

1. Introduction to SMS

SMS Webinar Series for heavy vehicle operations.



- 1. Introduction to SMS – what is it, and what does it mean**
2. Leadership & Accountability
3. Risk Management – Hazards, Risks and Controls
4. Risk Management – Ongoing Risk Review Incident Management
5. Assurance, Monitoring & Continuous Improvement
6. People
7. Safety Systems
8. Tying it all together with ACAs, MAP and PSOE



Section 457A of the HVNL

An SMS for an operator of a heavy vehicle, is a group of policies, systems, and procedures that relates to the safety of the operator's transport activities and the driving of heavy vehicles.

Identify Risks

Assess Risks

Control Risks

An SMS works as a layered system



**Policies &
Commitments**

“What we believe and expect”

**Procedures &
Processes**

“How we do the work safely”

**Tools &
Instruments**

“What helps people follow the system”

**People &
Culture**

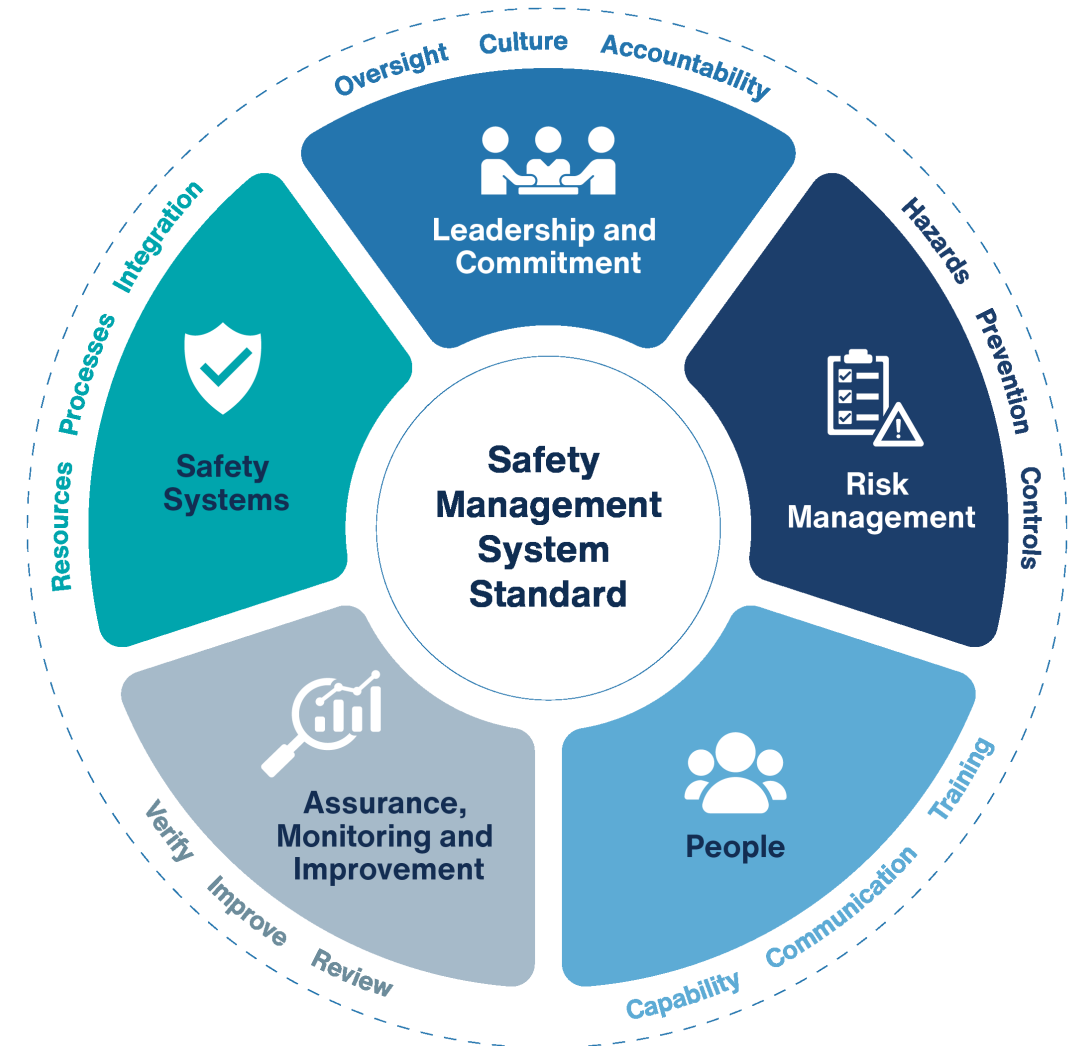
Where decisions, behaviours, actions and culture are part of everything

