

Modifications to New Vehicles

Fitting bodies and tow couplings

Purpose

This guide provides advice for vehicle owners, modifiers and dealers regarding the requirements when modifying a new heavy vehicle by fitting a body or tow coupling.

Introduction

Heavy vehicles are generally manufactured locally or imported as a cab chassis and require work to make the vehicle fit for purpose and suit the operator's requirements. The most common modifications performed to a cab chassis vehicle before it is delivered to the vehicle owner is fitting a body or tow coupling.

While it is important to ensure the vehicle is configured correctly, it is just as important to ensure the modification has been carried out properly and has been approved correctly. Generally, the fitting of a body or tow coupling to a new cab-chassis vehicle falls into two categories.

Fitment as original equipment by original equipment manufacturer (OEM)

In some cases, the OEM may have included the fitment of a particular body or tow coupling as part of their Identification Plate Approval (IPA). If the OEM, or their representative, fits a manufacturer's original body or tow coupling to the vehicle before it is registered, this is classed as part of the vehicle build and does not need to be certified as a modification. Original equipment fitted in this way will be completed to meet the OEM's control and quality procedures and the OEM accepts responsibility for the design and fitment of such items.

To assist vehicle owners, enforcement officers and vehicle inspectors identify when a body or coupling was original equipment fitted by the OEM, from May 2015 an optional label (known as a Manufacturer's Plate) may be fitted to the vehicle by the OEM, or their representative. The Manufacturer's Plate provides information about what original equipment was installed and may also include important safety information such as the D-Rating value for a fifth wheel coupling.

More information about Manufacturer's Plates can be found in the [Truck Industry Council Code of Practice \(for Heavy Vehicles\) Manufacturer's Plates](#)

Fitment of non-original equipment

The fitting of a body or tow coupling that is not original equipment fitted by an OEM, is classed as a modification under the Heavy Vehicle National Law and must be approved by an Approved Vehicle Examiner (AVE).

AVEs are accredited persons who are able to assess and certify modifications to ensure they comply with the [National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's \(NHVR\) Code of Practice for the approval of Heavy Vehicle Modifications](#)

Once an AVE has certified a modification, they will affix a modification plate or label to the vehicle and also issue a modification certificate. The modification certificate may need to be provided to a State or Territory Transport Authority when performing registration transactions.



MANUFACTURER	
MANUFACTURER COMPETENT ENTITY No:	L00xxx
VIN:	AAA6XXYYZZ1234
DATE:	00/00
EQUIPMENT INSTALLED BY VEHICLE MANUFACTURER:	
XXXXXXXXXXXX	
XXXXXXXXXXXX	
THIS PLATE MUST NOT BE REMOVED	

Example Manufacturers Plate

Other modifications

This guide only provides information about the requirements for fitting a body or tow coupling to a new heavy vehicle. For information about performing other modifications to a new or in-service vehicle please contact an AVE in your State/Territory or visit www.nhvr.gov.au/hvmodifications

Complying with the national heavy vehicle safety standards

It is an offence to modify a heavy vehicle in a way that does not meet the standards in the NHVR Code or a modification approval issued by the NHVR. It is also an offence to use a modified heavy vehicle on a road if the modification has not been approved.

Penalties can include an on-the-spot fine and/or being issued with a defect notice.

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, improve safety and productivity, minimise the compliance burden on the heavy vehicle transport industry and reduce duplication and inconsistencies across state and territory borders.

The NHVR has a dedicated Vehicle Safety Standards team to help with modification applications and advise on any technical aspects.

Email vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au and your enquiry will be actioned by the relevant team member who will contact you by email or phone.

For more information:

Email: vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au

Visit: www.nhvr.gov.au/hvmodifications

Subscribe: www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe

Fax: 07 3309 8777

Post: PO Box 492, Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Phone: 1300 MYNHVR* (1300 696 487)

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

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



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