

Vehicle Standards Guide 19 (VSG-19)

Vehicle warning signs

Revised December 2020

This guide provides advice to heavy vehicle owners and operators about the requirements and specifications for vehicle warning signs for combinations longer than 22m.

Background

Heavy vehicle combinations that are longer than 22m are required to display warning signs. The purpose of these signs is to advise other road users that the combination is longer than they may be aware. This information allows other drivers to adjust their behaviour, for example by allowing more time when overtaking.

Amendments to the *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation* (the National Regulation), were introduced in July 2018, which allowed warning signs to be made from flexible material.

This review highlighted the complex requirements surrounding which vehicles require a warning sign. From 10 December 2019 further amendments to the National Regulation have been made that simplify these requirements.

The changes meant that some vehicles that could previously use either long vehicle or road train signs would now be required to use one or the other. To accommodate this change, the NHVR implemented a transitional period of two years.

That transition period ended on 9 December 2021.

Previous requirements

Prior to the amendments made in 2019, the requirements for fitting warning signs were as described below.

Warning signs for combinations longer than 22m

- (1) The following combinations must display a road train warning sign at their front and rear—
 - (a) a combination longer than 36.5m;
 - (b) a road train longer than 30m that includes 1 or more dog trailers.
- (2) The following combinations must display a road train warning sign at their front and rear, or a long vehicle warning sign at the rear—
 - (a) a road train longer than 22m, but not longer than 30m, that includes 1 or more dog trailers;
 - (b) a road train longer than 22m, but not longer than 36.5m, that does not include a dog trailer.

- (3) A combination, other than a road train, longer than 22m, but not longer than 36.5m, must display a long vehicle warning sign at its rear.

Current requirements

The National Regulation was updated in 2019 and now states:

Warning signs for combinations longer than 22m

- (1) A combination longer than 22m, but not longer than 30m, must display a long vehicle warning sign at its rear.
- (2) A combination longer than 30m must display a road train warning sign at its front and rear.

This means that regardless of the types of trailers in the combination, other road users can readily identify the length of the vehicle. These requirements are summarised in Table 1

Table 1: Warning sign requirements

Vehicle length	Warning Sign	
	Long vehicle	Road train
22-30m long	✓	
Over 30m long		✓

Road Rules, speed limits, and road access.

The changes to the warning signs do not impact other road rules such as speed limits or access requirements.

Speed limits for larger vehicles such as B-doubles and road trains are set by the local road rules. These limits are determined by the configuration and not the length alone.

B-double and road train combinations continue to be restricted access vehicles which means they must obtain a specific authority to access the road network e.g., Access notice, Permit or PBS approval.

Vehicles operating under a specific authority must comply with all conditions detailed in the authority.

Specifications for warning signs

There are very specific requirements for warning signs that include their size, colour and fonts. These requirements have not changed and operators will be able to continue using their existing signs.

Table 3 details the specifications for warning signs and appendix 1 provides examples. Installing and fitting warning signs

There are some basic requirements that must be met when positioning a warning sign on a vehicle:

- for a vehicle that requires road train warning signs, a warning sign must be affixed to the front and the rear of the combination
- for a vehicle that requires a long vehicle warning sign, a warning sign must be affixed to the rear of the combination
- the sign is displayed so that the entire sign is visible
- be maintained so that it can be easily read by other road users
- be affixed or attached to the vehicle so that it does not furl, fold up, flap or warp under any operating condition
- the bottom edge of the sign must be at least 500mm above the ground
- the top edge of the sign must not be more than 1.8m above the ground
- the sign must be installed horizontally
- if a two-part sign is used:
 - for a long vehicle warning sign, the part on the left must show the word 'LONG' and the part on the right must show the word 'VEHICLE'
 - for a road train warning sign, the part on the left must show the word 'ROAD' and the part on the right must show the word 'TRAIN'
 - both parts of the sign must be installed at the same height above the ground.

Table 3: Long vehicle and road train warning sign specifications

Material	Suitable for the intended use on the vehicle
Reflective	A yellow surface complying with Class 400 (previously known as class 1) or class 2 specification of Australian Standard 1906 <i>Retroreflective Materials and Devices for Road Traffic Control Purposes</i>
Dimensions (minimum)	1020mm long 250mm high
Wording	Letters must be a minimum of 180mm high Black capital letters in typeface Series B(N) complying with AS 1744 <i>Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs</i>

Border

Around outside of sign

Note: a sign in two parts can have, but does not require, a border between the two parts.

Chain of Responsibility

Under the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) laws, relevant parties in the transport supply chain have a duty to ensure the safety of their transport activities.

