

# Passenger Bus (Motor Omnibus) In-Service Vehicle Maintenance Standards

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Commercial Passenger Vehicles Branch  
Passenger Transport Division  
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

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## 1. Introduction

The principal purpose of this document is to advise the Commercial Passenger Vehicle (CPV) industry the minimum standards for passenger buses that form part of the conditions of licence. These conditions are applicable to passenger buses when being assessed for first registration as a passenger bus and to passenger buses that are already in-service.

This document has been approved for the purposes of Section 41 (1) of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act* and section 9 (2) of the *Commercial Passenger (Miscellaneous) Regulations*, and may be cited as the approved standard and the specified minimum maintenance requirements for passenger buses. Relevant sections of the Northern Territory legislation include:

- *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*  
Section 41(1) A motor omnibus licence shall be subject to such conditions, if any, as the Director thinks fit and specifies in the licence.
- *Commercial Passenger (Miscellaneous) Regulations*  
Regulation 9 (2) If the Registrar of Motor Vehicles specifies minimum maintenance that is to be carried out on a commercial passenger vehicle, the operator of the vehicle must ensure that maintenance is carried out on the vehicle in accordance with that specified.

This document is intended for use by the Director, the Registrar, operators, drivers, networks, Inspectors and Authorised Inspectors.

Please note all CPV industry participants being either a driver, operator or network, must be aware of the regulator's expectations and what it considers to be fit and proper. For further information refer to Information Bulletin CPV03 - Fit and Proper Assessments and Disqualifying Offences for the CPV Industry which can be found on the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics' webpage, [www.nt.gov.au/driving/industry](http://www.nt.gov.au/driving/industry).

Passenger buses operating in the NT must ensure they continue to comply with these standards at all times. Passenger buses must also be serviced and maintained in line with the vehicle manufacturer's recommended periodic maintenance schedule, and comply with all applicable Australian Design Rules (ADRs) and roadworthy standards.

Any item that is fitted in compliance with these standards shall be deemed to have written approval unless otherwise written or instructed by the Director.

These standards are intended to ensure passenger buses provide a safe transport option to the public. However where necessary, and in consideration to public and industry expectations, the Director may exempt in writing, a vehicle or class of vehicles from the requirement to meet part or parts of these standards, and an Inspector may exempt in writing, a particular vehicle from the requirement to meet part or parts of these standards. Where an exemption is granted by an Inspector, it should not exceed a continuous period of three months.

SIMON SAUNDERS  
Registrar of Motor Vehicles  
Director of Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport

## 2. Definitions

**Act (the)** means the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*.

**ADR** means the Australian Design Rules for road vehicles.

**Advertising / Advertisement** means any advertisement, statement or representation of any kind displayed on or in a passenger bus, such as lettering, maps, plans, drawings or pictorial images and includes bumper stickers.

**Approved** means approved in writing by the Director.

**ARR** means the Australian Road Rules as contained under the *Traffic Regulations*.

**Australian Standards** means documents that are published by the Standards Australia organisation which set out specifications and procedures.

**Authorised Inspector** means a person appointed under the *Motor Vehicles Act* and approved by the Director to carry out inspections on a class or classes of commercial passenger vehicles.

**Bus** means a motor omnibus.

**Commercial Vehicle Licence (CVL)** means a licence to operate a commercial passenger vehicle which has been issued by the Director under the relevant section of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*.

**Decal** means a sticker or design transfer (whether decorative or otherwise), which can be attached to the vehicle either directly or via magnetic backing.

**Director** means the Director of Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport appointed under Section 5(1) of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*.

**Emergency Spare Wheel / Tyre Assembly** means a wheel and tyre assembly principally used for emergency situations (e.g. after puncture) and which has a reduced speed and load rating. They are generally designed and constructed to reduce the vehicle's allocated storage area needed for the spare wheel and may also be referred to as a "space saver" wheel.

**GVM** means the manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Mass (maximum combined weight of a vehicle and its load). The value is usually located on the vehicle's compliance plate and / or in the operator's manual.

**In-service** means a motor vehicle that is registered under the *Motor Vehicles Act* and is endorsed against a licence that is granted or renewed under the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*.

**Inspector** means a person appointed or declared as such under section 64 of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act*, and includes the Director.

