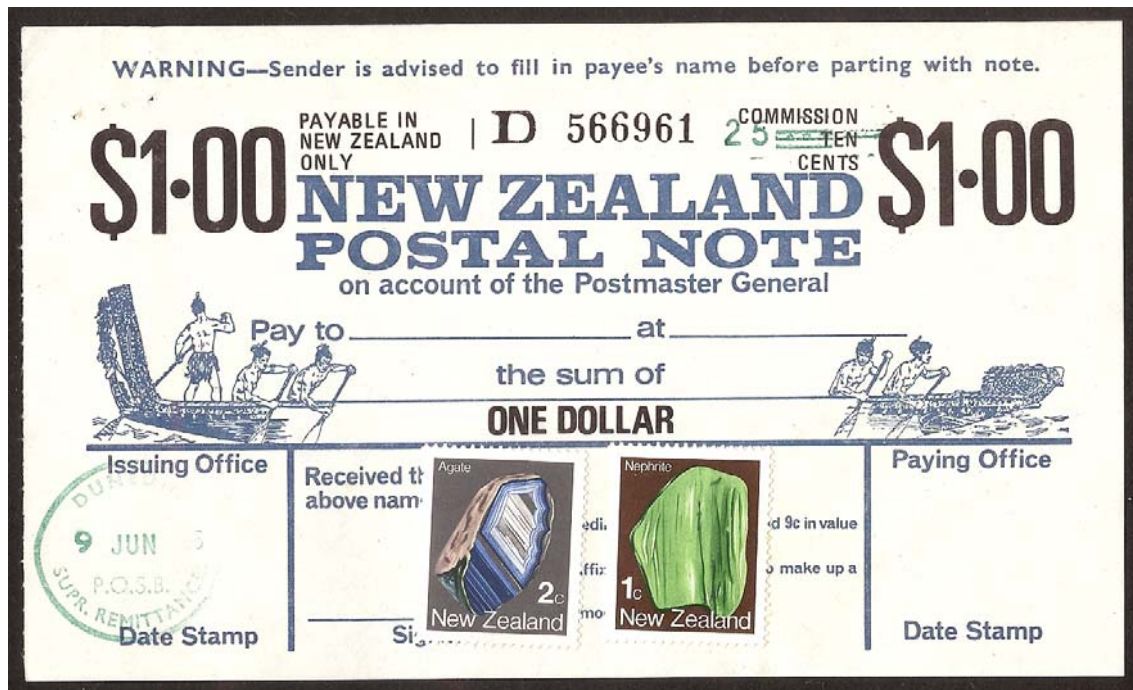
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The Type C handstamp, on the Postal Note shown below, consists of a solid bar, approximately 17 x 5 mm, with the new commission amount to its left. Note that the solid bar obliterates only the amount, leaving the word COMMISSION visible above the bar. Type C handstamps were provided for both the 1976 and 1978 commission increases, differing only in the amount shown in cents.



Type C surcharge in green on PN11A-7, reflecting the 1976 commission increase.

The Type D handstamp, on the Postal Note below, consists of the numbers “25” to the left of three thin bars. The bars are intended to obliterate the number only, leaving the words COMMISSION and CENTS visible.



Type D surcharge in green on PN12A-3, reflecting the 1986 commission increase.

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Commission surcharges have been observed on six of the eight decimal types and sub-types, and should exist on all eight. Several examples exist with two surcharges, indicating they remained in the drawer of a post office for at least several years, long enough to have been on hand at the time of two commission increases. *Table 2* describes known surcharges by Postal Note type.

Table 2. Surcharges on each Postal Note Type.

Type 8 – Initial decimal issue, with bold frame line around entire note.

Issue date: July 1967

Latest observed date of issue: 10 September 1971

Date of withdrawal from sale: late 1977

Surcharges recorded: Type A

Comments: Type B or C surcharges (for the 1976 commission increase) are possible, but considered highly unlikely. Most Type 8 Postal Notes had been sold prior to the 1976 increase.

Type 9 – Bold outer frame line removed, partially boxed value tablets.

Issue date: 1970

Latest observed date of issue: 11 May 1976

Date of withdrawal from sale: late 1977

Surcharges recorded: Type A

Comments: Type B or C surcharges (for the 1976 commission increase) are possible, but considered unlikely.

Type 10 – Thin value tablet numerals, no boxes around value tablets.

