

Motor Vehicle Registry Information Bulletin

V48 - Imported Vehicles

1. Introduction

This bulletin is a summary of the technical requirements for the registration of imported vehicles in the Northern Territory, subject to any importation conditions imposed by the Federal Transport Department.

Note: Vehicles imported into Australia must meet all federal importation requirements. Federal importation requirements are outlined in the [Federal Government's Brochure – Importing Vehicles into Australia](#).

2. Terms

GVM	Gross Vehicle Mass (laden mass rating of the vehicle)
VIA	Vehicle Import Approval (document/s issued by the Federal Transport Department)
IPA	Identification Plate Approval
ADR	Australian Design Rules (national motor vehicle standards)
VSB	Vehicle Standards Bulletin (national code of practice)
RAW	Registered Automotive Workshop
SEVS	Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme
NT	Northern Territory of Australia
MVR	Motor Vehicle Registry (NT registration authority)
AVSR	Australian Vehicle Standards Rules (schedule of NT legislation)

3. General Requirements

3.1. Vehicle Import Approval

All vehicles imported for use on the road network require a VIA. This document is issued by the Federal Transport Department.

3.2. Steering Conversion

Any steering conversion (left hand drive to right hand drive) must be modified in accordance with the [“Vehicle Standards Bulletin 4 – Steering Conversions for Left Hand Drive Vehicles”](#).

3.3. Engineering Certification

Where engineering certification is required to certify the imported/modified vehicle with applicable ADRs or other nationally recognised standards, a list of NT recognised engineering signatories is available – refer to [“Information Bulletin V83 – Recognised \(Northern Territory\) Engineering Signatories”](#).

3.4. NT Roadworthy Requirements

Certain import schemes require vehicles to comply with ADRs.

All imported vehicles must meet minimum roadworthy requirements for registration including compliance with NT legislation (i.e. Motor Vehicle (Standards) Regulations - Australian Vehicle Standards Rules, NT Vehicle Inspection Manual).

3.5. Interstate Transfer of Imported Vehicle Registration

Imported vehicles accepted for registration in the NT may not necessarily be acceptable in other jurisdictions (i.e. left hand drive).

3.6. Selling an Imported Vehicle

If a vehicle has met the requirements for import approval and initial registration, there is no restriction preventing the subsequent sale of an imported vehicle unless conditions have been applied to the VIA.

It is an offence to supply to the market (i.e. to sell for use on a public road) a vehicle that has been imported for use in transport but does not meet the ADRs or is not fitted with an Identification Plate, Used Import Plate or Personal Import plate.

4. Personal Import Scheme

The Personal Import Scheme is a concession that allows a personally imported vehicle to be registered in Australia without needing to comply with all of the ADRs. The vehicle must, however, provide an accepted alternative minimum level of safety as specified in the **Appendix** and must be in a roadworthy condition.

Personally imported vehicles not over 4.5t GVM may be registered in the NT in right-hand or left-hand drive configuration. Whilst the NT may accept these vehicles in a left-hand drive configuration, they may not be accepted for registration or operation in another State or Territory.

Vehicles over 4.5t GVM must be right-hand drive configuration – other than special purpose vehicles.

4.1. Personal Import Approval Documentation

The VIA issued under this scheme is a four-part document and must be presented at the time of first registration by the person who imported the vehicle and who is named on the VIA.

The documentation consists of:

- a copy for Australian Customs clearance (may be retained by Customs);
- a copy for the registering authority;
- a copy for the issue of a personal import plate, and
- a copy to be retained with the vehicle.

4.2. Personal Import Plate

A personal import plate can be obtained after the vehicle has been inspected at an MVR Vehicle Standards Centre and is deemed to meet an acceptable safety standard as outlined in the **Appendix**.

Once the vehicle has passed inspection, the relevant VIA documents will be signed by an approved officer and returned to the owner. The vehicle owner (who must be the person named on the VIA) is required to forward this documentation to an approved plate manufacturer who will then manufacture and issue the personal import plate. The plate manufacturer will send the personal import plate directly to the owner.

The vehicle must be re-inspected by an MVR Inspector to finalise the registration process. It is advisable to consult an MVR Inspector regarding the location and fitment of the plate.

5. Heavy Vehicles over 4.5t GVM - (excluding special purpose vehicles over 4.5t GVM)

Vehicles over 4.5t GVM must be right-hand drive.

If the vehicle is built on a conventional truck chassis it will be classed as a truck. If the vehicle has more than 9 seating positions, including the driver's seat, it is classed as a bus.

Vehicles imported under this category must have an Australian Identification Plate fitted via the "Letter of Compliance Scheme", "RAW Scheme" or "Low Volume Approval Scheme".

5.1. Trucks up to 12t GVM and Buses with up to 12 Seating Positions

Trucks with a GVM up to 12t and buses with up to 12 seating positions must comply with the ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of original manufacture.