**Licensed Carrying Capacity** means the number of passengers an individual passenger bus is approved to carry and does not include the driver.

**Luggage** means any container for a person's belongings or any individual item.

**Modified** means any modification, change or alteration to a vehicle from the original manufactured condition.

**Motor Omnibus** means an approved motor vehicle fitted, equipped and constructed in accordance with the Australian Design Rules (within the meaning of the *Motor Vehicles Act*), or other standards as the Director determines, to carry more than eight passengers and used to carry passengers for hire or reward.

**NT** means the Northern Territory of Australia.

**Operate** in relation to a commercial passenger vehicle means to drive or use, or to cause or employ another person to drive or use, a vehicle to carry passengers for hire or reward, other than only in the capacity of an employee or volunteer.

**Operator** means the holder of a CVL under which a vehicle is being operated.

**Passenger Bus** means a motor omnibus.

**Registrar** means the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and has the same meaning as that defined in the *Motor Vehicles Act*.

**Regulations** means any regulations made under the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act* that are applicable to operating passenger buses for hire or reward in the Northern Territory of Australia.

**Roadworthy** means a standard determined by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles for a vehicle to be registered as outlined in the "Northern Territory Inspection Manuals for Light and Heavy Vehicles".

**Tyre Placard** means a plate (or decal) affixed to the vehicle by the manufacturer and which provides specifications / dimensions of the wheels and tyres which may be fitted to the vehicle.

### 3. Vehicle Type

The type of vehicle suitable must meet the intent of all relevant ADR classifications of MD1, MD2, MD3, MD4, ME or as determined by the Registrar or Director, and the standards listed in this document. The classification descriptions are:

- MD1 to MD4 – Light Omnibus – An omnibus with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) not exceeding 5 tonnes.
- ME – Heavy Omnibus – an omnibus with a GVM exceeding 5 tonnes.

### 4. Vehicle Age Requirements

There are no restrictions on the maximum age for a passenger bus. Operators should consider the continued comfort and safety of passengers as well as economic and maintenance factors in deciding when to replace a vehicle being used as a passenger bus.

### 5. Inspection Requirements

All in-service passenger buses must be inspected at intervals as determined by the Director which is currently once per year. Current inspection requirements are contained within Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin No 19, unless otherwise specified in a vehicle's commercial vehicle licence (CVL).

The Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin No 19 can be accessed through the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics' webpage via the following link:

[nt.gov.au/driving/industry/vehicle-inspector-bulletins](http://nt.gov.au/driving/industry/vehicle-inspector-bulletins)

### 6. Equipment

All equipment that is required to be fitted to a passenger bus must be fitted in accordance with these standards, the manufacturer's recommended installation requirements and any applicable road law.

Equipment must not be located in a position that is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident and must be maintained in a serviceable condition at all times. Equipment must also be secured to withstand a force equivalent to 20 times its mass.

The display of information and the correct functioning of equipment assists with protecting the drivers and public, and provides important information to all persons including persons living with disabilities.

A person must not fit any device or make any modification to the vehicle or a component used in or fitted to a vehicle which alters the correct functioning of the vehicle or any vehicle component.

All electrical wiring and repairs should be conducted by a suitably qualified person.

All passenger buses must be fitted with the following equipment, except for route services and school service buses:

- 6.1 All fitted tyres must conform to the tyre placard affixed to the vehicle and must be maintained in a roadworthy condition. Retread tyres are acceptable for use, however if fitted, must comply with the speed and load rating of the vehicle's tyre placard.

Vehicles must be fitted with a suitably inflated spare wheel/tyre assembly and wheel changing equipment as originally supplied with the vehicle from new by the vehicle

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manufacturer (or to equivalent specifications). Town route service and metropolitan school service buses are exempt from this requirement. Spare wheel/tyre assemblies and wheel changing equipment must be in a serviceable condition as originally designed by the manufacturer and be easily accessible in the event of a vehicle tyre becoming deflated or unserviceable. The spare wheel/tyre assembly including any tools and equipment must be correctly located, secured and covered in line with the vehicle manufacturer's original design or component requirements.

If a spare wheel/tyre assembly is relocated as a result of an approved vehicle modification (such as the fitting of a LPG system), the wheel must be adequately secured.

