

As part of the Heavy Vehicle Roadworthiness and National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) review the Transport Ministers from participating jurisdictions requested that auditing of the NHVAS was to be strengthened.

## NHVAS Audit Framework

In response to this request, changes have been introduced and are outlined in the new NHVAS Business Rules and Standards (June 2015). These include;

- a person must be registered with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) to conduct NHVAS audits;
- auditor registration with the NHVR is determined upon the person meeting specific criteria (Section 14);
- a minimum level of technical competency is required prior to registration or an agreement in place to second a person with the technical competencies;
- revision of the NHVAS Audit Framework;
- revised NHVAS Audit Summary Report; and
- revised and reformatted matrices for NHVAS Mass and Maintenance Management modules.

## Auditor Technical Training Course

Over the last several months the NHVR has conducted Auditor training courses in Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. Attendees successfully completing the course are recognised as meeting the minimum technical competency required as detailed in one of the criteria to become registered with the NHVR as an NHVAS approved auditor.

## NHVAS Audit Framework and Matrices

The [NHVAS Audit Framework](#) applies a common set of principles, processes and audit methodologies for the conduct, documentation and reporting of NHVAS audits. It also provides guidance relating to the conduct of an NHVAS approved auditor registered with the NHVR.

The review of the NHVAS Audit Framework along with other scheme enhancements has led to the release of a revised version of the document, which is now in effect.

The NHVAS Audit Framework provides suitable guidance to NHVAS approved auditors when conducting audits of the Maintenance, Mass, Basic and Advanced Fatigue Management modules.

It is important to note that NHVAS compliance audits are system audits.

The purpose of a NHVAS audit is to;

- verify objective evidence related to an operators' management systems;
- assess how successfully the operators' systems have been implemented;
- determine the effectiveness of the operators' systems in meeting relevant NHVAS Standards;

- provide evidence concerning the mitigation of problem areas; and
- identify opportunities for improvements in the operator's management system.

An audit is an effective way to ensure the operators' management system meets the relevant standards and is continuously improved over the life of the business. It aims to ensure that only operators, who can demonstrate an appropriate level of compliance with the NHVAS Business Rules and Standards, achieve and maintain accreditation under the NHVAS.

To ensure consistency in reporting, evidence gathered during the audit is to be recorded on the NHVAS audit matrices and results are recorded on the NHVAS Audit Summary Report template. It is a condition of registration with the NHVR as an NHVAS approved auditor that auditors use this documentation when conducting audits under the NHVAS.

Updated audit matrices and NHVAS Audit Summary Report template have been developed and are available on the NHVR website.

The Audit Matrix is the primary on-site audit tool under the NHVAS. It provides a template for the auditor to systematically record evidence about the operator's compliance with the relevant accreditation standards.

Auditors must use the relevant Audit Matrix approved and published by the NHVR when undertaking an NHVAS audit and complete all of the fields in the Audit Matrix. Once completed, auditors must retain a copy of the Audit Matrix for a period of three (3) years from the audit date. Each matrix is to be given a document identifier (chosen by the auditor) and the identifier is included within the NHVAS Audit Summary Report so the NHVR can request the specific evidence gathered during a particular audit if required.

## Compliance Audit Notification and Audit Completion Notification forms

Control measures for audits being conducted include the [Compliance Audit Notification \(CAN\) form](#) and the [Audit Completion Notification \(ACN\) form](#).

The CAN must be submitted by an operator 28 days prior to the scheduled audit in order for the NHVR to accept or reject the chosen auditor nominated by the operator. The NHVR may request the operator to select a different auditor or the NHVR may nominate an auditor to undertake the audit.

An email confirming that the NHVR has approved the chosen auditor is provided to the operator and it is in the auditor's best interest to sight the approval before conducting the audit.

The ACN form is submitted by the auditor after completing an audit to indicate to the NHVR where the audit took place, who conducted the audit and the findings of the audit. The ACN form is emailed to [NHVASaudits@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:NHVASaudits@nhvr.gov.au).

The NHVR cross references these two documents which provides a strong control measure for ensuring integrity of the audit program.

## Alternate Auditor after approval

If the approved auditor is unable to conduct the audit as previously approved with the operator, the auditor may advise the NHVR of an alternative by email or the accredited operator can submit a new Compliance Audit Notification (ACN) form.

If providing an alternative, the auditor must provide the following information to [accreditation@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:accreditation@nhvr.gov.au):

- Alternate Auditors Name
- Auditors Registration Details
- Accredited Operators Details
- Accredited Operators NHVAS Number
- Date Audit is to be conducted

## NHVAS Audit Summary Report

NHVAS approved auditors must record a summary finding for all NHVAS audits on the current [NHVAS Audit Summary Report template](#) that is approved and published by the NHVR.

The NHVAS Audit Summary Report is the critical document that reports whether the operator is compliant or non-compliant with the standards of the relevant accreditation module.