All layers must work **together**

SMS Framework



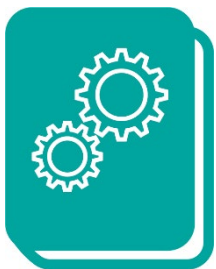
1. **Leadership & Commitment** – sets direction, resources, accountability, and culture.
2. **Risk Management** – identifies hazards, assesses risks, and ensures controls remain effective.
3. **People** – ensures trained, informed, and fit individuals carry out controls.
4. **Assurance, Monitoring & Improvement** – checks performance through reviews, audits, and continuous improvement.
5. **Safety Systems** – integrates and coordinates safety across daily operations.



Scalability and proportionality matters for an SMS



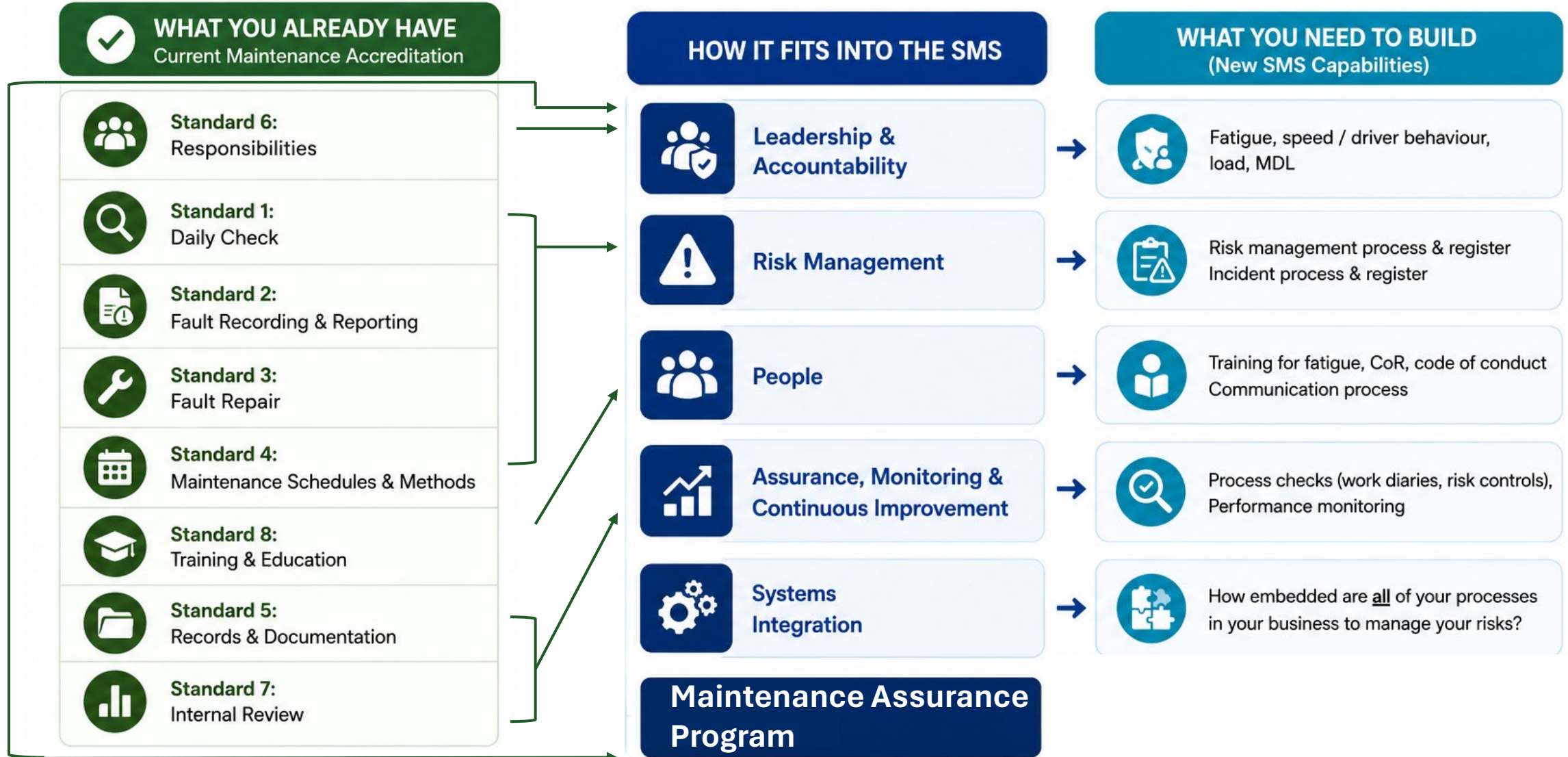
Small operator	Medium operator	Large operator
Simpler systems	More formal systems	Robust integrated systems



