

V48 - Imported vehicles – low volume

Information Bulletin

Introduction

This bulletin provides an outline for registration of low volume imported vehicles in the Northern Territory. For information on high volume (commercial quantities) of imported vehicles, refer to <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle>

All imported vehicles require import approval from the Commonwealth department for road vehicles – except Carnet and SOFA temporary imports. Vehicles imported for road use must meet the minimum standards for roadworthiness unless concessions apply.

New rules

From July 2021, the Commonwealth *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018* (RVSA) introduces a Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) to replace the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*. The RAV is an online, publicly searchable, database of vehicles approved for use on Australian roads. The RAV replaces the need to fit road vehicles with identification plates that contain compliance and certification information.

Under the new rules, imported vehicles will need to have a presence on the RAV unless a non-RAV entry import applies.

Import vehicle category pathways are:

- RAV
 - Type approval (commercial quantity more than 4 per year)
 - Concessional (older vehicles, RAW, SEV, returning Australian vehicles, SPV, personal vehicles, up to 4 light or heavy trailers)
- Non-RAV
 - SPV
 - Temporary imports (rally cars, Carnet, SOFA, test/evaluation)
 - Non road vehicles (exhibition vehicle)

For more information:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/rav/index.aspx>

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/rvs/resources>

Transitional arrangements

The transitional period before the full implementation of the RVSA has been extended by 12 months which is due to commence from 1 July 2023.

Vehicles with import approval issued prior to July 2021 will be assessed on requirements applicable to its approval. For more information: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/rvs/transitional-arrangements>

Terms

GVM	Gross Vehicle Mass (laden mass rating of the vehicle)
VIA	Vehicle Import Approval (document/s issued by the Commonwealth department for road vehicles)
IPA	Identification Plate Approval
ADR	Australian Design Rules (national motor vehicle standards)
VSBS	Vehicle Standards Bulletin (national code of practice)
RAW	Registered Automotive Workshop
SEVS	Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicle Scheme
RAV	Register of Approved Vehicles
NT	Northern Territory of Australia
MVR	Motor Vehicle Registry (NT registration authority)
AVSR	Australian Vehicle Standards Rules (schedule of NT legislation)
Light vehicle – not more than 4.5 tonne GVM/ATM	
Heavy vehicle – more than 4.5 tonne GVM/ATM	

General requirements

1. Vehicle Import Approval (VIA)

All vehicles imported for use on the road network require a VIA – except Carnet and SOFA.

A VIA issued prior to July 2021 may be an IPA (compliance plate) or a document issued by the Commonwealth or a vehicle presence on the RAV.

A VIA issued from July 2021 may be a vehicle a document issued by the Commonwealth or a vehicle presence on the RAV.

For more information: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/vehicles/imports/>

2. NT roadworthy requirements

All imported vehicles must meet minimum roadworthy requirements for NT registration including compliance with NT legislation (i.e. *Motor Vehicle (Standards) Regulations 2003 - Australian Vehicle Standards Rules*, NT Vehicle Inspection Manual).

For more information on NT roadworthiness and legislation, refer to [Section 14. NT vehicle standards information](#).

3. Engineering certification

Certain import options require vehicles to comply with ADRs while other options may offer concessions.

- From 1969, second edition ADRs apply.
- From July 1988, third edition ADRs apply.

Where engineering certification is required to certify the imported/modified vehicle complies or meets the intent with applicable ADRs or other nationally recognised standards, a list of available

NT recognised engineering signatories can be viewed – refer to [“Information Bulletin V83 – Recognised \(Northern Territory\) Engineering Signatories”](#).

ADR check lists are available to assist with certification requirements:

- [National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Construction and Modification](#) (VSB 14 – Section LO)
- [National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual](#) (Appendix A in the manual summarises second edition ADRs)
- [Road Vehicle Certification System](#) (ADR Applicability Tables and Vehicle Inspection Forms).

4. Modified imported vehicle

Where an imported vehicle has undergone modifications, it may be subject to assessment through the NT modified vehicle assessment process (refer to [Information Bulletin V32\(lv\) Light Vehicle Modifications](#) or [Information Bulletin V32\(hv\) Heavy Vehicle Modifications](#)).

5. Left hand drive steering

NT allows left hand drive configuration for the following import categories:

- Imported light vehicles older than 25 years
 - For vehicle category and eligibility criteria - refer to SEVs <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/motor-vehicle-standards-laws/sevs>
- Personal imported light vehicles
- SOFA imports
- Carnet imports
- Special Purpose Vehicles

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”](#).

Whilst the NT may accept these vehicles in a left-hand drive configuration, they may not be accepted for registration or use in another state or territory.

Heavy road vehicles must be right-hand drive configuration (excluding SPV).

6. Special purpose vehicles (non-road vehicles) over 4.5 tonne GVM

Special purpose vehicles are designed and built for purposes other than the transport of goods or people (i.e. purpose-built cranes). Generally, a “letter of support” for registration in Australia needs to be provided by an Australian Registration Authority to support an application to import a special purpose vehicle.