Where a new vehicle was sold onto the Australian market without a spare wheel/tyre assembly, the alternate device or system fitted to the vehicle by the manufacturer for managing tyre deflations must be maintained and serviceable; e.g. tyre inflation kit or "run flat" tyres. Any spare wheel/tyre assembly and wheel changing or inflating equipment must be secured in the vehicle as originally intended by the manufacturer.

NOTE: Emergency spare wheel/tyre assemblies (space savers) and deflated "run flat" tyres cannot generally be used when operating the vehicle for hire or reward. An exception to this is where the vehicle's primary wheel/tyre assembly has deflated (e.g. punctured) during a journey involving passengers and the emergency spare wheel/tyre assembly (space saver) is needed to complete that journey; or the operator of the vehicle relies on the "run flat" tyre feature to complete the journey. In any event the driver must not accept any new hiring until the vehicle's primary wheel/tyre assembly has been repaired and refitted to the vehicle. An emergency spare wheel/tyre assembly (space saver) is defined as being different in size and construction than the vehicle's primary wheel assembly and which is restricted in maximum speed and/or travel distance. Run flat tyres are tyres designed to allow continued vehicle operation upon becoming deflated (e.g. puncture), however have maximum speed and travel distance restrictions.

- 6.2 A fully charged fire extinguisher, complying with Australian Standard AS 2444 Portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets – Selection and location, must be securely mounted in the vehicle and not be a hazard or cause annoyance to the vehicle occupants. It must be easily accessible by the driver and must not be obscured. It must be properly maintained and be certified for operational use in accordance with Australian Standards AS 1851 "Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment". The frequency and level of inspection, testing, preventative maintenance and survey on portable fire extinguishers shall apply six-monthly (level 1), yearly (level 2), five-yearly (level 4), as applicable by the Standard, or after any usage).
- 6.3 A vehicle with a GVM up to 3.5 tonnes must have a minimum of one fire extinguisher of class 1A:5B complying with Australian Standards AS 2444 Portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets – Selection and location.
- 6.4 A vehicle with a GVM over 3.5 tonnes operating in urban areas or on short trips outside urban areas must have a minimum of one fire extinguisher of class 2A:20B (fitted with hose) complying with Australian Standards AS 2444 Portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets – Selection and location.
- 6.5 A vehicle with a GVM over 3.5 tonnes operating outside of urban areas or when fitted with integral luggage compartment must have a minimum of two fire extinguishers of class 2A:20B (fitted with hose) complying with Australian Standards AS 2444 Portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets – Selection and location, with

one fire extinguisher fitted near the under-floor area or engine and one fire extinguisher fitted in the cabin/occupant space that will not interfere with a passengers seating/leg room area.

- 6.6 A decal indicating the vehicle's licensed passenger carrying capacity which is affixed in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle, and which is clearly visible from all passenger seating positions. The sign is to have white lettering on a black background with characters at least 15 mm high and is to display information in a format similar to the following options. Please note 'xx/xxx' indicates the actual number of persons/passengers applicable for the licenced carrying capacity of the passenger bus.

Option 1: Licensed to Carry xx Passengers

Option 2: Licensed to Carry xx Persons including Driver

- 6.7 Unless otherwise specified, vehicles with a seating capacity of 11 or more passengers, Emergency Exit requirements apply as per the relevant Australian Design Rules (ADR 44 Specific Purpose Vehicle Requirements, ADR 58 Requirements for Omnibuses Designed for Hire and Reward).

## 7. Exterior

Operators and drivers of passenger buses should ensure that each vehicle is maintained to a high standard in keeping with public and industry expectations of a reliable and safe transport service. Well maintained and presented vehicles promote community confidence in the industry.

## 8. Interior

Passenger buses are to be maintained in a safe and reliable condition that does not present a risk of injury to a driver, passenger or other road user.