5.2. Trucks over 12t GVM and Buses with more than 12 Seating Positions

Trucks over 12t GVM and buses with more than 12 seating positions must comply with the ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of importation.

6. Special Purpose Vehicles over 4.5t GVM

Special purpose vehicles are designed and built for purposes other than the transport of goods or people (i.e. purpose-built cranes).

Special purpose vehicles over 4.5t GVM may be registered in the NT in right-hand or left-hand drive configuration. Whilst the NT may accept these vehicles in a left-hand drive configuration, they may not be accepted for registration or operation in another State or Territory.

For special purpose vehicles in the left-hand drive configuration, "**Left Hand Drive**" signage requirements will apply.

This sign is to be displayed on the rear of the vehicle with words of a font size of at least 75mm high and in colour contrast with the background of the words – refer Motor Vehicle (Standards) Regulations (Rule 63, Australian Vehicle Standards Rules).

7. Small Trailers not more than 4.5t Aggregate Trailer Mass

Imported small trailers must comply with the requirements of “VSB 1 Building Small Trailers”.

Note:

Common areas of non-compliance with VSB1 have been noted in the Department’s [Vehicle Inspector’s Bulletin 13 Light Trailer Requirements – Compliance with VSB1](#)”.

8. Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA)

This agreement allows temporary importation of vehicles owned by overseas military personnel for personal use during their tour of duty.

Vehicles entering the NT under this agreement are not exempt from NT registration requirements.

NT registration requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The vehicle must comply with the roadworthy requirements of the home (overseas) jurisdiction in which the vehicle was most recently registered (verification evidence may be requested); and
- The vehicle must comply with the roadworthy condition as outlined in the [Northern Territory Light Vehicle Inspection Manual](#).

SOFA vehicles are not required to be converted to right hand drive.

9. Modified Imported Vehicle

Where an imported vehicle has undergone modifications, it may be subject to assessment through the NT’s Modified Vehicle assessment process ([refer Information Bulletin V32 Vehicle Modifications](#)).

10. Vehicle Standards Requirements (weblinks)

- [NT legislation](#)
- [MVR Publications](#)

11. NT Registration Requirements

Evidence of NT Residency and vehicle ownership requirements apply – refer to [MVR Website](#).

Appendix

Safety Requirements for Personally Imported Passenger Cars, Light Trucks and Four Wheel Drives (not more than 4.5t GVM)

The minimum safety requirements are as follows:

A.1 Front Row Outboard Seats

Lap sash seat belts in vehicles manufactured in 1969 or later.

A.2 Centre Front Seat (where fitted)

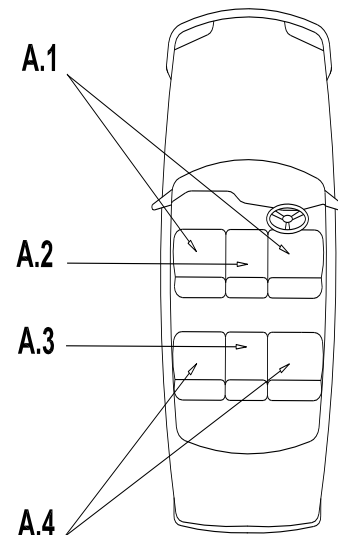
Lap seat belt in all vehicles manufactured in 1969 or later.

A.3 Centre Rear Seat

Lap seat belt in all vehicles manufactured in 1971 or later.

A.4 Rear Outboard Seats

Lap sash seat belts in all vehicles manufactured in 1971 or later.



A.5 Seat Belt Markings

All seatbelt assemblies (including seatbelts) must bear approved markings. Where a manufacturer has elected not to affix an approved marking each seatbelt assembly must be permanently and legibly marked with at least the manufacturer's name, initials or trade name or mark must be affixed in a suitable space to every seatbelt. The particulars must be clearly legible and may be permanently affixed either by means of a label or by direct marking. The label or marking must be resistant to wear.

A.6 Child Restraint Anchorages

The following passenger vehicles must be fitted with child restraint anchorages for each rear seating position (except light passenger vans which require a minimum of 3 child restraint anchorages):

- sedans manufactured after July 1976;
- station wagons manufactured after January 1977;
- hatchbacks manufactured after January 1977;
- light passenger vans (up to 12 seats) manufactured after January 1986 (minimum 3 anchorages);
- four wheel drive vehicles manufactured after July 1990.

Generally, sports cars and vehicles that are designed for commercial purposes do not have anchorage points.

A.7 Glazing

All glazing used in the vehicle's windscreen, windows or interior partition must be approved safety glass.

In the case of a windscreen, it must have no tinted film in the area swept by windscreen wipers. Not less than 75% visible light transmission is allowed for the windscreen. If the windscreen is heat-treated glass, it shall carry an appropriate identifying mark usually including the letters TP, TS or TF, and shall have a modified zone on the right hand side of the vehicle, i.e. in front of the driver. If it is a laminated windscreen, it shall carry a mark incorporating the symbol WHP or ASI.

