

Vehicle Standards Guide 19 (VSG-19)

Vehicle warning signs

Revised November 2019

This guide provides advice to heavy vehicle owners and operators about the requirements and specifications for vehicle warning signs for combinations longer than 22m.

Introduction

Under the *Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL)*, including notices and permits issued under the Law, certain longer combinations are required to be fitted with either 'Long Vehicle' or 'Road Train' warning sign.

The purpose of these signs is to ensure that other road users are aware that a combination is longer than they would normally encounter so that they can adjust their driving behaviour, for example by allowing more time when overtaking.

Amendments to the *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation* (the National Regulation), were introduced in July 2018, which allowed warning signs to be made from flexible material.

This review highlighted the complex requirements surrounding which vehicles require a warning sign. From 10 December 2019 further amendments to the National Regulation have been made that simplify these requirements.

Under the new requirements, combinations more than 22m but not longer than 30m will require a long vehicle sign displayed at the rear and combinations exceeding 30m in length will require a road train sign to be displayed at both the front and the rear.

Note: A vehicle operating under a specific authority, (e.g. a Notice, Permit or PBS Vehicle Approval) may have conditions relating to the type of warning sign it must display. These conditions override what is listed in Table 1.

New requirements

The new requirements for which warning sign that a combination is required to display is based on the vehicle's length, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Warning sign requirements

Vehicle length	Warning Sign	
	Long vehicle	Road train
22-30m long	✓	
Over 30m long		✓

Transitional requirements

The NHVR recognises that this means that some vehicles that were eligible to use either long vehicle or road train sign will now be required to use one or the other.

To assist those operators who will have a change in signage transition to the new requirements the NHVR has published the *National Heavy Vehicle Standards (Warning Signs for Combinations Longer than 22m) Exemption Notice*.

Under the transitional notice, certain vehicles as described in table 2, will be able to use either long vehicle or road train signs for up to 2 years.

Table 2: Transitional warning sign requirements

Vehicle combination and length	Warning Sign	
	Long vehicle	Road train
22-30m long road train with dog trailer	✓	✓
30-36.5m long road train with no dog trailer	✓	✓
30-36.5m long not a road train	✓	✓

Specifications for warning signs

There are very specific requirements for warning signs that include their size, colour and fonts. These requirements have not changed and operators will be able to continue using their existing signs.

Table 3 details the specifications for warning signs and appendix 1 provides examples. Installing and fitting warning signs

There are some basic requirements that must be met when positioning a warning sign on a vehicle:

- for a vehicle that requires road train warning signs, a warning sign must be affixed to the front and the rear of the combination
- for a vehicle that requires a long vehicle warning sign, a warning sign must be affixed to the rear of the combination

- the sign is displayed so that the entire sign is visible
- be maintained so that it can be easily read by other road users
- be affixed or attached to the vehicle so that it does not furl, fold up, flap or warp under any operating condition
- the bottom edge of the sign must be at least 500mm above the ground
- the top edge of the sign must not be more than 1.8m above the ground
- the sign must be installed horizontally
- if a two-part sign is used:
 - for a long vehicle warning sign, the part on the left must show the word 'LONG' and the part on the right must show the word 'VEHICLE'
 - for a road train warning sign, the part on the left must show the word 'ROAD' and the part on the right must show the word 'TRAIN'
 - both parts of the sign must be installed at the same height above the ground.

Table 3: Long vehicle and road train warning sign specifications

Material	Suitable for the intended use on the vehicle
Reflective	A yellow surface complying with Class 400 (previously known as class 1) or class 2 specification of Australian Standard 1906 <i>Retroreflective Materials and Devices for Road Traffic Control Purposes</i>
Dimensions (minimum)	1020mm long 250mm high
Wording	Letters must be a minimum of 180mm high Black capital letters in typeface Series B(N) complying with AS 1744 <i>Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs</i>
Border	Around outside of sign Note: a sign in two parts can have, but does not require, a border between the two parts.

Chain of Responsibility

Under the Chain of Responsibility (CoR) laws, relevant parties in the transport supply chain have a duty to ensure the safety of their transport activities.

Parties in the chain have an obligation to eliminate or minimise potential harm or loss (risk) by doing all that is reasonably practicable in their business to ensure safety.

Complying with the Heavy Vehicle National Law

The operator of a heavy vehicle must ensure their vehicle complies with the *Australian Design Rules* (ADRs) and *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation*. Using or permitting another person to use a defective heavy vehicle on a road is an offence.