For more information:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle/non-rav-entry-import-approvals>

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle/concessional-rav-entry-approvals>

For special purpose heavy 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 2003 (Rule 63, Australian Vehicle Standards Rules)*. For more information: <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/>

7. Personal import (personal effects) vehicle

This option allows migrants settling in Australia or expatriate Australian citizens returning permanently to Australia after a long period overseas to import their personal vehicle with them as long as it has been owned for the qualifying 12 month period.

For more information: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle/concessional-rav-entry-approvals>

The personal vehicle option provides a concession that allows a personally imported light 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 and must be in a roadworthy condition.

Personally imported light vehicles 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 use in another state or territory.

Heavy road vehicles must be right-hand drive configuration (excluding SPV).

Personal import VIA

A VIA issued prior to July 2021 may include:

- Approval on Customs clearance
- Approval for the registering authority
- Approval for the issue of a personal import plate
- Approval for the vehicle owner

From July 2021, a VIA will show a vehicle presence on the RAV.

Personal import plate (VIA issued prior to July 2021)

Once the vehicle has passed inspection, the relevant VIA documents will be signed by an MVR Inspector and returned to the owner. The vehicle owner 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.

Where an application for a personal plate is pending, short term vehicle registration may be offered.

It is advisable to consult an MVR Inspector regarding the location and fitment of the import plate.

When a final MVR inspection has confirmed the fitment of the personal import plate, further registration can be offered.

8. Trailers

Concessional RAV entry pathway applies where not more than 4 trailers are manufactured or imported.

Where more than 4 trailers are manufactured or imported, the type approval pathway applies – refer to <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/road-vehicle-standards-laws/guides-and-resources# Vehicle Type approvals>

Low ATM light trailers

- Compliance standards VSB 1 Building small trailers - version 5
- VINs are issued via application on the RAV
- Compliance inspection required

For more information: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/overview-guide-to-low-atm-trailers.pdf>

High ATM (heavy) trailers

- Evidence of compliance with applicable ADRs
- ADR 38/05 braking calculations
- VINs are issued via application on the RAV
- Roadworthy inspection required

For more information: <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/high-atm-overview.pdf>

9. Carnet

'Carnet de Passage en Douane' is an international agreement which allows the temporary import of a vehicle for up to 12 months by visitors to Australia. The scheme is administered at the international level by the Alliance International du Tourisme (AIT) and the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and locally by Automobile clubs. The Carnet is obtained in the country of residence. VIA is not required.

For more information:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle/non-rav-entry-import-approvals>

NT registration requirements do not apply. Carnet vehicles must hold current registration in their home country.

Carnet 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).
- The vehicle must have appropriate compulsory third party insurance. This insurance may be purchased at any Motor Vehicle Registry Office. When travelling interstate, vehicle owners should check with each jurisdiction on compulsory third party insurance requirements.

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

Red coloured rear indicators are acceptable.

10. Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA)

This agreement allows for the importation of road vehicles by military personnel temporarily posted to Australia under the terms of an intergovernmental agreement. VIA is not required.

For more information:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/vehicle-imports-under-status-of-forces-agreement-overview.pdf>

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:

- Evidence from the military base confirming the SOFA status of the vehicle and the deployment timeframe for the visiting military officer (vehicle owner).
- 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).
- The vehicle must comply with the NT roadworthy requirements.
- If the vehicle is modified, further assessment is required by department officers.

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

Red coloured rear indicators are acceptable.

11. Race and rally and support vehicles option

This option allows for the importation of vehicles intended to be used for road vehicle rallies, closed circuit road vehicle racing and vehicles designed to support road vehicle racing or rallying.

For more information:

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/importing-vehicle/concessional-rav-entry-approvals>

The NT dedicated rally car registration may apply – for more information:

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/regio/registration-other-vehicles/apply-for-rally-car-registration>

12. 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 to restrict vehicle ownership.

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 minimum technical requirements (i.e. AVSR, ADRs) or does not have any form of import approval (i.e. vehicle identification plate, used import plate, personal import plate, presence on the RAV, non-RAV entry approval).

13. Interstate acceptance 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).

Imported vehicle owners should check vehicle standards requirements of the new registration authority prior to travelling or relocating.

14. NT vehicle standards information

Vehicle Standards Bulletin (VSB) 1 – Building Small Trailers

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/vehicle-design-regulation/rvs/bulletins>

Vehicle Standards Bulletin (VSB) 14 – Light Vehicle Construction and Modification

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure-transport-vehicles/vehicles/vehicle-design-regulation/rvs/bulletins>

NT Legislation

<https://legislation.nt.gov.au/#>

Light Vehicle Inspection Manual

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/registration/vehicle-standards-for-registration>

Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/heavy/heavy-vehicle-inspection-standards>

Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin 24 – Red Rear Indicator Lights and Flashing Brake Lights (motor vehicles built before 1973)

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/industry/vehicle-information-bulletins-and-forms>

Information Bulletin V83 NT Recognised Engineering Signatories

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/industry/vehicle-information-bulletins-and-forms>

Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin 13 Light Trailer Requirements – Compliance with VSB1.

<https://nt.gov.au/driving/industry/vehicle-information-bulletins-and-forms>

More information

For more information, contact the department on 08 8924 7157 or email

vehiclestandards.mvr@nt.gov.au