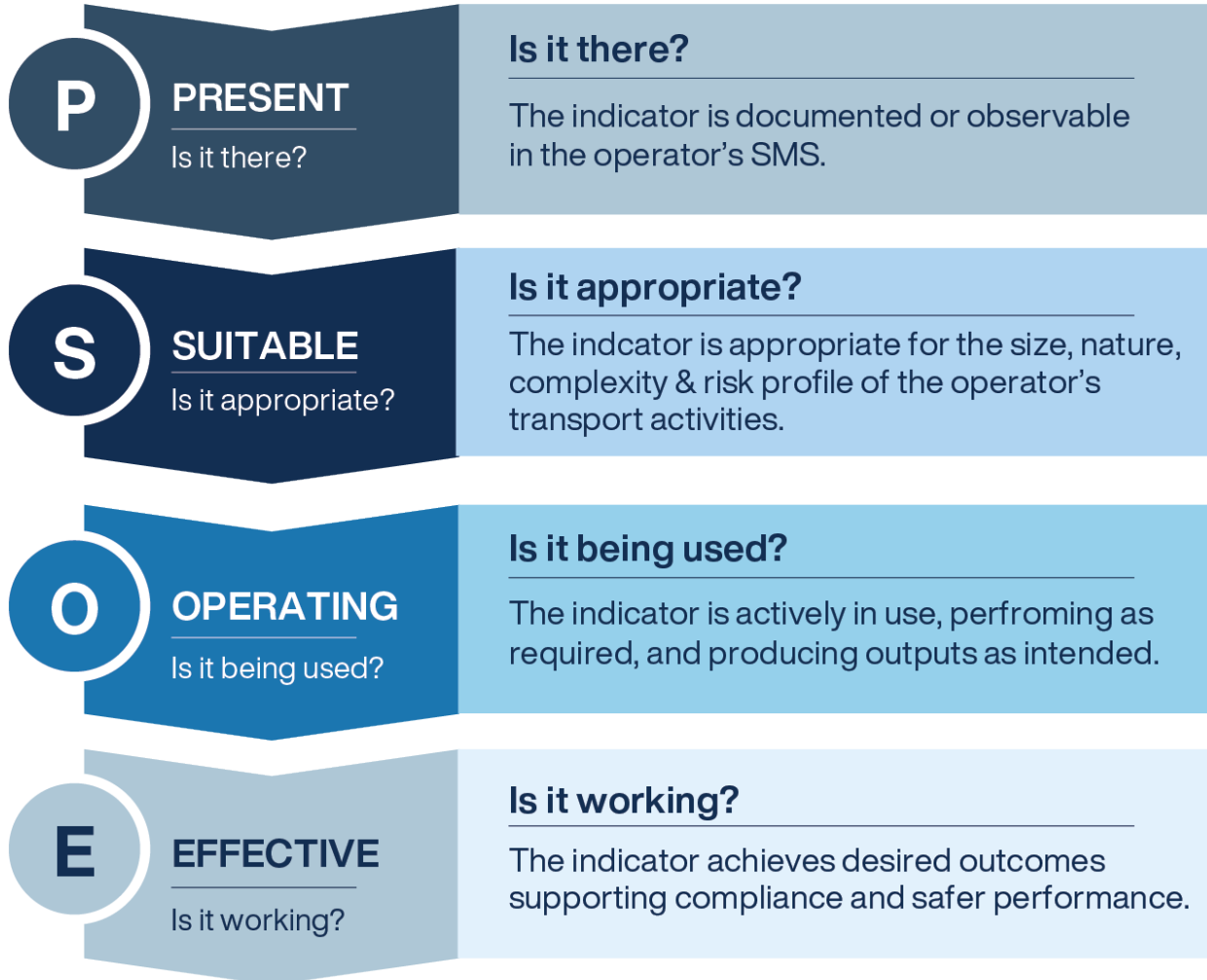
“However, the SMS should match the size, nature, complexity and **risk profile** of the operator’s transport activities. The higher the risk, the more robust your SMS should be”

