

Vehicle Standards Guide 7 (VSG-7)

Modifications to New Vehicles

Revised February 2022

This guide provides advice for vehicle owners, modifiers, and dealers, modifying a heavy vehicle **before** the vehicle has been *provided to a consumer for the first time in Australia*.

Background

All road vehicles are required to meet certain regulatory requirements to ensure, amongst other things, they are safe, secure and environmentally-friendly.

The Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the Department of Infrastructure), are responsible for the [road vehicle standards laws](#) that apply to both heavy and light vehicles before they are *provided to a consumer for the first time in Australia* (provided).

Once a vehicle has been provided, the *in-service* regulations apply. For light vehicles, these are the laws that apply in the jurisdiction the vehicle is used and for heavy vehicles (in participating jurisdictions), the [Heavy Vehicle National Law](#) (HVNL).

To accommodate the unique requirements of heavy vehicles, new vehicles almost always require some degree of customisation. When these modifications are performed before a vehicle enters service by being provided to a consumer, they must be carried out in accordance with *the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018 (Cth)* (RVSA).

This VSG details the different types of modifications that may be performed, and the approvals required.

When is a vehicle provided?

The Department of Infrastructure has published a guidance note (GN) explaining when a road vehicle is considered to have been *provided* to a consumer for the first time.

The GN advises that a vehicle has been provided when the following conditions have been met:

- the vehicle has been correctly entered on the Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV); and
- a contract of sale has been entered into between the consumer and either an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or dealership.

Note: This consideration does not include a contract between an OEM and a dealership, or vehicles sold for a second stage of manufacture.

Modifications approved under the RVSA

The following modifications can be made to a vehicle that has been entered on the RAV, but **before** it is provided to a consumer for the first time in Australia:

- modifications carried out in accordance with the written instructions of the holder of a vehicle type approval.
- modifications carried out during second stage of manufacture in accordance with a vehicle type approval.
- modifications carried out during second stage of manufacture in accordance with an applicable Model Report that applies to the vehicle.
- modifications carried out in accordance with Vehicle Standards Bulletin 6 (VSB6), as in force in the State or Territory in which the vehicle was modified at the time the modifications were made.

Note: Where a VSB6 modification has been carried out, the modification must be assessed and certified by an Approved Vehicle Examiner and be fitted with a modification (blue) plate.

Modifications approved under the HVNL

The following types of modifications may be made to a vehicle **after** it has been provided to a consumer for the first time in Australia:

- modifications performed in accordance with VSB6
- complex modifications permitted under Section 87 of the HVNL.

Note: Complex modifications are assessed and approved on case-by-case basis. Applications for complex modifications may be submitted to the NHVR for approval before the physical delivery of the vehicle only if there is a valid contract of sale.

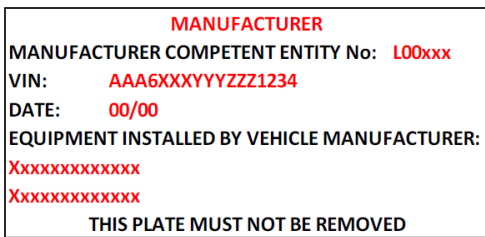
Fitment of original equipment by original equipment manufacturer (OEM)

In some cases, the OEM may have included modifications as part of their vehicle type approvals (previously referred to as an Identification Plate Approval (IPA)). If the OEM, or their representative, carries out these modifications before the vehicle is provided, the modifications is classed as part of the vehicle build and does not need additional certification. Original equipment fitted in this way will be done to meet the OEM’s control and quality procedures and the OEM accepts responsibility for the design and fitment of such items.

To assist vehicle owners, enforcement officers and vehicle inspectors identify when original equipment is fitted by the OEM, from May 2015 an optional label (known as a Manufacturer’s Plate) may be fitted to the vehicle by the OEM, or their representative.

The Manufacturer’s Plate provides information about what original equipment was installed and may also include important safety information such as the D-Rating value for a fifth wheel coupling.

More information about Manufacturer’s Plates can be found in the [Truck Industry Council Code of Practice \(for Heavy Vehicles\) Manufacturer’s Plates](#)



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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VSG07 Revision history

First Published	2016	
Revised	Feb 2022	Major review

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.