

## National Heavy Vehicle Regulations- Information Sheet

### Fatigue Management

Driver fatigue or drowsy driving is a safety hazard for drivers of heavy vehicles as an accident resulting in serious injury or death could happen to the driver and/or other road users. The main causes of fatigue are not enough sleep, driving at night (when you should be asleep) and working or being awake for a long time. It is important to be aware of the signs of fatigue.

### Signs of Fatigue

A driver must not drive a fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle on a road while impaired by fatigue. Drivers may be impaired by fatigue even when complying with work and rest limits. It is important to spot the signs of fatigue and **take a break**.

#### Your body

- A lack of alertness
- Inability to concentrate
- Making more mistakes than usual
- Drowsiness, falling asleep or micro-sleeps
- Difficulty keeping your eyes open
- Not feeling refreshed after a sleep
- Excessive head nodding or yawning
- Blurred vision
- Mood changes
- Changes to personal health or fitness

#### Your vehicle

- Near miss or incident
- Not keeping in a single lane
- Not maintaining a constant speed
- Overshooting a sign or line
- Poor gear changes

### Fatigue-regulated heavy vehicles

National heavy vehicle driver fatigue laws apply to fatigue-regulated heavy vehicles, which are:

- A vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) of over 12t
- A combination when the total of the GVM is over 12t
- A truck, or a combination including a truck, with a GVM of over 12t with a machine or implement attached.

At the heart of the laws for fatigue management is a primary duty - **a driver must not drive a fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle on a road while impaired by fatigue**.

#### Work diary

Most drivers of a fatigue-regulated heavy vehicle are required by law to create a record of time spent working (including driving time) and resting on a daily basis.

### **When must I use a work diary?**

All drivers of fatigue regulated heavy vehicles who drive **100km or more** from their home base or operate under basic fatigue management (BFM) or advanced fatigue management (AFM) must carry and complete a work diary to record their work and rest times. If you have a work diary exemption notice or permit you must carry it in lieu of the work diary.

### **Work and rest hours/breaks (As per Modern Award)**

- A rest break is a 10-minute paid break that counts as time worked.
- A meal break is a 30-minute unpaid break that doesn't count as time worked.
- An employee gets 1 rest break and 1 meal break each day.
- An employee who works for more than 5 hours must get at least 1 meal break.
- Employees can't be asked to work more than 5 hours without a meal break.

### **To minimise the risks resulting from driver fatigue;**

- Drivers must be fit for duty
- Shifts are planned within work and rest limits so drivers aren't pressured to drive while fatigued
- Drivers can stop and rest whenever they need to without fear of getting into trouble

### **To ensure our Operators are 'Fit for Duty' we;**

- Conduct random drug and alcohol testing in line with the Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Will arrange for drivers to undergo a review so they can be certified as being fit to drive a heavy vehicle by a medical practitioner. (Once every 3 years for drivers under 49 and years for 50 years and above).
- Have a procedure for drivers to assess their fitness for duty prior to commencing and during work (Company pre-start)
- Have a procedure for drivers to notify management if they are unfit for duty due to any lifestyle, health or medical issue both before and during work (through pre-start and contacting management)

## **Speed**

It is vital that safe speed limits are adhered to at all times to minimise risks associated with speeding. Speeding can cause accidents, resulting in serious injury or death for the driver and other road users. Here are some existing controls to minimise the risk of speeding;

- Company does not encourage drivers to speed,
- If delayed in traffic, management will inform site supervisors
- In-vehicle monitoring system notifies management when speed limits are exceeded

## **Maintenance Management**

For a vehicle to be considered roadworthy it must comply with the Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation (known as Vehicle Standards), and the relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs). These contain mandatory requirements for the safe design, construction and maintenance of vehicles and for the control of emissions and noise. When using the NHVIM, the following principles are relevant:

- Equipment required by the Vehicle Standards or ADRs to be part of a vehicle must be present and work properly
- Equipment which is essential for compulsory components to function, the safe operation of a vehicle, or the control of its emissions, must be kept in good condition
- Manufacturers' recommendations relevant to the safety of particular vehicle parts or to the control of emissions must be considered

Important points for Drivers to note:

- The Pre-Start must cover the minimum requirements for Vehicle Standards
- The Pre-Start is to be completed in a thorough and accurate manner
- Any faults found during the Pre-Start are to be recorded
- That the individual(s) who carried out the check understands that they are certifying that the vehicle is roadworthy to the limits of the inspection, when the vehicle leaves the yard or depot.
- Incident/Injury Reports are to be completed when human injury as well as vehicle damage occurs and Equipment Damage Reports are completed when just truck/equipment damage occurs
- Drivers must complete general maintenance/clean down of truck as per their job descriptions and as directed by management

## **Mass/Dimension Management**

### **General Mass Limits**

General Mass Limits (GML) apply to all heavy vehicles. The GML state the allowable mass for all types of heavy vehicle axle groups unless the vehicle is operating under an accreditation or an exemption under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL).

