

## Operating a 4.6m high heavy vehicle as a specified semitrailer and under other notices

### Purpose

This information sheet outlines the access requirements for operating a heavy vehicle up to 4.6m in height.

Under the *Heavy Vehicle National Law* (HVNL), specified semitrailers may operate at a maximum height of 4.6m, provided specific conditions are met.

It also explains the conditions of operation and compares access under the specified semitrailer notice with other options for operating vehicles up to 4.6m high.

### Key changes

From 28 February 2020, the inclusion of *specified semitrailers* under the HVNL provides an additional access option for operators of heavy vehicles up to 4.6m high.

A key difference compared to some existing access options is that operating a specified semitrailer is not limited to specific freight tasks (e.g. livestock, vehicles, fodder, etc.).

### Conditions for operating specified semitrailers up to 4.6m high

A specified semitrailer must:

- be no greater than 4.6m high
- be a semitrailer forming part of a:
  - prime mover towing a single semitrailer



- B-double



- B-triple



- not be a PBS vehicle
- be equipped with an air suspension system and effective dampers
- have a deck height up to 1.2m for at least 50% of its deck length
- operate at no greater than 90% of its applicable total combination mass limit.

The 90% mass restriction does not apply to:

- mass limits for axles and axle groups
- mass limits relating to spacing between axle groups.

**Note:** a specified semitrailer may need to operate below these mass limits, to comply with the 90% combination mass restriction.

A specified semitrailer may be loaded up to 4.6m high, regardless of its constructed height.

For example, a 1.2m-high flat-bed semitrailer may be loaded up to 4.6m high, provided it complies with all specified semitrailer conditions and other applicable requirements, such as the load being properly restrained.

### Applicable mass limits for specified semitrailers

A combination that includes a specified semitrailer(s) may operate under (one of):

- General Mass Limits (GML)
- Concessional Mass Limits (CML)
- Higher Mass Limits (HML).

For example, a specified semitrailer combination may operate under CML, with a combination mass limit that would otherwise be 44 tonnes. Operating with a specified semitrailer, the combination must operate at a maximum mass calculated as:

**90% of 44 tonne, being 39.6 tonne.**

**Only the specified trailer(s) that forms part of a combination may operate at 4.6m high.**

The prime mover and other *normal* semitrailers must not exceed 4.3m high.

## No additional road access restrictions

No additional road access restrictions are applied to a specified semitrailer:

- if it was previously operating with general access (i.e. as a prime mover towing a single semitrailer), it continues to have that access.
- if it was operating on an approved route (i.e. under notice or permit as a B-double or B-triple), then those route restrictions continue to apply.

## Not all semitrailers in a combination need be specified semitrailers

Not all semitrailers in a B-double or B-triple combination need to be specified semitrailers. It is permissible for some trailers in the same combination to operate as specified semitrailers (up to 4.6m high), while others are not (up to 4.3m high).

In this instance:

- Only the specified semitrailers must comply with the conditions for operating as a specified semitrailer.
- However, if any trailer in the combination to operate as a specified semitrailer, the total combination mass, including all other semitrailers, must not exceed 90% of the applicable combination mass limit. This may require reducing operating masses on trailers that are not the specified semitrailer(s).
- The deck length of each relevant specified semitrailer must be measured (50% of which must have a height no greater than 1.2m). The deck lengths of other vehicles in the combination do not need to be counted unless they are also operating as specified semitrailers themselves, in which case they must be measured individually.

## Operating under a permit or notice

If a combination operating under a notice or a permit includes a specified semitrailer, it must comply with both the specified semitrailer requirements and the notice or permit conditions.

General principles for determining mass and dimension limits when operating as a specified semitrailer under notice or permit are:

- Mass and dimension limits (e.g. total combination length, or total mass, or an axle mass limit) prescribed in the *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* (MDL Regulation) apply unless substitute limits are set in the notice or permit.
- MDL Regulation limits include the 4.6m height limit for a specified semitrailer.
- Any mass and dimension limits set by the notice or permit cannot be exceeded.

## Examples of determining applicable mass and dimension limits

### Example A:

The [National Class 2 B-double Authorisation Notice](#) sets a mass limit for 19m-long B-doubles at 50.0t, which is less than the MDL Regulation mass limit of 55.5t.