Issued: 1971

Latest observed date of issue: 18 November 1977

Date of withdrawal from sale: late 1977

Surcharges recorded: None

Comments: Type B or C surcharges (for the 1976 commission increase) should exist, as Type 10 Postal Notes remained in inventory at many post offices in early 1976.

Type 10A – Same as Type 10, except “(excluding the odd half-cent)” deleted from stamp box.

Issued: September 1973

Latest observed date of issue: 26 April 1977

Date of withdrawal from sale: late 1977

Surcharges recorded: None

Comments: As is the case with Type 10 Postal Notes, Type B or C surcharges (for the 1976 commission increase) should exist.

Type 11 – Thick numerals, commission in words and numbers, “odd half-cent” in stamp box.

Issued: 1971

Latest observed date of issue: 29 October 1983

Date of withdrawal from sale: 31 July 1986 for 10c, 50c, \$1, \$2, \$3, \$4 and \$5, 31 May 1979 for all other denominations.

Surcharges recorded: Type C (1976 commission increase) and Type C (1978 commission increase).

Comments: Examples of Type 11 Postal Notes exist with Type C (1976) only, and with Type C (1978) only, and with both Type C (1976) and Type C (1978) on the same note (*i.e.*, two surcharges).

Type 11A – same as Type 11, but “odd half-cent” deleted from stamp box.

Issued: September 1973

Latest observed date of issue: 15 November 1977

Date of withdrawal from sale: same as Type 11

Surcharges recorded: Type C (1976 commission increase) only.

Comments: Type 11A should exist with Type C (1978) surcharge, and with two surcharges, in the same manner as Type 11.

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Type 12 – Thick numerals in value tablets, commission in words only.

Issued: 1976

Latest observed date of issue: 31 July 1986

Date of withdrawal from sale: 31 July 1986

Surcharges recorded: Type C (1978 commission increase).

Comments: The \$3 denomination should exist with Type D surcharge only. All other denominations may exist with either Type C or Type D surcharges, or both.

Type 12A – Same as Type 12, but with revised commission.

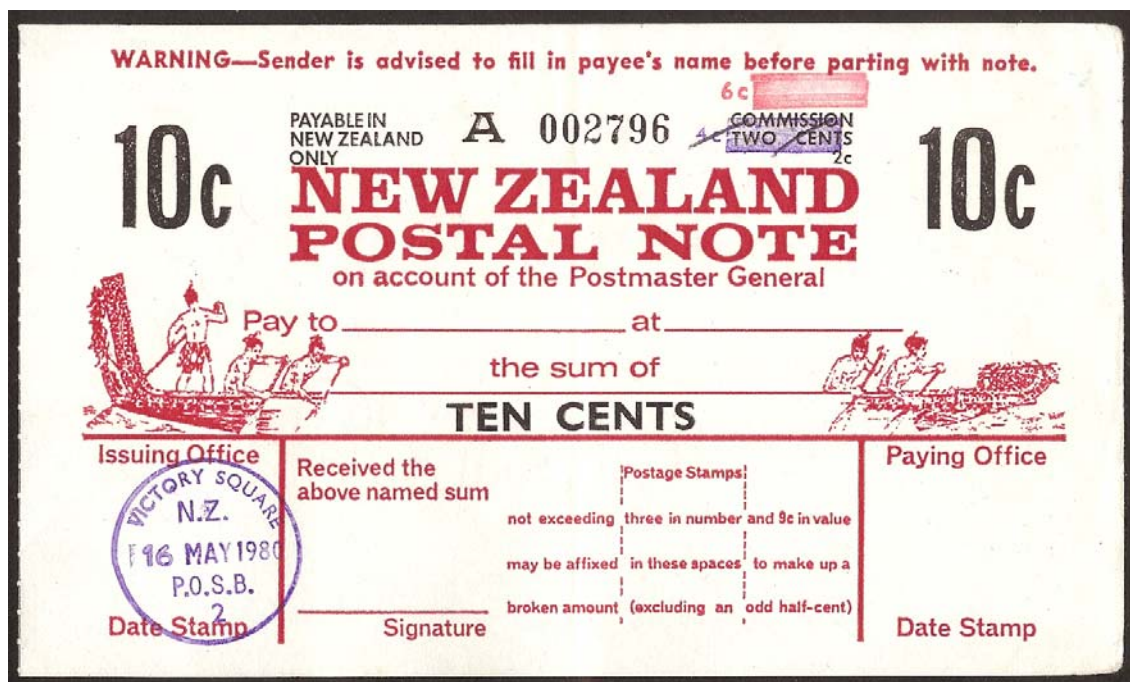
Issued: 1979

Latest observed date of issue: 4 August 1986

Date of withdrawal from sale: 31 July 1986

Surcharges recorded: Type D only.