### **Width**

- The width limit for vehicles is 2.5 metres, excluding:
- Rear vision mirrors, signalling devices and side-mounted lamps and reflectors
- Anti-skid devices mounted on wheels, central tyre inflation systems, tyre pressure gauges
- Permanently fixed webbing-assembly-type devices, such as curtain-side devices, provided that the maximum distance measured across the body including any part of the devices does not exceed 2.55 metres.

### **Height**

The height limit for heavy vehicles is 4.3 metres unless it is a:

- Vehicle built to carry cattle, horses, pigs or sheep - 4.6 metres
- Vehicle built with at least 2 decks for carrying vehicles - 4.6 metres
- Double-decker bus - 4.4 metres

### **Length**

The length of a heavy vehicle is:

- For a combination other than a B-double, road train or a car carrier—19 metres
- For a B-double—25 metres
- For a road train—53.5 metres
- For a car carrier —25 metres
- For an articulated bus—18 metres
- For a bus other than an articulated bus—14.5 metres
- For another vehicle—12.5 metres

## Rear overhang and rear overhang line

The rear overhang of a vehicle is the distance between the rear of the vehicle and the rear overhang line of the vehicle.


- If a vehicle's rear axle group comprises of only 1 axle, the rear overhang line is the centre-line of that axle.
- If a vehicle's rear axle group comprises of 2 axles, 1 of which is fitted with twice the number of tyres as the other, the rear overhang line is located at one-third the distance between the 2 axles and is closer to the axle with the greater number of tyres.
- If a vehicle's rear axle group comprises of 3 or more axles, the rear overhang line is the centre-line of the axle group.
- If a vehicle's rear axle group has a steerable axle, that axle is to be disregarded unless: The group comprises only 1 axle and that axle is a steerable axle; or all axles in the group are steerable axles.

**Rear overhang on rigid trucks** - Lesser of 3.7 metres or 60% of wheelbase.

**Rear overhang on a semi-trailers and dog trailers** - Lesser of 3.7 metres or 60% of 'S' dimension.




**Rear overhang on a pig trailer** - Rear overhang on a pig trailer must not exceed the lesser of the length of the load-carrying area, forward of the rear overhang line or 3.7 metres.

**Rear overhang on a bus** - Lesser of 3.7 meters or 60% of the wheelbase



National Heavy Vehicle Regulator  
Common Heavy Freight  
Vehicle Configurations

Disclaimer: This diagram shows some of the common heavy vehicle combinations used in Australia. Other heavy vehicle configurations may not be represented. The mass and length limits shown are from the Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation (the MDL Regulation) and are provided for general guidance only. These limits are available only to vehicles that comply with all other regulatory requirements (e.g. width and height limits, tyre width, vehicle standards, load restraint, suspension type etc). In some circumstances, other mass concessions and length limits may also be available. The NHVR website provides links to the MDL Regulation and to national and state Notices which may apply, depending on individual circumstances. For further information, contact the NHVR at 1300 MYNHVR (1300 696 487) or [info@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:info@nhvr.gov.au) or [www.nhvr.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/contact-us)

COMMON RIGID TRUCKS - GENERAL ACCESS		Description	Maximum Length (metres)	Maximum Regulatory Mass under GML (tonnes)	Maximum Regulatory Mass under CML (tonnes)	Maximum Regulatory Mass under HML (tonnes)
1		2 Axle Rigid Truck	≤ 12.5	15.0	CML does not apply	-
2		3 Axle Rigid Truck	≤ 12.5	22.5	23.0	-
3		4 Axle Rigid Truck	≤ 12.5	26.0	27.0	-

### Common 2 Axle Rigid Truck











Type of Mass Limits	Maximum Length (metres)	Allowable CVM/CCM (tonnes)	Single Steer Axle (tonnes)	Twin Steer Axle Group (tonnes)	Single Axle (tonnes)	Tandem Axle Group (tonnes)	Triaxle Group (tonnes)
GML	12.5m	15.0t	6.0t*	N/A	9.0t	N/A	N/A
CML not permitted	12.5m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
HML not permitted	12.5m	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Common 3 Axle Rigid Truck