The combination cannot exceed 50.0t while operating under the notice.

The maximum mass for the B-double combination (i.e. 90% of the combination mass) is **49.95t if it contains a specified semitrailer**.

### Example B:

A permit sets a mass limit for the same B-double combination at 65.0t. (This is a Class 3 permit as the mass is above the MDL Regulation mass limit of 62.5t).

The mass limit when operating with a specified semitrailer in the combination is the same as Example A (i.e. 56.25t). This is because the mass limit for the combination is determined at 90% of the MDL Regulation limit.

**Table 1 - Examples of how mass and dimension limits apply to specified semitrailers under notice**

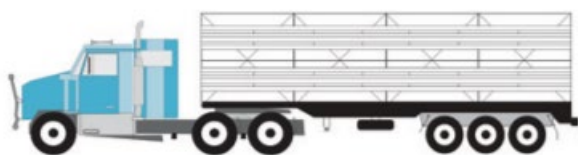
		Combination mass limit	
		Example A	Example B
<b>MDL Regulation</b>		55.5t	62.5t
<b>Specified semitrailer mass condition (90% of MDL)</b>		49.95t	56.25t
<b>Notice or permit type</b>		Class 2	Class 3
<b>Notice or permit condition</b>		50.0t	65.0t
<b>Applicable mass limit</b>	While operating as a specified semitrailer	49.95t	56.25t
	While not operating as a specified semitrailer	50.0t	65.0t

## Notices granting access at 4.6m high are unaffected by the specified semitrailer amendment

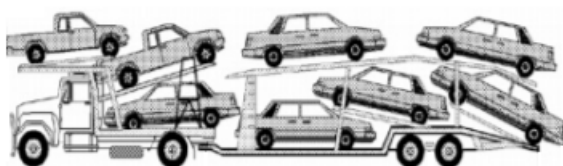
Various notices made under the HVNL already allow access for certain heavy vehicles 4.6m in height. Each of the notices applies different conditions and in different circumstances. Access conditions under each are unaffected by the specified semitrailer amendment.

The most common notices are for:

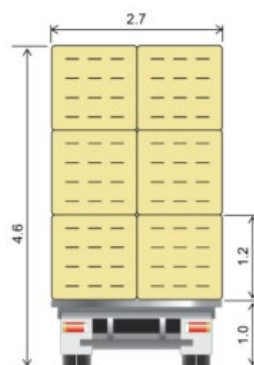
- livestock vehicles (i.e. built to carry cattle, horses, pigs or sheep)



- vehicle carriers (i.e. built with at least two decks)



- vehicles carrying baled hay and straw



- vehicles operating under 4.6m in height notices:
  - [New South Wales and Queensland Class 3 4.6m High Loaded Semi-Trailer Dimension Exemption Notice 2024 \(No.1\)](#)
  - [Australian Capital Territory Class 3 4.6m High Vehicle Dimension Exemption Notice 2024 \(No.1\)](#)
- vehicles carrying high-cube containers:
  - [Tasmania Class 3 Heavy Vehicles Transporting High-Cube Freight Containers Dimension Exemption Notice 2023 \(No.1\)](#)
- various notices authorising the carrying of indivisible loads.

## Selecting the most appropriate option

Table 2 compares requirements and allowances of different options for operating heavy vehicles at up to 4.6m in height.

It includes requirements under various notices and for specified semitrailers. Each of the options makes different requirements and suits different operational needs.

Introducing specified semitrailers under the HVNL has increased and/or overlapped with the access provided by some notices in Table 2.

The notices referred to in Table 2 are found on the NHVR [Notices and permit-based schemes](#) webpage.

