Vehicle Standards Guide 19 (VSG-19)

Vehicle warning signs

Revised June 2018

This guide provides advice to heavy vehicle owners and operators about the requirements and specifications for vehicle warning signs.

Introduction

Under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), including notices and permits issued under the Law, certain longer combinations of vehicle 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.

Historically, it has been a requirement that these signs are made from a rigid material, such as sheet steel. To provide more options to industry, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) published the National Heavy Vehicle Standards (Warning Sign) Exemption Notice 2017 which allowed warning signs made from flexible material.

Amendments to the Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation (the National Regulation), scheduled to commence in July 2018, introduce these changes into the Law, and the interim notice has been retracted.

This amendment does not change the requirements for what vehicles require a warning sign, the specifications of those signs or how they need to be positioned on the vehicle. These requirements and specifications for warning signs can be found in the National Regulation and are outlined in this guide.

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 the following Table 1.

What vehicles require a warning sign

The warning sign that a combination is required to display is based on the vehicle’s length and the types of vehicle in the combination, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination type</th>
<th>Warning Sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-36.5m long excluding road trains</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30m long road train with dog trailer</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-36.5m long road train without dog trailer</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30m long trailer with dog trailer</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any combination over 36.5m long</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Warning sign requirements.

Specifications for warning signs

There are very specific requirements for warning signs that include their size, colour and fonts. Table 2 details the specifications for warning signs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Suitable for the intended use on the vehicle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>A yellow surface complying with Class 400 (previously known as class 1) or class 2 specification of Australian Standard 1906 Retroreflective Materials and Devices for Road Traffic Control Purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions (minimum)</td>
<td>1020mm long 250mm high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wording</td>
<td>Letters must be a minimum of 180mm high Black capital letters in typeface Series B(N) complying with AS 1744 Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border</td>
<td>Around outside of sign Must not be border between parts of a split sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Long vehicle and road train warning sign specifications
Figure 1: Long vehicle warning signs

Figure 2: Road train warning signs
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.

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
Phone: 1300 MYNHVR* (1300 696 487)
Email: vehiclestandards@nhvr.gov.au

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