Type of Mass Limits	Maximum Length (metres)	Allowable CVM/CCM (tonnes)	Single Steer Axle (tonnes)	Twin Steer Axle Group (tonnes)	Single Axle (tonnes)	Tandem Axle Group (tonnes)	Triaxle Group (tonnes)
GML	12.5m	22.5t	6.0t*	N/A	N/A	16.5t	N/A
CML	12.5m	23.0t	6.0t*, a	N/A	N/A	17.0t	N/A
HML	12.5m	23.0t	N/A	N/A	N/A	17.0t	N/A

## Mass limits for single axles and axle groups

Axle/s	Axle group/tyres	Axle/vehicle details	Mass limit (tonnes)
	Single axle Single tyres	Steer axle <sup>a, b</sup> Non steer axle, tyres less than 375mm Non steer axle, tyres 375mm to 449mm Non steer axle, tyres at least 450mm	6.0t 6.0t 6.7t 7.0t
	Single axle Dual tyres	Pig trailer Any other vehicle A complying bus, or a bus authorised to carry standing passengers under an Australian road law An ultra-low floor bus with no axle groups, only 2 single axles	8.5t 9.0t 10.0t 11.0t
	Twin-steer axle group Single tyres	Non load-sharing suspension system Load-sharing suspension system	10.0t 11.0t
	Tandem axle group Single tyres	Less than 375mm 375mm to 449mm At least 450mm	11.0t 13.3t 14.0t
	Tandem axle group Dual/single tyres	Single tyres on one axle and dual tyres on the other axle A complying bus	13.0t 14.0t
	Tandem axle group Dual tyres	Pig trailer Any other vehicle	15.0t 16.5t
	Tri-axle group Single tyres	Single tyres on all axles with section width less than 375mm, or single tyres on one or two axles and dual tyres on the other axle or axles Pig trailer with either single tyres with at least a 375mm section width, dual tyres on all axles or a combination of those tyres	15.0t 18.0t
	Tri-axle group Dual tyres	Vehicle other than a pig trailer with either single tyres with at least a 375mm section width, dual tyres on all axles or a combination of those tyres	20.0t

## Loading

Under the HVNL, it is an offence to drive a heavy vehicle on a road when the vehicle or its load does not comply with the loading requirements applying to that vehicle. If your vehicle load is unsafe because it's poorly placed or inadequately restrained, you're not only putting your own safety at risk but also that of other road users, the general public and the environment.

### What are loading requirements?

Under the HVNL, a load on a heavy vehicle must:

- Not be placed in a way that makes the vehicle unstable or unsafe
- Be secured so it's unlikely to fall or be dislodged from the vehicle
- Be restrained using an appropriate method of restraint
- Be placed, secured or restrained in a way that meets the performance standards in the *Load Restraint Guide*.

### Why are loading requirements important?

Poorly loaded or inadequately restrained loads may cause injuries and fatalities when:

- Heavy objects fall from vehicles onto other vehicles or pedestrians
- Drivers swerve to avoid falling or fallen items from vehicles
- Spillage on roads from vehicles causes other vehicles to skid and lose control
- Unrestrained loads crash into vehicle cabins during emergency braking
- Vehicles overturn when loads shift during cornering.

### How to load safely

To load a vehicle safely the responsible person(s) should:

- Choose a vehicle that is a suitable size for the load
- Position the load correctly on the vehicle to maintain adequate stability, steering and braking
- Use a suitable load restraint system with equipment of adequate strength and in serviceable condition.

### Assessing loading requirements

The following questions should be asked when assessing whether a heavy vehicle loading and load restraint system meets the HVNL loading requirements:

- Does the load positioning make the vehicle unsafe or unstable?
- Has the load been restrained so it's unlikely to fall or be dislodged from the vehicle?
- Has an appropriate method been used to restrain the load?
- Does the load restraint system meet the performance standards contained in the *Load Restraint Guide*?

### Driver responsibilities

Before starting and throughout a journey, drivers should ensure that they:

- Do not drive on a road when the heavy vehicle or its load does not comply with the loading requirements for that vehicle
- Carry out periodic checks to ensure the load hasn't shifted and is still secure.

### Summary

Points to remember in order to abide by the national heavy vehicle regulations;

- Ensure that your conduct does not compromise road safety or involve breaking the law (being 'fit to drive', not driving while fatigued, driving to safe speed limits etc.)
- You should know your vehicle's mass – For example keep weighbridge docket, use on-board scales to check your weights, and keep any loading documentation that shows the weight of your load, and ensures that your vehicle does not exceed legal dimensions
- Check your load to ensure it is properly restrained – even if you are not the person who loaded the vehicle
- Check the condition of restraining equipment (chains, ropes, straps etc.) for signs of wear

Document Control  
Version: 1.0  
Dated: 14/01/2024  
Position: Managing Director  
Signed:



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