A defective heavy vehicle is a vehicle that:

- does not comply with the heavy vehicle safety standards; or
- has a part that does not perform its intended function; or
- has deteriorated to an extent that it cannot be reasonably relied on to perform its intended function.

Penalties can include on-the-spot fines or prosecution. Formal warnings or a defect notice may also be issued. For more information see the Heavy vehicle defects—Compliance and enforcement bulletin at www.nhvr.gov.au/ce-bulletins.

For more information:

Subscribe: www.nhvr.gov.au/subscribe
 Visit: www.nhvr.gov.au/hvmodifications
 Phone: 1300 MYNHVR* (1300 696 487)
 Email: vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au

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

VSG19 Revision history

First Published	Dec 2017	
Revised	June 2018	Minor amendment
Revised	Nov 2019	Major review
Revised	Nov 2019	Minor amendment
Revised	January 2020	Minor amendment

Appendix 1: Warning sign specifications

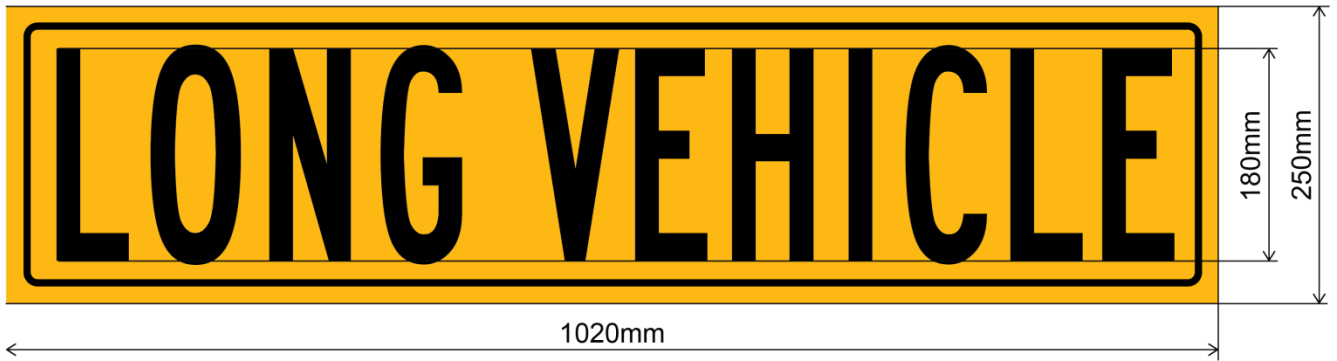


Figure 1: Long vehicle warning signs

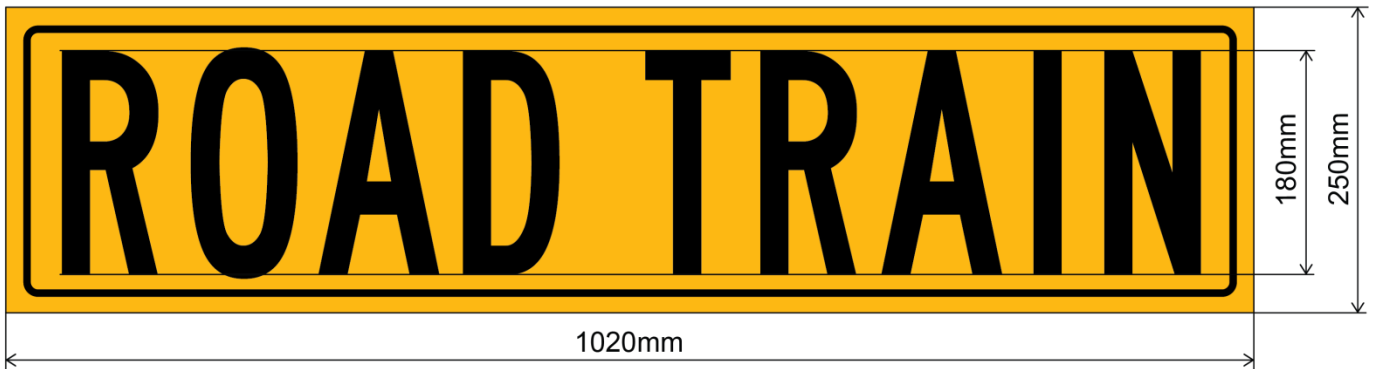


Figure 2: Road train warning signs