
TRANSPORT NEWS

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Concessional Mass Limits

Concessional Mass Limits (CML) was introduced into many Australian States on July 1, 2006. CML provides for operators accredited under the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) Mass Management Accreditation programme to carry an additional 1000 kg above the statutory Mass Limits for Gross Mass provided weigh tolerances for individual axles and groups are not exceeded. As is the case with Increased Mass Limits (providing up to 2500 kg extra mass on road friendly triaxle suspensions and 500 kg on road friendly tandem axle groups) there is no tolerance provided under CML.

Details of CML and Mass Adjustments (tolerances for statutory operations) are available from the following South Australian sites (Check other State authorities for information pertinent to the operation within the particular jurisdictions)

CML - http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/freight/road/vehicle_configuration/concession_mass.asp

Mass Adjustments - <http://www.transport.sa.gov.au/publications/legislation.asp>

Fuel Tax Credits for Heavy Diesel Vehicles

Also from July 1, 2006 is the implementation of the new Fuel Tax Credit Scheme for Heavy Diesel Vehicles. This legislation is primarily covered by the Australian Taxation Office and as such the monetary requirements should be discussed with your accountant.

To be eligible to make a claim under this legislation, heavy trucks (Those with a GVM rating of 4500 kg or more) are classified into the following 4 Criteria

Criterion 1	Manufactured on and after 1 January 1996 (Trucks manufactured prior 1 January 1999 may be eligible if fitted with a Post 1 January 1996 engine)
Criterion 2	Operator registered in an audited maintenance programme accredited by the Transport Secretary
Criterion 3	Vehicles meet Rule 147A of the Australian Vehicle Standards Rules 1990. This requires that the truck must have undertaken a "DT80" test at an approved facility within the preceding 2 years.
Criterion 4	Vehicles maintained in accordance with a maintenance schedule endorsed by the Transport Secretary.

The publications "Fuel Tax Credit for Heavy Diesel Vehicles" from the Department of Transport and regional Services (DOTaRS) provides important information to operators. The publication can be downloaded from http://www.dotars.gov.au/roads/environment/fuel_tax_credit/guidelines.aspx. This site provides details of accredited programmes and test facilities.

It is our current view that for most operators the easiest method to comply (for trucks manufactured prior to 1 January 1999) is to use Criterion 4.

This has examined the requirements in a simplistic manner. Operators should make themselves fully aware of all the requirements and meet them in the manner that best suits their business.

Preparing For NHVAS Audits

Preparation for an audit should be a simple task as the standards require on-going work to maintain documentation throughout the accreditation period. The main points are as follows;

Procedures

All procedures must be current and available. The **Procedures Manual** is the means by which most operators document the procedures to meet the various standards. A manual is not essential but if not used the auditor will expect that the operator can provide copies of procedures that address each standard within the various modules. All relevant personnel must have access to the procedures they must use.

Internal Review

An Internal Review annually covering all standards. The review must be documented by way of the **Annual Internal Review Report**. The report must show that all standards have been reviewed and can be likened to the audit undertaken by the external auditor towards the end of each accreditation period. It is recommended that the Internal Review is undertaken at a time that provides the opportunity for the operator to rectify any problems and hence show the auditor that the system is functioning

Quarterly Compliance Statements are required for all quarters. The Quarterly Statement is a means to record the level of compliance with Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) such as daily checks, fault reporting and repairs, regular maintenance (maintenance accreditation) and overloading and off route travel (mass management).

Non Conformance Reporting

The Non Conformance Report (NCR) or Corrective Action Report (CAR) should be used to record matters requiring correction or improvements that can be made. The NCR or CAR should identify the problem, document the required action to rectify the problem, and (if appropriate) document any action to prevent recurrence (e.g. follow up)

Vehicle Register

The vehicle register is used to list all vehicles, and, in the case of Mass Management, show that all equipment has adequate manufacturer's and registration ratings to undertake the task. Where vehicles are operating in excess of the manufacturer's plated ratings it is recommended that an appropriate Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) approval plate is fitted. **TEAM** is authorised to undertake this work.

The Vehicle register will also show the date of entry and exit from the accreditation scheme for vehicles. A sample Vehicle Register sheet is available on our web site.

Training

A training record should be available for all personnel having duties as part of the accreditation scheme, particularly drivers, but also administrative personnel.

Records

All records must be kept for a period of three years from the last entry. This includes equipment maintenance records for equipment no longer accredited (whether still in the fleet or not)