Parties in the chain have an obligation to eliminate or minimise potential harm or loss (risk) by doing all that is reasonably practicable in their business to ensure safety.

Complying with the Heavy Vehicle National Law

The operator of a heavy vehicle must ensure their vehicle complies with the *Australian Design Rules (ADRs)* and *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation*. Using or permitting another person to use a defective heavy vehicle on a road is an offence.

A defective heavy vehicle is a vehicle that:

- does not comply with the heavy vehicle safety standards; or
- has a part that does not perform its intended function; or
- has deteriorated to an extent that it cannot be reasonably relied on to perform its intended function.

Penalties can include on-the-spot fines or prosecution. Formal warnings or a defect notice may also be issued. For more information see the Heavy vehicle defects—Compliance and enforcement bulletin at www.nhvr.gov.au/ce-bulletins.

For more information:

Subscribe: www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe
 Visit: www.nhvr.gov.au/hvmodifications
 Phone: 1300 MYNHVR* (1300 696 487)
 Email: vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au

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VSG19 Revision history

First Published	Dec 2017	
Revised	June 2018	Minor amendment
Revised	Nov 2019	Major review
Revised	Nov 2019	Minor amendment
Revised	January 2020	Minor amendment
Revised	December 2021	Major amendment

Appendix 1: Warning sign specifications

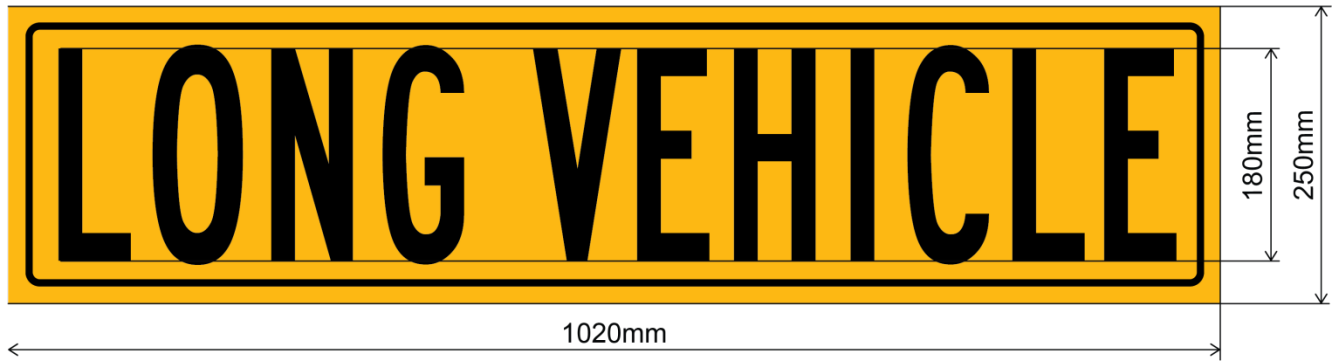


Figure 1: Long vehicle warning signs

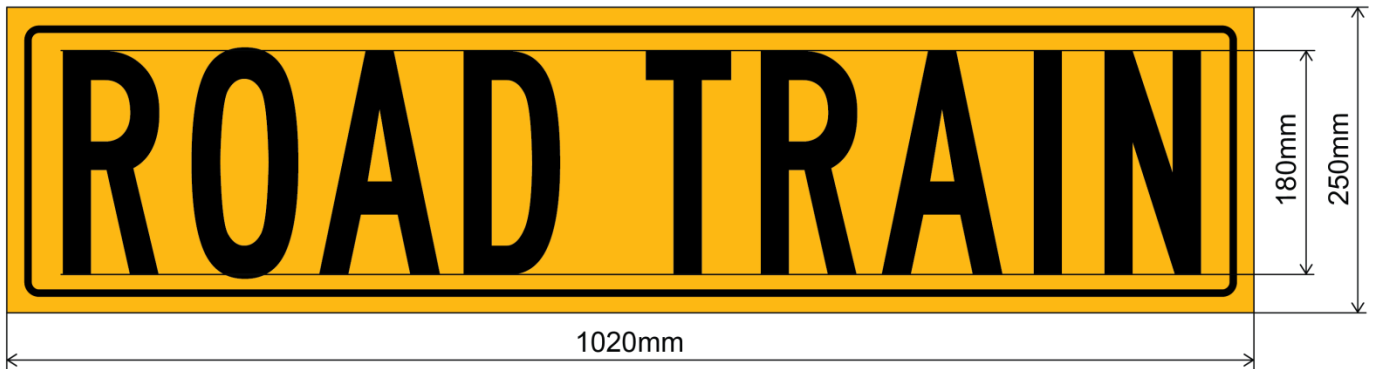


Figure 2: Road train warning signs