Glazing other than windscreens may have limited tinting, but must carry an identifying mark which, for heat treated glass usually includes letters TP, TS or TF, or for laminated glass the symbol LP, LS, LF or AS2. Any window tint applied to side and rear windows must meet the requirements outlined in the department's [Information Bulletin V51 – Vehicle Window Tinting](#).

A.8 Lights and Reflectors

The following lights and reflectors meeting the intent of applicable ADRs must be fitted:

- at least two white front parking lights;
- amber turn-signal lights (two at the front and two at the rear);
- at least two white headlights which have a dipping device which deflects the beam downwards and to the left;
- High Intensity Discharge (HID) lamps must meet the intent of applicable Australian Design Rules
- at least two red tail lights and two red stop lights;
- a rear registration plate illumination light; and
- two rear red reflectors.

Note; Flashing brake and or tail lights are **not** permitted. (S.O.F.A. and Carnet vehicles exempt)

A.9 Head Restraints

The front outer seats of passenger vehicles and light buses (category MA, MB, MC and MD1) built after 1988 and commercial vehicles (category NA) built after 1996, must have head restraints.

If head restraints are of the removable type (i.e. not built into the seat), they will be accepted provided they would not be likely to collapse or separate from the seat in a crash.

"Clip-on" head restraints are not acceptable.

A.10 Driving Position

Personally imported left-hand drive vehicles may be acceptable in the NT. These vehicles must be fitted with external rear vision mirrors on both the left and right hand side of the vehicle.

If the vehicle is converted to right-hand drive, it must be done in accordance with the technical requirements for left to right-hand drive conversions described in the federally published "[Vehicle Standards Bulletin 4 – Steering Conversions for Left Hand Drive Vehicles](#)".

Summary Matrix of Northern Territory Requirements Imported Vehicles Permanent Import Options

	Import Scheme	VIA (documents)	Identification Plates	Vehicle Compliance (addition to Roadworthy Requirements)	Comments
	Pre-1989 Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Certification to meet ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of Manufacture (where ADRs are applicable)	NT registration available Left hand drive permitted for vehicles not more than 4.5t GVM
1.	Personal Imports Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (4 parts)	Personal Import Plate Required	Roadworthy Requirements	NT registration available Left hand drive permitted for vehicles not more than 4.5t GVM
2.	Returning Australian Vehicles Arrangement (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Required	As per Identification Plate	NT registration available
3.	Small Road Trailer Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Vehicle Plate Required	Compliance with VSB 1 Building Small Trailers	NT registration available
4.	Large Road Trailer Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Required for new trailers	As per Identification Plate	NT registration available
			Not required for used trailers	Certification to meet ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of importation (where ADRs are applicable)	
5.	Race and Rally Vehicle Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Not Applicable	NT registration not available
6.	Letter of Compliance Arrangement (Permanent Import Option)	Required (2 parts)	Required	As per Manufacturer's letter of Compliance	NT registration available
7.	Special Purpose Vehicle Scheme (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Roadworthy Requirements	NT registration available Left hand drive permitted with signage requirements
8.	Exhibition Vehicle Option (Permanent Import Option / Non-Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Registration not available
9.	Discretionary Approvals (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Subject to VIA and individual assessment	Subject to VIA and individual assessment	Subject to VIA and individual assessment
10.	Non-Road Vehicles: Off-Road and Non-Transport Equipment Assessment Option (Permanent Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Applicable	Not applicable	Registration not available

Summary Matrix of Northern Territory Requirements Imported Vehicles *Temporary Import Options*

	Import Scheme	VIA (documents)	Identification Plates	Vehicle Compliance	Comments
11.	Carnet (Temporary Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Roadworthy Requirements	NT registration available Left hand drive permitted
12.	Temporary Import Options (Temporary Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Registration not available
13.	Vehicles in Transit Scheme (Temporary Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Registration not available
14.	Status of Forces Agreement (Temporary Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Roadworthy Requirements	NT registration available Left hand drive permitted

Imported Vehicles *Commercial Import Options*

	Import Scheme	VIA (documents)	Identification Plates	Vehicle Compliance	Comments
15.	Full Volume Scheme (Commercial Import Option)	Refer to IPA	Required	Certification to meet ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of Manufacture	NT registration available
16.	Low Volume Scheme (Commercial Import Option)	Refer to SEVS	Required	Certification to meet ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of Manufacture	NT registration available
17.	Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme (Commercial Import Option)	Refer to SEVS	Required	Certification to meet ADRs applicable to the vehicle's date of Manufacture	NT registration available
18.	Test and Evaluation Vehicles (Commercial Import Option)	Required (1 part)	Not Required	Statement of intended compliance with ADRs	Conditional NT registration available

Contact Details

Motor Vehicle Registry	
Telephone	1300 654 628
Facsimile	(08) 8999 3103
Email	mvr@nt.gov.au
Web	www.mvr.nt.gov.au
Postal Address	GPO Box 530 Darwin NT 0801