Comments: Type 12A was issued after the 1978 commission increase, and can be found only with Type D surcharge.



Two Type C surcharges on PN11-1, 4c violet reflecting the 1976 commission increase, and 6c red, reflecting the 1978 commission increase.

The current census (Table 3, on the next page) of surcharged decimal postal notes contains 22 items. There are undoubtedly many more which can be added. Even from this small sample, a number of observations are possible.

- It is evident that identical handstamping devices were provided to many, and perhaps all, post offices that handled Postal Notes.
- No examples of Postal Notes Type 10 or 10A are recorded with surcharges. However, since those types are known to survive with issue dates beyond the January 1976 commission increase date, it seems likely they exist with surcharges.
- The fact that some Postal Notes received more than one surcharge indicates some denominations saw little use, as they must have remained in inventory for at least several years. At this time, only 10c Postal Notes have been observed with two surcharges, but others probably exist.

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- The large number of surviving 10c denomination Postal Notes (12 of the 22 in the census) may be at least partially attributable to “town-cancel” collectors. There are a significant number of collectors in New Zealand who seek an example of the post office cancel from each existing post office. A 10c Postal Note is an inexpensive way to obtain such markings. In addition, a Postal Note provides two examples of the cancel (one on the note itself, and one on the counterfoil), and typically receives nice clear markings. Postal Notes also are frequently purchased to obtain “commemorative” cancels such as the 3rd Asia/Pacific Jamboree marking on one of the items in the census.

If you can add to the census of surcharged Postal Notes, please contact Jack Harwood (address inside front cover). A scan or photocopy of your item(s) would be preferred. Assuming additional information is received, an updated census will be presented in a future issue of *Postal Order News*.

Table 3. Census of Commission Surcharges on Decimal Issues

| <u>Catalogue no.</u> | <u>Denomination</u> | <u>Surcharge</u> | <u>Colour</u> | <u>Issuing Office</u> | <u>Issue Date</u> |
|---|---------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Surcharge Type A (1971 commission increase)</u> | | | | | |
| PN8-17 | \$1.50 | 4c | purple | Otautau | Sept 1971 |
| PN9-6 | 50c | 3c | purple | Johnsonville | Aug 1971 |
| PN9-12 | \$1.00 | 4c | red | Auckland | Feb 1971 |
| <u>Surcharge Type B (1976 commission increase)</u> | | | | | |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c | purple | Christchurch Airport | Apr 1979 |
| <u>Surcharge Type C (1976 commission increase)</u> | | | | | |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c | green | Rai Valley | Jan 1980 |
| PN11A-7 | 60c | 6c | green | Parnell | Nov 1977 |
| PN11A-25 | \$5.00 | 12c | blue | Avalon | Aug 1976 |
| <u>Surcharge Type C (Items with two surcharges, reflecting 1976 and 1978 increases)</u> | | | | | |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c/6c | blue/violet | 3 rd Asia/Pacific Jamboree | Jan 78 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c/6c | blue/violet | Karamea | Jan 1980 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c/6c | blue/red | Port Nelson | May 1980 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 4c/6c | violet/red | Victory Square | May 1980 |
| <u>Surcharge Type C (1978 commission increase)</u> | | | | | |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 6c | blue | Stoke | Dec 1979 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 6c | red | Richmond | Jan 1980 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 6c | violet | Westport | Jan 1980 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 6c | green | Lyll Bay | July 1980 |
| PN11-1 | 10c | 6c | grey-blue | Pukeuri Junction | Jan 1982 |
| PN12-4 | 30c | 6c | violet | Auckland | Jan 1978 |
| PN12-5 | 40c | 6c | green | Auckland | Nov 1977 |
| PN12-6 | 50c | 8c | green | Auckland | Nov 1977 |
| PN12-20 | \$1.80 | 12c | green | New Plymouth | May 1978 |
| <u>Surcharge Type D (1986 commission increase)</u> | | | | | |
| PN12A-1 | 10c | 25c | violet | Christchurch | July 1986 |
| PN12A-3 | \$1.00 | 25c | green | Dunedin | June 1986 |

Note: Catalogue numbers in this table and elsewhere in this article are from *New Zealand Postal Notes 1886-1986*, 2010 edition.

