

Agricultural vehicles

What is an agricultural vehicle or agricultural combination?

Under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) an agricultural vehicle is defined as an agricultural machine or agricultural implement.

An agricultural vehicle is considered a Class 1 restricted access heavy vehicle if it, together with its load, does not comply with a prescribed mass or prescribed dimension requirement.

Examples of an agricultural vehicle include harvesters, tractors, augers and conveyors.

However, an agricultural trailer regardless of compliance to the mass or dimension limits, are still considered to be Class 1 restricted access heavy vehicles.

A Class 1 agricultural vehicle will not require a permit to operate provided the movement of the vehicle complies with all of the requirements and travel conditions outlined in a gazette notice or guideline. Operators still need to comply with the operating conditions specified in their relevant transitional notice.

If a Class 1 agricultural vehicle does not comply with the mass or dimension limits set out in a transitional notice, an operator must apply to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) to obtain a Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit.

Agricultural vehicles:

An agricultural machine - a vehicle with its own automotive power, built to perform agricultural tasks. Examples include a harvester or tractor.

An agricultural implement - a vehicle without its own automotive power, built to perform agricultural tasks, and includes an agricultural trailer. Such as an auger, conveyor, field bin, harvester front, irrigating equipment or machinery.

An agricultural vehicle - an agricultural implement or agricultural machine.

An agricultural trailer - a trailer that is designed to carry a load and used exclusively to perform agricultural tasks, but does not include a semitrailer.

An agricultural task - a task carried out in agriculture. Examples of an agricultural task include cultivating land, growing and harvesting crops or rearing livestock.



Exemptions under mass or dimension exemption notice

The NHVR may grant a Mass or Dimension Exemption Gazette Notice for a period of not more than five years to a Class 1 agricultural vehicle from a prescribed mass or dimension requirement.

A Mass or Dimension Exemption Gazette Notice will include the following information:

- › the category of heavy vehicles to which the exemption applies
- › the mass or dimension requirements
- › the areas or routes to which the exemption applies
- › the road conditions or travel conditions required by the relevant road manager/s
- › the period for which the exemption applies.

Operators can continue to operate under a current transition gazette notice. If the vehicle exceeds the requirements of the gazette you can apply to the NHVR to obtain a Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit.

Exemptions by permit

The NHVR may grant a Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit for a period of not more than three years.

Will I have to apply for a permit again?

All permits that were already in force at the time the HVNL commenced continue to have effect as if they were made under the HVNL. They will remain current for the same routes and with the same conditions and will continue to have force up until their expiry date or they are replaced under the national access framework, whichever comes first.

All new and renewal permit applications must be directed to the NHVR.

Where the dimensions of the vehicle are likely to disrupt services or damage infrastructure including overhead wires, bridges and other structures on or beside the road, approval to travel the route must be sought from the relevant utility provider. It is the responsibility of the driver of the oversize agricultural vehicle or combination to obtain approval from the relevant organisation.

The driver of a Class 1 heavy vehicle who is driving the vehicle under a Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit must keep a copy of the permit in the driver's possession.

What if my permit doesn't have an expiry date?

In almost all cases, permits should have an expiry date attached to them. Some older permits which were issued in perpetuity continue to exist. In this small number of cases,

the permits will continue under the HVNL for three years. At the end of the three year period, the permit will lapse and you must apply to the NHVR if you want the permit to be reissued.

Warning devices

In some instances agricultural vehicles may require conditions of operations such as warning devices or warning lights to operate on the road network. If operating under a transition notice or a permit, these requirements will be specified in detail.

Examples of warning devices that may apply to an agricultural vehicle.

Warning lights

A warning light attached to an agricultural vehicle, when switched on, must:

- › emit a yellow coloured light of rotating and flashing effect
- › flash between 120 and 200 times a minute
- › have a power of at least:
 - › if LED technology is used— 25W, or
 - › if another technology is used—55W
- › not be a strobe light.

A warning light attached to an agricultural vehicle must be:

- › clearly visible at a distance of 500m in all directions, or
- › supplemented by 1 or more additional warning lights so that the light emanating from at least 1 of them is clearly visible at a distance of 500m in any direction.
- › However, for a pilot vehicle travelling in front of a Class 1 heavy vehicle, a filter may be placed behind the warning light attached to the pilot vehicle to reduce the intensity of the light directed to the driver of the heavy vehicle.

Warning patterns

A warning pattern must be displayed at the sides of the rear of any auger, conveyor, or the reaping implement of a combine harvester. A warning pattern consists of diagonal stripes at least 150mm wide and alternatively coloured either red and white or black and white. The warning pattern must cover an area of at least 0.16m².

Any part of an axle extending more than 150mm from the outside wall of a tractor's tyre must be painted fluorescent yellow or have yellow fluorescent or other high-visibility material wrapped around it.

Oversize sign

The warning sign on an agricultural vehicle must be at least 1200mm long and at least 450mm high. The length of the sign may be split in two parts, in which case the combined length of its parts must be at least 1200mm.

A warning sign on agricultural vehicle must have a face showing:

- › the word **OVERSIZE**, in black capital letters and in typeface Series C(N) complying with AS 1744 Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs

Note – AS 1744 Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs may be purchased from Standards Australia at www.standards.org.au.

- › the letters must be at least 200mm high and at least 125mm from the top and bottom of the warning sign.

If the length of the warning sign is split into two parts:

- › the word **OVER** must be on the left part and the word **SIZE** on the right part
- › there must be no border between the two parts
- › both parts must be mounted at the same height.

A warning sign on an agricultural vehicle must be fitted horizontally. The lower edge of the warning sign must be:

- › above the bottom bumper bar, or
- › if there is no bumper bar, at least 500mm above ground level.

The face of a warning sign on a Class 1 agricultural vehicle must have:

- › a yellow surface complying with Class 1 or 2 of AS 1906 'Retro-reflective Materials and Devices for Road Traffic Control Purposes'
- › a black border that is at least 20mm wide and, unless the sign is made with a box edge, whose outermost edge is at least 10mm in from the edge of the sign
- › its manufacturer's name or trademark, and the brand and class of material used for the warning sign's surface, permanently marked in letters at least 3mm but no more than 10mm high on any visible part of the sign.

A warning sign on an agricultural vehicle must be made of stiff, flat, weatherproof material for example:

- › zinalume that is at least 0.8mm thick
- › aluminium that is at least 1.6mm thick

However it may be made of flexible, weatherproof material if the sign is:

- › held taught
- › clearly visible
- › unlikely to become dislocated, furl or otherwise difficult to be read by other road users.

▼ Example of a warning sign for an oversize vehicle or combination



Other requirements

Not to carry goods or passengers

An agricultural implement must not carry goods or passengers.

About the NHVR

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) is Australia's dedicated independent regulator for heavy vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass.

The NHVR was created to administer one set of rules for heavy vehicles under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), improve safety and productivity, minimise the compliance burden on the heavy vehicle transport industry and reduce duplication and inconsistencies across state and territory borders.

For more information

subscribe www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe

visit www.nhvr.gov.au

email info@nhvr.gov.au

fax 07 3309 8777

post PO Box 492, Fortitude Valley Q 4006

tel 1300 MYNHVR* (1300 696 487)

*Standard 1300 call charges apply. Please check with your phone provider.



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Please note: While every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the content of this fact sheet, it should not be relied upon as legal advice.