The NHVAS Audit Summary Report references the audit matrix compiled during the audit using an ID numbering or lettering system established by the auditor. Where necessary the NHVR will request the audit matrix to be supplied, and the ID number used on the audit report will be the reference for the NHVR to use when requesting the required matrix.

The report also now captures the person responsible for the development of the management system.

## Non-conformances and Corrective Action Requests

Where non-conformances were previously subjectively categorised as major or minor this is no longer the case. An operator is considered as either compliant or non-compliant with a standard and the report is completed with a "V" for verified conformance or "NC" non-conformance and rectification action required.

Where rectification action is required the auditor issues a "Corrective Action Request" (CAR) on which the auditor details the non-conformance identified and the operator details the action that will be undertaken to rectify the non-conformance.

In some circumstances, the corrective action taken in response to the CAR may be simple and the non-conformance may be rectified by the operator at the time of the audit (or soon after) thus providing the necessary evidence for the auditor to close the CAR.

## Unconditional CARs

For a non-conformance remedied immediately at the time of audit (or soon after) the CAR is signed off by both the auditor and operator and closed out. The CAR is considered to be closed UNCONDITIONALLY.

## Conditional CARs

For non-conformances that can be immediately addressed, an agreed date for the completion is documented on the CAR. Where the operator proposes a corrective action that, in the opinion of the auditor, would remedy the non-conformance, when implemented, the CAR can be signed off by both the auditor and operator and is considered to be **CONDITIONALLY** closed.

The CAR has been closed on the condition that the operator fulfils the proposed corrective action.

In this instance the “signing off” of a CAR by the auditor does not mean that the non-conformance has been rectified but rather, it signifies that the operator has agreed to undertake remedial action by a certain date, and the auditor is satisfied that the action planned if implemented will be sufficient to remedy the non-conformance.

It is the operator’s responsibility to ensure that any action identified in a CAR is completed by the agreed date. In some instances, the corrective action the auditor accepted on the CAR may take some time to implement and complete.

In such circumstances, an agreed date will be set whereby the operator must notify the auditor that the corrective actions have been completed. The auditor may, at their discretion, request evidence from the operator that the corrective action has been completed by a particular date. The auditor is not required to revisit the place of audit to confirm completion of the corrective action but must satisfy themselves that the proposed corrective action has been undertaken.

An audit report that includes CARs that have been conditionally closed may be provided to an operator; however, it is the auditor's responsibility to follow up on the agreed implementation of the proposed actions. An operator may include a report that includes conditionally closed CARs with their applications. Where the operator fails to provide notification or evidence by the required date, the auditor must advise the NHVR to follow up.

Auditors may still provide suggestions for improvement where they feel that although the operator is compliant with the standard it is in the best interest of the operator to improve their process to strengthen their compliance to the standard.

## Auditor Code of Conduct

Auditor conduct is given consideration with inclusion of the "Auditor Code of Conduct" that is included in the audit framework. From 1 July 2016 a person wishing to carry out a NHVAS audit must be registered with the NHVR as an NHVAS approved auditor. Once registration approval has been given, the auditor is provided with a NHVR identification card and is bound by the "Auditor Code of Conduct" when conducting NHVAS audits or displaying their NHVR identification card.

NHVAS audits are conducted on behalf of the NHVR.

The NHVR ID card provided to registered auditors is a visible representation of the connection auditors have with the NHVR and it is expected that the NHVR brand is not to be tarnished or misrepresented at any time.

Where any breach of the code of conduct is substantiated the NHVR may withdraw the auditor's registration and if so any audits conducted by the person will not be accepted by the NHVR.

The code of conduct deals specifically with areas such as:

- conflict of interest;
- confidentiality;
- inducements;
- provision of false or misleading information;
- maintaining professional indemnity insurance;

behaviour that upholds the values, the integrity and reputation of the NHVR.

### Quarterly Compliance Reports (Module outcomes)

The NHVR recognises that auditors have operated without a great amount of support, guidance or ongoing assistance in the world of NHVAS auditing.

Guidance for the requirements of Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) quarterly reporting is one area that is often discussed. While some conjecture even exists if a BFM operator is to complete a quarterly report the NHVAS Business Rules & Standards released June 2015 make it clear that such a report must be completed.

It was not until the NHVAS Audit Framework was revised that clarification was provided and identified the specifics for what module outcomes are required and what are to be accounted for. The audit framework identifies the areas that must be covered within the quarterly report for all NHVAS modules as well as the sample size required for documentation to be viewed, relating to each module.

The audit framework is just one avenue of guidance available to NHVAS auditors. Auditors are welcome to make contact with the NHVR whenever they may feel the need for clarification or further information. The work auditors complete on our behalf is highly regarded and essential to the integrity and credibility of the scheme. With your continued efforts to conduct robust auditing, the scheme will continue to improve.

#### For more information:

Email: [accreditation@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:accreditation@nhvr.gov.au)

Visit: [www.nhvr.gov.au](http://www.nhvr.gov.au)

Subscribe: [www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe](http://www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe)

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