**Table 2 - Examples of how mass and dimension limits apply to specified semitrailers under notice**

Authority to operate at up to 4.6m high	States and territories	Vehicle type	Road access	Freight type	Mass limit	Other
Specified semitrailer	ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC	Restricted to only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single semitrailers</li> <li>• B-doubles</li> <li>• B-triples</li> </ul>	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	Any	Restricted to 90% of applicable limits.	Trailer deck height limit of 1.2m for at least 50% of the deck.
<b>Notices allowing any type of freight to be transported at 4.6m high</b>						
<a href="#">Class 3 4.6m High Loaded Semi-Trailer Dimension Exemption Notice - NSW</a>	NSW	Restricted to only semitrailers as part of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single semitrailers</li> <li>• B-doubles</li> <li>• road trains</li> </ul>	Restricted to approved 4.6m routes and as per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	Any	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	<a href="#">Supporting Operator's Guide.</a>
<a href="#">Class 3 4.6m High Loaded Semi-Trailer Dimension Exemption Notice - QLD</a>	QLD	Restricted to only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single semitrailers</li> <li>• B-doubles</li> </ul> This notice does not allow 4.6m trailers to be operated as part of a road train combination.	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).		Restricted to 90% of applicable limits.	Trailer deck height limit of 1.2m for at least 50% of the deck.  <a href="#">Supporting Operator's Guide.</a>
<a href="#">Class 3 4.6m High Vehicle Dimension Exemption Notice - ACT</a>	ACT only	Any and all vehicle types eligible to operate in the ACT.	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).		As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	
<a href="#">Class 3 Heavy Vehicle 4.6m High by Construction Semitrailer Dimension Exemption Notice</a>	NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC	Restricted to only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single semitrailers</li> <li>• B-doubles</li> <li>• B-triples (except in Queensland)</li> </ul>	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high). Also restricted to approved 4.6m routes in NSW only.		Restricted to 90% of applicable limits.	Trailer deck height limited to 1.2m for at least 50% of the deck.  <a href="#">Supporting Operator's Guide.</a>

Authority to operate at up to 4.6m high	States and territories	Vehicle type	Road access	Freight type	Mass limit	Other
<b>Notices allowing the transport of certain freight types at 4.6m high</b>						
<a href="#">Class 2 4.6m high and/or 25m Long Vehicle Carrier Authorisation Notice</a>	NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, VIC	Vehicle carriers with dual loading decks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>combinations up to 25m long</li> <li>truck-trailers</li> <li>single semitrailers</li> <li>B-doubles</li> </ul>	Varies by state, but mostly restricted to 25/26m B-double routes. In NSW only—also restricted to approved 4.6m routes.	Vehicles only.	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	
<a href="#">Class 2 Heavy Vehicle 4.6m High Livestock Carrier Authorisation Notice</a>		Varies by state/territory and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rigid vehicles</li> <li>single semitrailers</li> <li>B-doubles</li> <li>road trains</li> </ul>	Varies by state/territory, mostly as per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high). Restricted also to livestock vehicle network in NSW.	Livestock only - cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses.	As per state livestock mass exemptions.	Trailer deck length limits. Tare mass limits.
<a href="#">Class 3 Drought Assistance Dimension Exemption Notice</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigid vehicles</li> <li>Single semitrailers</li> <li>Low loaders</li> <li>B-doubles</li> <li>Road trains</li> </ul>	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high). Limited to participating road manager's roads only.	Baled or rolled hay or straw.	As per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high).	Supporting <a href="#">Operator's Guide</a> .
<a href="#">Class 3 Drought Assistance Dimension Exemption Notice - NSW</a>	NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigid vehicles</li> <li>Single semitrailers</li> <li>Low loaders</li> <li>B-doubles</li> </ul>	Routes approved in the <a href="#">Operator's Guide</a> .	Baled or rolled hay.		
<a href="#">Class 3 Baled Commodities Dimension Exemption Notice - NSW</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigid vehicles</li> <li>Single semitrailers</li> <li>Truck-trailers</li> <li>B-doubles</li> <li>Road trains</li> </ul>	Restricted to approved 4.6m routes and as per relevant heavy vehicle type (when operating at up to 4.3m high). Additional route restrictions for truck-trailers.	Rectangular cotton bales produced at a cotton gin. Baled or rolled hay or straw. Baled wool.		Supporting <a href="#">Operator's Guide</a> .

## Contact the NHVR

If operators have any further queries regarding the operation of specified semitrailers or operating up to 4.6m in height under a notice or permit, the NHVR may be contacted using the details below.

### For more information:

Visit: [www.nhvr.gov.au](http://www.nhvr.gov.au)  
Subscribe: [www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe)  
Email: [info@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:info@nhvr.gov.au)  
Phone: 13 NHVR\* (13 64 87)

\*Standard 13 xx xx call charges apply. Please check with your phone provider.  
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