What does this mean for you?

Keep doing what you are doing, and start building out



PSOE Audit Method



Resources – web, guide, checklist, & gap tool



Safety Management Systems (SMS)



The current content on this page will change significantly due to changes to the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Regulations commencing on 1 August 2026. The content in this section of the website will be updated soon to reflect the new Safety Management System Standards. For more information, please see [Safety Management System Standard 2026](#).

Regardless of the size of your business, having an effective Safety Management System (SMS) can be one of the best ways of ensuring you have a safety-focus and are complying with your safety duty obligations under the [Heavy Vehicle National Law \(HVNL\)](#).

Under the HVNL, operators wishing to participate in the Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA) Scheme are required to have an effective SMS that complies with the [Management System Standard](#). This SMS forms the basis of General Safety Accreditation (GSA) and Alternate Compliance Accreditation.



SMS Framework

This section of our website provides practical tools and guidance to help you design, implement and improve an SMS that suits your business you are seeking HVA or not, and supports you to meet the five requirements of the HVNL SMS Standard.

Please note that by using this guidance you agree to the following terms of use.

[SMS Framework - Disclaimer and Terms of Use](#)

Our [SMS Fact Sheet \(PDF, 249KB\)](#) provides a short overview of an SMS and its benefits to a business. More detailed information is available in the [Introduction to Management Systems in the Heavy Vehicle Industry \(PDF, 3.4MB\)](#). You may also want to refer to the [FAQs \(frequently asked questions\)](#) for answers to common questions.

The NHVR looks to continually improve our industry SMS guidance materials over time, so make sure you [Subscribe to On the Road](#) to keep up to date when become available.



Alternative Compliance Accreditation (ACA)

A different way to meet your legal safety and compliance obligations.



SMS Framework

A structured way for managing the primary safety risks associated with road transport.



Heavy Vehicle Industry Safety Survey

The 2024 survey was held from May to 18 June, 2024.



Resources

SMS guides, resources and examples for your guidance.



Safety toolbox talk - COVID-19

Resources to help you talk about what you can do in your business to reduce the spread of coronavirus.



FAQs

Frequently asked questions about Safety Management Systems.



INTRODUCTION TO SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE HEAVY VEHICLE INDUSTRY

2026



Safety Management System (SMS) Checklist

Use this checklist to help you identify which SMS elements you already have in place. When you're completing the checklist, it's important to keep in mind the size, nature and complexity of your business.

Some of the items may not be applicable to your operations. You may also have other elements in place not mentioned in this list. Additionally, you may already have some items partially in place or carry them out informally.

