

## National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS)

The NHVAS was first offered to the heavy vehicle industry in 1999 as an alternative compliance system. Since 10 February 2014, the NHVR has been the single administrator and national point of contact for the NHVAS.

It has since evolved as a formal process for recognising operators that have robust safety and other management systems in place.

It is also increasingly being used to show compliance with general duty requirements under the Heavy Vehicle National Law.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for accreditation under NHVAS, operators need to provide documentary and auditable evidence that they comply with the relevant NHVAS module's standards.

An operator must:

- read and understand the *NHVAS Business Rules* and relevant module standards and your responsibilities
- develop and maintain an in-house safety management system
- document the procedures that staff must follow to achieve compliance with NHVAS standards
- produce (and keep for audit) documents and other evidence that prove compliance with the relevant standards
- undertake internal audits and review
- undergo independent audits
- be an individual or company to be granted accreditation.

### NHVAS Business Rules & Standards Updated October 2020

The November 2019 Transport Infrastructure Council meeting endorsed the revised NHVAS Business Rules and Standards that encourage further alignment with Safety Management System principles as well adding clarifications to avoid misunderstandings.

#### Business Rules changes and amendments

- Registration status for nominated vehicles clarified – vehicles must be registered to be nominated

- Assessment criteria as fit and proper to participate in the scheme added
- Timeframe to reapply after accreditation has been refused or cancelled is six months
- Clarification of the criteria to be able to be granted the maximum three years of accreditation added
- Inclusion for operators to report significant crash or incident as a Notifiable Occurrence
- Owner of a sub-contractor vehicle has the right to remove the vehicle from an accreditation
- *Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) Business Rules* and standards are now included as part of a single document covering all modules.
- References to Fatigue Expert Reference Group (FERG) replaced with advice from jurisdictions and third parties
- FERG requirements replaced with ability for NHVR to seek external specialist advice.

### Standards – Major Changes

- Vehicles declared “safe” not “roadworthy” after the maintenance daily check
- Tow couplings to be checked daily
- Vehicles to be inspected by a qualified person annually
- Register of infringements and defects to be kept
- Mass management nominated vehicle loaded mass to be verified twice per year
- AFM & BFM use the same seven standards
- Ensuring the vehicle as a workplace meets with workplace safety legislation (fatigue modules)
- Vehicle statement of compliance no longer required to be carried.

### Applying for Accreditation

The NHVR Portal is the access point for all NHVAS related transactions including an application to join the NHVAS.

By logging into the NHVR Portal ([www.service.nhvr.gov.au](http://www.service.nhvr.gov.au)) and navigating to the NHVAS section, an application to join the scheme can be submitted. Before submitting an application, a set of policies and procedures related to the relevant module will need to have been adopted and audited by a NHVAS approved auditor.

Individual guides for each of the modules are available that set the policies and procedures that need to be adopted and audited.

## Maintaining Accreditation

Operators must seek approval to use their chosen auditor who will audit their system. Only NHVR-registered auditors may conduct NHVAS audits.

To have their auditor approved, the operator must submit a Compliance Audit Application (CAA) form no later than 28 days prior to the date of the audit.

The NHVR may nominate a different auditor to the one nominated on the CAA application or request the operator to choose a different auditor.

An auditor or consultant cannot be nominated by the operator as a Third Party to act on behalf of the operator's accreditation. An application to maintain accreditation may be submitted up to six months but no later than one month prior to the expiry date.

## Benefits of NHVAS accreditation

### Mass Management

- Operators with mass management accreditation can operate at concessional mass limits (CML)
- Under the mass management module, operators are required to develop a management system that ensures they have a loading system that controls both axle and gross mass within the CML.

Trip records are required whenever the vehicle or combination is loaded above general mass limits (GML). Both axle and gross mass records are to be kept where practical. As a minimum, the gross mass records must be kept for every trip the vehicle takes when loaded above GML. The gross mass and individual axle group masses must be verified twice a year in line with an operator's mass management system. The verification process is done using a certified weighbridge that provides a record detailing when and which vehicle was weighed, along with the mass of all individual axle groups and the gross mass of the vehicle.

The verification process is different to the assessment (loading method/process) of the mass of the vehicle prior to commencement of each trip. The operator's policies and procedures must contain adequate controls that ensure individual axle group masses and the gross mass remain within the legal limits.

## Maintenance Management

- Operators with maintenance management accreditation have systems in place to ensure their vehicles are safe at all times
- A minimum set of safety checks are completed each day a vehicle nominated under maintenance management is used to ensure the vehicle is safe
- Once a year the operator has a qualified person inspect vehicles nominated under the scheme and provide a report on the mechanical condition.

## Basic Fatigue Management (BFM)

- Operators with BFM accreditation can operate under more flexible work and rest hours, allowing, for example, a total of up to 14 hours work in a 24-hour period
- BFM provides operators some additional flexibility for when drivers can work and rest, as long as the risks of driver fatigue are managed.

## Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM)

- AFM brings a genuine risk management approach to managing heavy vehicle driver fatigue
- Rather than prescribing work and rest hours, AFM offers more flexibility than Standard Hours or BFM, in return for the operator demonstrating greater accountability for managing their drivers' fatigue risks.

### About the NHVR

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) is Australia's dedicated independent regulator for heavy vehicles over 4.5t 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.

### For more information:

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