

## Vehicle Standards Guide 23 (VSG-23)

### 26 metre B-double Car Carriers

This document provides advice to the heavy vehicle industry about changes that will be made to the requirements for a combination that is a B-double and is fitted with two decks for carrying vehicles.

#### Introduction

The *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* (the Regulation) states the maximum length for a B-double combination.

25 metre B-double car carriers are permitted to have a car carrying frame fitted above the prime mover's cabin, however, prime movers used in B-double combinations that measured 26 metres were not previously permitted to have an area built to carry goods.

Recent amendments to the Regulation allow a prime mover in a 26 metre B-double combination that is carrying, or built to carry, other vehicles to have a deck fitted over the top of the prime mover.

#### B-double prime mover requirements

Not all B-double rated prime movers can be used in a 26 metre B-double combination. The Regulation requires the prime mover to be fitted with:

- a front underrun protection device that complies with UN ECE Regulation No. 93 or ADR 84–Front Underrun Impact Protection
- a cabin that complies with UN ECE Regulation No. 29

These requirements will continue to apply to vehicles used as car carriers.

**Note:** A prime mover used in a 26 metre B-double combination and is not a car carrier, must continue to comply with the requirement to not have an area carrying, or built to carry, goods.

#### Steer axle limits

A deck fitted to the top of the prime mover combined with the load must not cause the prime mover to exceed regulated steer axle limits.

The steer axle limit on vehicles used in a B-double combination is 6t, unless the vehicle is a complying steer axle vehicle.

The axle mass limit on a complying steer axle vehicle is 6.5t.

A complying steer axle vehicle that has all of the following:

- an engine complying with the emission control requirements contained in ADR 80/01 (Euro IV engine) or a later version of ADR 80
- appropriately rated tyres, axle and suspension to permit 6.5t on the steer axle
- a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 15t or more.

#### Approved modifications

Where a prime mover is modified so as to accommodate a deck designed for the carrying of cars above the cabin, the modifications must be carried out in line with manufacturers specifications or VSB6.

A car carrying frame fitted to a prime mover is considered to be a body and may be assessed and certified by an appropriately accredited Approved Vehicle Examiner (AVE) under VSB6 Modification Code J1.

**Note:** The AVE must ensure as part of the certification that the mass that the frame and the load it will carry will impose on the vehicle's steer axle will not exceed regulatory limits.

When fitting a car carrying frame, there are a number of other matters that must be considered, including:

- any modifications to the vehicle's cabin must be assessed and certified under Section K Cabin of VSB6, including the impact on compliance with UN ECE Regulation No. 29
- any modifications to the chassis, such as the drilling of additional mounting holes for the frame or the fitting of additional or alternate cross members must be assessed and certified under Section H Chassis of VSB6
- the vehicle, as modified, must be assessed for ongoing compliance with the requirements for front underrun protection.

## Complying with the national heavy vehicle safety standards

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](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/ce-bulletins)

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