Please click [here](#) for additional SMS templates and information



Legend:	
Yes	This item is implemented in the business.
Partially	Only parts of this item are implemented in the business (perhaps as an informal process).
No	This item is not implemented in the business.
N/A (not applicable)	Not appropriate given the size and complexity of the business.

SMS components and subcomponents

Leadership and Commitment	Yes	Partially	No	N/A
Responsibility and accountability				
Does your business have a safety policy that documents the commitment to safety and is supported and approved by the accountable person (owner/operator, managing director, executive officer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you defined and documented the safety roles and responsibilities for key personnel in your organisation and are the responsible people competent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are roles and responsibilities relating to the SMS for all employees in the business clearly documented (e.g. safety manager, transport manager, training manager, drivers)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is everyone in your business clear about their safety duty obligations as a party in the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does senior management have a shared, practical understanding of how the business operates, the nature and scope of its heavy vehicle activities, and the associated hazards and public risks, including how risk controls are applied and function in practice?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your business have arrangements that enable drivers and other personnel to report hazards, risks, incidents and opportunities for improvement? Do those arrangements protect personnel from reprisal when making safety-related reports?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your business have arrangements that enable senior management to have visibility of safety-related information necessary to exercise effective oversight? Can you show evidence of this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development and implementation				
Is your SMS documentation practical, proportionate, and tailored to your operational activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your operational public risks identified, documented, and managed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your policies and procedures address all public risks associated with statutory obligations (HVNL, accreditation conditions)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your alternative compliance procedures (if sought) tailored to your transport activities and your risk and size profile?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource allocation				
Does your business have a safety manager/officer or someone appointed to implement, manage, communicate and promote the SMS? If owner-operator, is the owner-operator aware of safety requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a position description outlining the responsibilities of the safety manager/officer/appointed person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the safety manager/officer/appointed person have a direct reporting line to the executive officer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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NHVAS to GSA Gap Analysis



NHVAS to GSA Gap Analysis

See what your NHVAS accreditation already covers and what you still need to build before the new Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA) scheme. When you renew, General Safety Accreditation (GSA) comes first, with ACA – Fatigue, ACA – Mass, and GSA-MAP (Maintenance Assurance Program) as optional add-ons.

How the two systems fit together

Show ▾

NHVAS checked set processes, module by module. The new scheme checks that you run a genuine, risk-based safety system across your business, and that it works in daily operations.

I currently hold (NHVAS)

Maintenance, Mass, and/or Fatigue modules you hold under NHVAS today.

Maintenance Management

Mass Management

Fatigue Management

Target module(s) under GSA

HVA scheme schedules you want after GSA: ACA – Fatigue, ACA – Mass, and/or GSA-MAP (Maintenance Assurance Program). GSA itself is always required first.

GSA-MAP (Maintenance Assurance Program)

ACA – Mass

ACA – Fatigue

Operator size

Evidence expectations vary by operator size.

Small

Medium

Large

Show gaps

Your work remaining

GSA SMS foundation work plus schedule-level gaps for your selected targets.

Download my gap workbook

Focus on work items only

35 items need your attention

19 SMS foundation elements · 9 criteria to adjust · 7 new criteria

Recommended order: GSA SMS foundation → already aligned → new → adjust → optional evidence

GSA-MAP (Maintenance Assurance Program)

16 actionable · 22 of 38 criteria already met

17 Meets 7 New 9 Adjust 6 Evidence only

How to read your results

Show ▾

GSA SMS foundation: requirements beyond NHVAS modules

19 SMS audit elements

To gain GSA, every operator must run a Safety Management System (SMS): the processes and procedures that show how your business keeps its transport activities safe. Holding NHVAS modules alone does not cover this: the elements below apply to everyone entering the HVA scheme, whichever modules you add on top.

• **It has to live in daily operations.** Your SMS should be part of how you run the business, monitored, reviewed and improved over time.

• **Risk management is the core.** Identify hazards, assess the risks, and put controls in place to manage them. This is a central GSA requirement.

