

## Vehicle Standards Guide 3 (VSG-3)

### Semitrailer rear bumpers

This guide provides advice to the heavy vehicle industry about the requirements for rear bumper bars on semitrailers.

#### Background

Changes to the Australian Design Rule (ADR) removed the need for new semitrailers built from 1 January 2005 to have the rear bumpers be painted white. T

To ensure the full benefits of this change are realised, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) issued a vehicle standards exemption notice, removing the requirement for the rear bumper to be painted white for semitrailers built from July 1988, when the requirement was first introduced.

These requirements have since been incorporated into the *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation* (the Regulation) and the notice discontinued.

#### Application to in-service semitrailers

From 19 February 2016, the requirement for the rear bumper of any in-service semitrailer to be white was removed. This means that when replacing a damaged rear bumper, or refurbishing a semitrailer, any colour of rear bumper may be fitted without making the vehicle non-compliant with the heavy vehicle safety standards.

While the rear bumper on a semitrailer no longer needs to be white, there are some other important safety requirements that need to be met:

- rear marking plates must still be fitted, to improve the conspicuity (visibility) of the rear of the trailer
- compulsory lights such as brake, tail, direction indicating, rear position or end-outline marker lamps must still be fitted and comply with the requirements of the ADRs and heavy vehicle safety standards
- operators should give consideration to the improved visibility that a white rear bumper can provide to the trailer.

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

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#### VSG-3 Revision history

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