

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) coordinates the access of heavy vehicles to ensure a safe, efficient and sustainable road network for industry and other road users. The NHVR is not a road owner; we liaise directly with more than 400 Road Managers – including state and territory road authorities and local government – to facilitate access between heavy vehicle operators and the Road Managers. Road funding and maintenance responsibilities belong to local, state and territory governments.

How do heavy vehicles access the road network?

Heavy vehicles fall into two categories: General Access Vehicles and Restricted Access Vehicles.

- General Access Vehicles comply with mass and dimension requirements and do not require an exemption to operate on the road network. These vehicles have general access to the road network unless a road or infrastructure, for example a bridge, is sign-posted otherwise.
- Restricted Access Vehicles are Class 1, 2 or 3 vehicles that operate under an exemption, and vehicles operating under Higher Mass Limits (HML), which may only access an approved road network if complying with a relevant instrument of exemption or authorisation such as a permit or gazette notice.

National harmonisation program

The NHVR has put substantial effort into harmonising and amalgamating existing notices, permits, guidelines and policy instruments into new national notices to reduce state based policy conditions. For some vehicle types and trips this will negate the need to apply for permits.

Working with industry, the NHVR has facilitated harmonisation of Special Purpose Vehicles, PBS Truck and Dog and OSOM notices that is estimated to remove more than 30,000 consents a year.

Notices currently being developed are Agricultural, B-double, Road Train and HML vehicles.

With over 400 Road Managers, achieving harmonisation is a complicated task but one that the NHVR is focused on achieving to provide productivity improvements for industry.

Contact us

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Understanding heavy vehicle road access



What are the different classes of Restricted Access Vehicles?

The Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) provides for three classes of heavy vehicle as a means of managing the access requirements of different vehicle types.

- **Class 1** heavy vehicles include vehicles such as oversize and/or overmass (OSOM) vehicles, agricultural vehicles and agricultural combinations, vehicles with the ability to carry a large indivisible item and special purpose vehicles (SPV).
- **Class 2** heavy vehicles include B-doubles, road trains, long buses, Performance Based Standard (PBS) vehicles and some livestock and vehicle carriers that exceed prescribed heights by construction.
- **Class 3** heavy vehicles include vehicles that exceed prescribed limits within the Heavy Vehicle Mass, Dimension and Loading National Regulation requirements and are not Class 1 heavy vehicles.
- Vehicles that operate under higher mass limits (HML) or concessional mass limits (CML) are, under the HVNL, operating within prescribed mass requirements. For example, a B-double operating under HML is a Class 2 heavy vehicle unless it exceeds another prescribed mass requirement or dimension requirement.



The Road Manager's role

Road Managers are responsible for granting heavy vehicle access to their road networks under the HVNL. They must determine if the use of certain heavy vehicles is safe, will cause damage to road infrastructure or have adverse impacts on the communities involved.

For example, a Road Manager may require a route or structural assessment on a bridge to ensure it is safe for heavy vehicle access before it approves that access.

The NHVR liaises with Road Managers to seek consent to use a restricted access vehicle on its roads on behalf of the operator. Once a Road Manager has reviewed the application and given approval (with or without conditions), the NHVR can finalise the outcome and issue the permit.

Improving heavy vehicle road access

Pre-approved and gazetted routes

The Road Manager for the 'first and last mile' of most routes is often a local government. The NHVR is working extensively with local government Road Managers to expand the number of pre-approved and gazetted routes to streamline processes and improve access to the road network.

The pre-approval and gazettal process targets routes expected to experience large numbers of (particularly OSOM) vehicle movements such as roads in industrial areas and access routes connecting existing approved routes or state and territory controlled roads.

Pre-approved routes mean when the NHVR receives a permit application for movement on one of these routes, the NHVR can issue a permit as the route is already pre-approved.

For example, in March 2018 the NHVR, along with the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and City of Port Adelaide-Enfield, worked together to pre-approve 33 additional roads across Adelaide's northern and western suburbs to slash permit application times and allow the continued safe movement of heavy vehicles up to 30 metres in length. This area is one of South Australia's major freight hubs and the initiative will deliver greater efficiency and productivity for South Australia's OSOM industry.

