Vehicle Standards Guide 23 (VSG-23)
26 metre B-double Car Carriers

This document provides advice to the heavy vehicle
industry about changes that will be made to the
requirements for a combination that is a B-double and is
fitted with two decks for carrying vehicles.

Introduction

The Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading)
National Regulation (the Regulation) states the
maximum length for a B-double combination.

25 metre B-double car carriers are permitted to have a
car carrying frame fitted above the prime mover’s cabin,
however, prime movers used in B-double combinations
that measured 26 metres were not previously permitted
to have an area built to carry goods.

Recent amendments to the Regulation allow a prime
mover in a 26 metre B-double combination that is
carrying, or built to carry, other vehicles to have a deck
fitted over the top of the prime mover.

B-double prime mover requirements

Not all B-double rated prime movers can be used in a 26
metre B-double combination. The Regulation requires
the prime mover to be fitted with:

- a front underrun protection device that
  complies with UN ECE Regulation No. 93 or ADR
  84–Front Underrun Impact Protection
- a cabin that complies with UN ECE Regulation
  No. 29

These requirements will continue to apply to vehicles
used as car carriers.

Steer axle limits

A deck fitted to the top of the prime mover combined
with the load must not cause the prime mover to exceed
regulated steer axle limits.

The steer axle limit on vehicles used in a B-double
combination is 6t, unless the vehicle is a complying steer
axle vehicle.

The axle mass limit on a complying steer axle vehicle is
6.5t.

A complying steer axle vehicle that has all of the
following:

- an engine complying with the emission control
  requirements contained in ADR 80/01 (Euro IV
  engine) or a later version of ADR 80
- appropriately rated tyres, axle and suspension to
  permit 6.5t on the steer axle
- a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 15t or more.

Approved modifications

Where a prime mover is modified so as to accommodate
a deck designed for the carrying of cars above the cabin,
the modifications must be carried out in line with
manufacturers specifications or VSB6.

A car carrying frame fitted to a prime mover is
considered to be a body and my be assessed and
certified by an appropriately accredited Approved
Vehicle Examiner (AVE) under VSB6 Modification Code
J1.

Note: A prime mover used in a 26 metre B-double
combination and is not a car carrier, must continue to comply with the
requirement to not have an area carrying, or built to carry,
goods.

Note: The AVE must ensure as part of the certification that the
mass that the frame and the load it will carry will impose on
the vehicle’s steer axle will not exceed regulatory limits.

When fitting a car carrying frame, there are a number of
other matters that must be considered, including:

- any modifications to the vehicle’s cabin must be
  assessed and certified under Section K Cabin of VSB6,
  including the impact on compliance with UN ECE
  Regulation No. 29
- any modifications to the chassis, such as the drilling
  of additional mounting holes for the frame or the
  fitting of additional or alternate cross members must
  be assessed and certified under Section H Chassis of
  VSB6
- the vehicle, as modified, must be assessed for
  ongoing compliance with the requirements for front
  underrun protection.
Complying with the national heavy vehicle safety standards

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