

National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual

VERSION 3.1

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1. Application

The National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual (NHVIM) has been revised by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) as part of its task to develop and introduce a single national approach to ensuring heavy vehicle roadworthiness. The NHVIM applies to all vehicles that have a gross vehicle mass (GVM) or aggregate trailer mass (ATM) greater than 4.5 tonnes.

It provides consistent criteria for when a vehicle should fail a heavy vehicle inspection and therefore be considered defective. The NHVIM details practical information about wear, damage or change to important systems regarding vehicle in-service inspections for owners, operators and administrators in each state and territory.

For a vehicle to be considered roadworthy it must comply with the Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation (known as Vehicle Standards), and the Australian Design Rules (ADRs) relevant to the manufacture date of the vehicle. These contain mandatory requirements for the safe design, construction and maintenance of vehicles and for the control of emissions and noise. Relevant legislation as applicable in each jurisdiction should also be checked for requirements (e.g. specific regulations for passenger transport vehicles).

When using the NHVIM, the following principles are relevant:

Equipment required by the Vehicle Standards or ADRs to be part of a vehicle must be present and work properly.

Equipment that is essential for compulsory components to function, the safe operation of a vehicle, or the control of its emissions, must be kept in good condition.

Equipment that is not required by the Vehicle Standards and has no direct effect on the vehicle's safe operation or the control of its emissions does not have to function, as long as it does not interfere with compulsory equipment that is required

Manufacturers' recommendations relevant to the safety of particular vehicle parts or to the control of emissions must be considered

Test methods or other conditions have not been specified except where they are necessary to determine whether criteria are met.

Examiners will utilise their qualifications and experience in vehicle repairs and maintenance and refer to any relevant information regarding vehicle manufacturer's specifications to ensure that the vehicle meets the requirements of the Vehicle Standards or ADRs.

Relevant ADRs are noted at the beginning of each section of the NHVIM. Some of the ADRs may have been repealed or updated since publication of the NHVIM, however, depending on the age of the vehicle being inspected, the ADR or aspects of the ADR may still be applicable. All relevant documents should be consulted for a complete list of the requirements.

Introduction

Some inspection processes and standards apply only to certain heavy vehicles. Similarly, a heavy vehicle may have been exempted from a Vehicle Standard, dimension or ADR¹.

An ADR, Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation or Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation developed after publication of the NHVIM may allow a variation or exemption.

There are some common vehicle types which are often provided exemptions from Vehicle Standards, dimensions or ADRs. Where such vehicles do not meet a standard, an exemption will be provided. Examples of these vehicles and their exemption types are provided in the table below.

Vehicle type	Typical Exemptions	Exemption tool
SPV	Dimensions, Axle groups and axle spacing	VS Exemption permit, Notice, IPA Schedule 5 exemption, RAV* Specified Non-Compliance (Non-Standard Vehicle Type Approval or Concessional RAV entry)
PBS vehicle	Dimensions, Axle groups and axle spacing	PBS Vehicle Approval, VS Exemption permit, IPA Schedule 5 exemption, RAV Specified Non-Compliance (Non-Standard Vehicle Type Approval or Concessional RAV entry)
Modified vehicle	Any areas of non-compliance	VS Exemption permit, RAV Second Stage of Manufacture
Oversize vehicles	Dimensions	VS Exemption permit, IPA Schedule 5 exemption, RAV Specified Non-Compliance (Non-Standard Vehicle Type Approval or Concessional RAV entry)
*Register of Approved Vehicles		

2. Purpose

The purpose of the NHVIM is to provide authorised officers (including safety compliance officers and police), approved vehicle examiners (AVEs) and other vehicle inspectors with a nationally consistent set of failure criteria to be applied when conducting a heavy vehicle inspection. It also provides vehicle operators with an easy to follow set of requirements to know when a vehicle is considered defective.

3. Scope

The NHVIM will provide guidance to Authorised Officers, AVEs and other vehicle inspectors on the national failure criteria for heavy vehicle roadworthiness.

The NHVIM is intended to apply to in-service heavy vehicles. Where heavy vehicles have been modified, Authorised Officers and AVEs will need to assess the vehicle against whatever approvals have been issued for the heavy vehicle in question. These may be in the form of an engineer's report, a Vehicle Standards exemption, a second stage manufacturer identification plate or a modification plate or label which signifies that the modifications have been carried out to an accepted standard.

The NHVIM will be supplemented by administrative processes and procedures.

As vehicle technologies are forever evolving it isn't possible to include all of them in the HVIM. However, the NHVR constantly observes these developing technologies and include them on our forward work program for consideration in future revisions to the NHVIM.

For the present, if systems are included on a vehicle but a failure criterion has not yet been included in the NHVIM authorised officers and AVEs are requested to refer to the original manufacturer specifications.

It is important to note that the Vehicle Standards, including the ADRs and the original heavy vehicle manufacturer's specifications take precedence over the requirements of the NHVIM.

4. Objectives

The use of the same failure criteria in all jurisdictions for heavy vehicle inspections will ensure a more consistent approach to the management and detection of vehicles which are unsafe.

As a general rule the application of consistent failure criteria will prevent duplication of effort within and between jurisdictions and through mutual recognition lead to a more efficient transfer of heavy vehicles between states and territories.

5. Consultation

The failure criteria set out in the NHVIM reflect current consultation with road user groups, road transport authorities, police agencies, manufacturers and suppliers. The NHVR seeks to continually update and improve the NHVIM. Contributions and feedback may be made by sending an email to vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au