SMS Webinar Series



DATE	TOPIC	TIME
Wed 17 June	Introduction to Safety Management Systems (SMS) – what they are and why they matter	8am AEST
Wed 24 June	Leadership and Accountability	8am AEST
Wed 1 July	Risk Management – Hazards, Risks and Controls	8am AEST
Wed 8 July	Risk Management – Incident Management and Ongoing Risk Review	8am AEST
Wed 15 July	Assurance, Performance Monitoring and Continuous Improvement	8am AEST
Wed 22 July	People	8am AEST
Wed 29 July	Safety Systems	8am AEST
Wed 5 August	Bringing it all together – Accreditation Compliance Accreditation (ACA), Maintenance Assurance Program (MAP), Present, Suitable, Operating and Effective (PSOE) Audit method	8am AEST

Scan to register



Questions?



[Safety Management Systems \(SMS\) | NHVR](#)

Question	Answer
Is the SMS now what we previously referred to as the 'NHVR rules'? Can operators opt in or out?	<i>The SMS is the framework which is the baseline tier for Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA). It operates as the foundation on which fatigue, mass and maintenance accreditation are build on. Participation occurs through HVA requirements; however we encourage all heavy vehicle operators to adopt an SMS as it is an effective way to demonstrate compliance to CoR and primary duty.</i>
Under the new system, are operators required to meet accreditation requirements across fatigue, maintenance, and mass — effectively all three previous certifications?	<i>The new framework requires operators to manage all hazards and risks their business identifies. This generally means fatigue, driver fitness and behaviour, load, MDL and vehicle condition. However, if an operator has fatigue, maintenance and mass accreditation - they will need to demonstrate they meet the specific requirements outlined in the SMS Standard for the accreditation they are seeking. For example, if an operator is in fatigue accreditation only (Alternative Compliance Accreditation – Fatigue), they will need to meet the requirements outlined in the SMS Standard for fatigue. For vehicle condition, they need to demonstrate they have effective controls in place to manage vehicle condition. This does not have to be aligned to maintenance accreditation outlined in the SMS Standard.</i>
Is there a difference between the NHVR SMS and a WHS Management System under WHS Qld? Will there be guidance explaining the distinction?	<i>An NHVR SMS and a WHS management system are closely aligned. Many operators can use existing WHS systems as a foundation, but the SMS must include specific heavy vehicle safety requirements. Operators are not expected to have multiple SMS's in place. Rather the SMS should capture all risks their business generates, including those outside of heavy vehicle transport activities.</i>
Does the new SMS eliminate the need for a separate CoR manual, or does it need to be folded in?	<i>Existing CoR processes should be integrated into the SMS so that CoR obligations are managed through one system rather than separate documents where practical.</i>
Is this the pathway to reducing the requirement for a Certificate of Inspection (COI)?	<i>The maintenance accreditation concession does not change under the new scheme.</i>
Where do the limits of the SMS sit? If external factors (e.g., deteriorating roads) affect driver risk but operators can't influence them, how does SMS account for that?	<i>The SMS requires operators to identify and manage risks they can reasonably influence. External hazards such as road conditions should be identified and managed through controls within the operator's influence such as reduced speed or drive to conditions.</i>

