

Heavy vehicle dimension assessment

Compliance and Enforcement bulletin 3

This bulletin provides practical advice to help heavy vehicle drivers and operators comply with the Heavy Vehicle National Law (the national law) and provides information about some of the methods used to assess compliance with heavy vehicle dimension requirements.

This bulletin does not provide comprehensive information about dimension limits for heavy vehicles. For more detail, visit:

www.nhvr.gov.au/road-access/mass-dimension-and-loading

What are dimension requirements?

The prescribed dimension requirements (limits) for heavy vehicles are set out in the Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation. Other instruments, such as notices, permits or PBS vehicle approvals, can also prescribe certain dimension limits related to particular vehicles.

It is an offence to drive on a road a heavy vehicle that, together with its load, does not comply with the dimension limits applying to the vehicle.

How are heavy vehicle dimensions assessed?

Under the national law, dimension offences are categorised as minor, substantial and severe.

The offence category is proportionate to the level of risk to road and public safety and the potential damage to road infrastructure, all of which increase with the severity of the offence.

For more information on risk-based offence categorisation, visit: www.nhvr.gov.au/risk-based-categorisation-of-offences.

What is measurement adjustment?

Measurement adjustment is a nationally-agreed process that applies when a vehicle is being measured for compliance and enforcement purposes.

Measurement adjustment recognises that dimension assessment outcome may potentially vary from time to time, due to:

- the weighing and measuring equipment used
- the inspection site characteristics
- measuring methods
- the conditions under which the measurements are taken.



For example, when a vehicle is loaded exactly at the legal dimension limit, it is possible that the measured dimension (as indicated on measuring equipment) could be slightly more or slightly less than the legal limit, due to the variations in the dimension assessment process being used.

By applying an agreed adjustment to account for these possible variations, the measurement is based on the highest degree of accuracy achievable at any time. This means the assessment results can legally be relied upon in considering possible enforcement action.

How is dimension measurement adjustment (DMA) applied?

The DMA is deducted from the measured dimension to determine the assessed dimension.

- measured dimension (MD) - the reading obtained from the measuring device.
- assessed dimension (AD) - the measured dimension (MD) minus the relevant DMA.

$$MD - DMA = AD$$

The assessed dimension is compared with the dimension limit and breakpoints to determine the severity of any offence that may have occurred.

Dimension measurement adjustments

Dimension measured	Categories, measurements and applications	
Height	Category 1 - 30mm	Category 2 - 100mm
	All height measurements where: the site is an even surface; the highest point can be identified by line of sight; and the highest point is accessible with a height stick.	All height measurements that do not meet Category 1
Width	Category 1 - 20mm	
	All width measurements	
Length	Category 1 - 100mm	Category 2 - 300mm
	Vehicles that are not eligible to operate over 26 metres in length	Vehicles that are eligible to operate over 26 metres in length

How are dimension offences determined?

For unladen vehicles and combinations, breaches of dimension limits (breach is not caused by a load) are individual offences. They are not categorised offences.

For laden vehicles and combinations, breaches of dimension limits that are caused by the load are categorised, in the following table.

Overall width	Category	Applies to overall width offences where the breach is caused by the load
	Minor	Up to 39mm over the maximum permissible width limit
	Substantial	40mm up to 79mm over the maximum permissible width limit
	Severe	80mm or more over the maximum permissible width limit
Projecting loads	Category	Applies to loads that project from one or both sides of a vehicle where the breach is caused by the load
	Minor	Up to 39mm over the maximum permissible width/projection limit
	Substantial	40mm up to 79mm over the maximum permissible width/projection limit
	Severe	80mm or more over the maximum permissible width/projection limit
Overall height	Category	Applies to the overall height breaches where the breach is caused by the load
	Minor	Up to 149mm over the maximum permissible height limit
	Substantial	150mm up to 299mm over the maximum permissible height limit
	Severe	300mm or more over the maximum permissible height limit
Overall length	Category	Applies to overall length breaches where the breach is caused by the load
	Minor	Up to 349mm over the maximum permissible length limit
	Substantial	350mm up to 599mm over the maximum permissible length limit
	Severe	600mm or more over the maximum permissible length limit
Rear overhang	Category	Applies to rear overhang breaches where the breach is caused by the load
	Minor	Up to 349mm over the maximum permissible rear overhang limit
	Substantial	350mm up to 599mm over the maximum permissible rear overhang limit
	Severe	600mm or more over the maximum permissible rear overhang limit

What other actions can be taken?

This section describes the types of direction that can be issued for national law dimension breaches.

Minor risk breach

When a minor breach of a dimension requirement is detected the driver or operator may be directed to:

- rectify the breach immediately; or
- move the vehicle (with or without conditions) to a stated place, within a 30 kilometre radius from where the vehicle is located, or any point along the forward part of the journey and to not move the vehicle until the breach is rectified.

Substantial risk breach

When a substantial breach of a dimension requirement is detected the driver or operator will be issued a written notice, directing them to:

- not move the vehicle until the breach is rectified
- move the vehicle to a stated reasonable place and not to move it until the breach is rectified.

Examples of reasonable place include:

- a place where the heavy vehicle can be loaded or unloaded
- a depot of the heavy vehicle
- a weighbridge
- a rest area
- the intended destination of the heavy vehicle's journey, if appropriate.

Severe risk breach

When a severe breach of a dimension requirement is detected the driver or operator will be issued a written notice, directing them to:

- not move the vehicle until the breach is rectified,
- if there is a risk of harm to public safety; or an appreciable risk of harm to the environment, road infrastructure or public amenity, move the vehicle to the nearest stated safe location and not move it until the breach is rectified.

Examples of a safe location include:

- a place where the heavy vehicle can be loaded or unloaded
- a depot of the heavy vehicle
- a weighbridge
- a rest area
- the intended destination of the heavy vehicle's journey, if appropriate.

A direction given by an authorised officer will be in writing unless the moving of the vehicle is carried out in the presence of, or under the supervision of an authorised officer, in which case the direction can be given verbally.

Can my vehicle be defected if it is over dimension?

Yes, under the national law, a breach of a vehicle dimension requirement (excluding any load on or in the vehicle) as prescribed in the *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* may be treated as a breach of the Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation.

This means that if a single vehicle or vehicle forming part of a combination is detected breaching a prescribed dimension requirement, excluding any load on or in the vehicle, a defect notice may be issued.

Driver responsibilities

Before commencing a journey, drivers should ensure that:

- the vehicle they are driving complies with the relevant dimension requirements
- if the vehicle they are driving is operating under a notice or permit ensure that the vehicle and the operation of the vehicle complies with any conditions specified, including carrying a copy of the notice or permit (if required)
- the journey follows the route as approved under the relevant notice or permit noting any relevant bridge, tunnel or other dimension restrictions.

Operator responsibilities

Vehicle operators should ensure that:

- the vehicle and load complies with the relevant dimension requirements
- the driver is provided with the appropriate documents required to operate the heavy vehicle in compliance with the national law, any instrument or accreditation
- the driver is aware of their responsibilities in regard to the safe operation of the vehicle including any conditions imposed by a notice or permit the vehicle may be operating under
- the route is approved for travel under the relevant notice or permit noting any relevant bridge, tunnel or other dimension restrictions.

For more information

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