

Vehicle Standard Guide (VSG) 29

Rear Marking Plates and Do Not Overtake Turning Vehicle signs

This guide provides information for operators and owners of heavy vehicles about the retroreflective requirements of rear marking plates and do not overtake turning vehicle (DNOTV) signs.

Background

The *Heavy Vehicle National Law* requires the rear of certain heavy vehicles to be fitted with retroreflective markings to improve their visibility. One way this can be achieved is by fitting Rear Marking Plates, which have been made to comply with Australian Standard (AS) 4001 *Vehicles - Rear marker plates - Reflective rear marker plates*.

A review of AS4001 was completed in 2017 and found that Class 2 plates do not perform as well, and were not a durable, as newer style of plates. On these grounds it was previously decided to that over a three-year period, the NHVR would phase out the use of Class 2 plates in favour of the newer style plates.

As the end of that three-year period draws closer, it has become apparent that a large number of vehicles continue to be fitted with Class 2 plates.

While there is a definite safety benefit from using these newer, better performing plates, the continued use of Class 2 plates that are in good order, does not pose a significant safety risk. However, to assist operators better manage the cost of transitioning from Class 2 plates the NHVR has decided to adopt an alternate approach to transition.

This means that instead of all vehicles displaying the new style of plate by the end of 2020, operators that have Class 2 plates fitted prior to 31 December 2020 are not required to upgrade their rear marking plates until they are next replaced. Operators may choose to upgrade sooner if desired. From 1 January 2021 the fitting of new Class 2 plates to vehicle will be prohibited.

Which vehicles require these signs?

Rear marking plates can be fitted to any vehicle however, motor vehicles with a GVM over 12 tonnes and trailers with a GTM over 10 tonnes **must** be fitted with rear marking plates. Buses with a GVM over 12 tonnes must also be fitted with rear marking plates, except

those fitted with hand grips (or similar equipment) for use by standing passengers.

The obligation to provide the DNOTV warning is a road rule and applies equally to heavy and light vehicles or combinations that are 7.5m or longer. These signs are required where it is necessary for the vehicle/combination to occupy more than a single lane of traffic in order to safely navigate an intersection.

Vehicles or combinations less than 7.5m in length **must not** be fitted with DNOTV signs.

Category or Class?

The category of a plate refers to the size and design of the plate. Plates are assigned a code on this basis: for example, a 300mm wide x 100mm high plate is designated as Category 31.

The Class of plate refers to the type of reflective material used on the plate.

The Categories of rear marking plates has not changed.

How do I know what class my plates are?

Perhaps the easiest way to tell the difference between the newer style of plates and Class 2 plates at a glance is that the newer classes of plates have a honeycomb or diamond pattern that sits behind the print (see Figures 1 and 2), whereas Class 2 plates have a flat appearance (see Figure3).



Figure 1: Example of pattern on newer classes of plates

In addition to the visual differences between the plates, compliant rear marking plates must be printed with certain information. This is limited to:

- the approved text and graphics,
- the name of the manufacturer or agent,
- letters indicating the correct orientation on the vehicle, and
- AS4001.1 and the class of retroreflective material (see notes on correct format below)

Class 1A and Class 400 plates

The words printed on the plate must state '**AS 4001.1 Class X**', where 'X' is, this is the class of retroreflective sheeting material used.

UNECE Regulation 70 plates

The words printed on the plate must state '**AS 4001.1 UN R70**' (an approval mark as required by UNECE R70 may also be printed on the plate).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) create internationally recognised standards used throughout the world. These standards are recognised in Australia when they are specified in an Australian law, standard or design rule.



Figure 2: Example of Class 1 Rear marking plate (Category 33A)



Figure 3: Example of Class 2 Rear marking plate (Category 33A)

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I replace rear marking plates?

You must replace any rear marking plates that are:

- faded
- damaged
- incorrectly fitted
- no longer clearly marked with all required information.

NOTE: Do not mix Class 2, Class 1A, Class 400 and UNECE R70 rear marking plates on a vehicle as they have different reflective properties.

Do I need to replace all the plates on the vehicle?

No. These changes mean that you only need to replace marking plates that are lost, worn or damaged.

It is important to ensure that all rear marking plates on a vehicle are made of the same reflective material. This means that if a trailer currently fitted with Class 2 plates loses a plate, any matching plate(s) must also be replaced.

NOTE: These changes **do not** affect Long Vehicle, Road Train or Oversize signs.

Do I need to purchase the Australian Standard?

No. There is no need for operators to purchase the Australian Standard (AS4001) for rear marking plates.

AS4001 is split into two parts, the first part, AS4001.1, details the manufacturing requirements that apply to rear marking plates. Only manufacturers engaged in the production of rear marking plates need purchase this standard.

The second part of the standard, AS4001.2 specifies fitting requirements. Operators do not need to purchase AS4001.2 as the NHVR has published everything you need to know in order to comply with the requirements in VSB12.

These requirements are nationally consistent across all states and territories in Australia (except for the size of DNOTV signs in NSW).

Where can I get more information?

The [Vehicle Standards Bulletin \(VSB\) 12 – National Code of Practice – Rear marking plates](#) identifies the types of plates that can be used, where they are placed on the vehicle and the methods for installing them.

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.

Implementing a system to ensure you are informed of changes to the vehicle safety standards and apply these to your business can support transport 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

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