Question	Answer
I've just completed Mass, Maintenance and Fatigue modules for another two years — should I start SMS now or wait 12 months?	<i>Operators can begin preparing now, particularly by reviewing existing systems against the SMS requirements. Transition arrangements will allow existing accreditations to continue until renewal.</i>
When my next NHVAS audit is due (e.g., mid next year), what is the transition process? Do I forgo the scheduled NHVAS audit and initiate an introductory HVA/SMS audit instead?	<i>Operators are expected to transition at their next accreditation cycle unless they opt to transition earlier.</i>
Do we need to book a specific SMS audit, or will the new SMS component be included in our next scheduled audit?	<i>The SMS audit will occur when your current accreditation expires and you transition across to the new scheme. While you hold NHVAS accreditation, audits will be under the NHVAS Business Rules and Standards.</i>
Will existing audit information be uploaded to the GSA tool as a starting point for identifying gaps?	<i>At this stage we are not building in this functionality.</i>
When are standards for the GSA-MAP and other elements of GSA and ACA going to be made available to operators?	<i>These documents are already available on our website: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/heavy-vehicle-accreditation-scheme/about-the-hva-scheme/hva-scheme-legislative-structure</i>
How do you determine what size your business is — is it based on number of vehicles or drivers?	<i>Business size will generally be determined using a combination of operational complexity, scale and risk profile rather than a single measure such as fleet size. We are finalising this tool now and will publish it once it has been approved for release.</i>
We have an ISO-accredited SMS in place that covers all NHVR requirements — do we still need to develop a standalone SMS?	<i>Existing ISO or other management systems can be leveraged. Operators do not need to create a separate standalone system if their current system meets the SMS requirements.</i>

Question	Answer
Do you have guidance on internal review, or does what we currently do under NHVAS meet the proposed SMS standards?	<i>Many existing NHVAS review processes will remain relevant, including the internal review. Operators are able to use the Audit Tool as a measure to undertake their internal review.</i>
Is there going to be guidance for organisations not previously accredited under NHVAS? The presentation appeared to assume NHVAS familiarity.	<i>Yes. Guidance material is being developed for operators who are new to accreditation and may not be familiar with NHVAS concepts.</i>
When is the GAP analysis tool being released?	<i>The GAP analysis tool is targeted for release in July.</i>
Is the SMS checklist tool free?	<i>Yes. The intention is for key implementation tools to be freely available to industry.</i>
Will there be staff available to assist operators in building an SMS and developing a manual?	<i>The NHVR will provide guidance, templates and educational resources to support operators transition to an SMS.</i>
Is there a sample SMS document on the website?	<i>Sample documents, examples and guidance material are available on our website. We are progressively releasing more support material. Information can be found here: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/safety-management</i>
I'm building an online SMS in Excel — could I give an auditor live access and eliminate the back-and-forth with documents?	<i>Yes. Electronic and cloud-based systems are acceptable. Operators should have appropriate backup and business continuity arrangements.</i>
Do the new rules reduce grey areas for NHVR officers when pulling drivers over?	<i>The SMS aims to provide clearer expectations and more consistent safety management practices, which may reduce ambiguity over time.</i>

Question	Answer
<p>Will there be a general risk matrix (similar to the mining industry) for companies to use, or do operators need to build their own?</p>	<p><i>The NHVR will be providing an overview of the risk assessment process on 1 July. We will go through the risk assessment tool available for operators in this session. More information is available here: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/safety-management/resources</i></p>
<p>Will there be advantages for operators under an audited SMS — e.g., will minor errors (such as misspelt words) result in reduced or waived fines?</p>	<p><i>The SMS is designed to improve safety outcomes rather than create enforcement concessions. Compliance and enforcement decisions will continue to be made in accordance with legislation and policy.</i></p>
<p>How do you get drivers to participate in building safety systems when they are disengaged?</p>	<p><i>Driver engagement is strongest when drivers are involved in identifying hazards, developing controls and seeing that their feedback results in action. Regularly engaging drivers in safety discussions and responding to their concerns helps build a positive safety culture. More information on toolbox tools can be found here: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/safety-management/resources</i></p>
<p>How do you get drivers to give feedback in toolbox talks when they say nothing in the session but complain later?</p>	<p><i>Use practical discussions, ask specific questions, follow up individually where required, and demonstrate that feedback leads to real improvements.</i></p>
<p>Can we have more information on what's changing in relation to work diaries and Mass, Dimensions and Loading under the HVNL reform? Is that information available yet?</p>	<p><i>Yes, the NHVR has developed factsheets and guidance for Mass, Dimension and Loading and updates to the Written Work Diary. Please note these sessions are specific to SMS. Operators should monitor the NHVR website communications for updates and consultation opportunities.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Written Work Diary: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/work-diary - MDL: https://www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/mass-dimension-and-loading