- 8.1 All seating including head rests must provide adequate support as originally intended.
- 8.2 All interior lighting must be operational as originally designed.
- 8.3 The installation of internal fixtures must not reduce the safety of passengers in the event of an accident.
- 8.4 All passenger buses must have an effective ventilation system installed in the vehicle appropriate to the vehicle's intended operation. Where applicable, air conditioning, heating and ventilation systems must operate as originally designed and deliver sufficient quantities of cool or warm air to maintain acceptable cabin temperatures for passenger comfort.
- 8.5 Where fitted, lavatories and wash basins are to be maintained to ensure passenger hygiene.
- 8.6 All interior fittings and accessories must be in an undamaged sound condition.
- 8.7 Any vehicle equipped with factory fitted airbag safety devices is to be free of stickers or any decal plates which may affect operation of the airbags. The vehicle must not be modified in a way, including the fitment of an accessory, which affects any vehicle safety feature or the correct functioning of a vehicle component.



## 9. Luggage Compartment

- 9.1 The luggage compartment such as the boot lid or door seal must be correctly secured, aligned and not be damaged so that it prevents the ingress of exhaust fumes and dust.
- 9.2 Luggage or goods must not be carried in a location or manner that may cause injury to a person in the event of an accident or emergency braking manoeuvre.
- 9.3 Luggage or goods must not be placed in any location that blocks the use or operation of any door or emergency exit.

## 10. Accessories and Modifications

- 10.1 Any accessory fitted must be maintained in a sound condition, and must meet the manufacturer's installation requirements and be secured to withstand a force equivalent to 20 times its mass.
- 10.2 Aftermarket audio visual displays may be fitted to the interior of the vehicle provided:
  - 10.2.1 the player or screen does not interfere directly or indirectly with any other vehicle system, the driver's view of the road, or the passengers' view of required information;
  - 10.2.2 no video display screen is in the view of the driver when the vehicle is in motion (this does not apply if screens display only geographic or vehicle data);
  - 10.2.3 any video or audio content complies with all relevant legislative requirements that apply to the content of material being viewed; and
  - 10.2.4 the installation complies with the requirements of the ADRs and ARRs.
- 10.3 Public address microphones used by the driver when the vehicle is in motion must be hands-free.
- 10.4 Any accessory or modification that may affect the structural integrity of the vehicle's occupant protection or the handling characteristics of the vehicle will require prior approval in writing from the Registrar of Motor Vehicles.

## 11. Advertising

Advertising on passenger buses is permitted.

- 11.1 Any mounted display units, if fitted, must be mounted centrally on the boot or roof, have no sharp edges or protrusions, be of sound construction, be secured to withstand a horizontal force equivalent to 20 times its mass and must not obscure the centre high mount brake light.
- 11.2 Advertisements displayed must be static and must not be reflective (e.g. must not be mirror like in appearance).
- 11.3 The Director may direct an operator to remove any advertising that is in compliance with these standards, if in the opinion of the Director, the advertising is not in keeping with public or industry expectations or the intent of these standards. It is a condition of the Commercial Vehicle Licence (CVL) that operators obey any direction to remove advertising if the Director Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport forms

the opinion that the advertising is not consistent with public or industry expectations.

### 11.4 Restrictions on Alcohol Advertising

Advertising of take away outlets is not permitted.

Advertising specific alcohol products, or alcohol related promotions such as “drink specials” is not permitted.

Advertising of licenced venues such as restaurants, pubs and clubs is permitted, *however* the advertising should not draw attention to or glamorise alcohol or excessive drinking.

Operators will be directed to remove any advertising which contravenes the above rules. Operators who fail to obey such a direction risk prosecution for breach of operator licence condition, and suspension/cancellation of licence.

For further information on alcohol advertisement on commercial passenger vehicles, refer to Information Bulletin [CPV27 – Restrictions on Alcohol Advertising on Commercial Passenger Vehicles](#).

## 12. Trailers

12.1 Adequate restraint and packing measures are to be in place to prevent damage to any luggage carried in the trailer.

12.2 The luggage compartment of the trailer must be fully enclosed/sealed to prevent the ingress of dust or moisture.

## 13. Passenger Body Modules

13.1 Factory new vehicles with passenger body modules require a second compliance plate known as Second Stage Manufacturer (SSM) plate as evidence of compliance with all Australian Design Rules for the change in vehicle category from goods-carrying vehicle to passenger vehicle. SSM approval is only offered by the Commonwealth Transport Department.

13.2 In-service vehicles with replacement passenger body modules require a Chartered Professional Engineer or other suitably qualified person to certify that the modified vehicle complies with all Australian Design Rules as a passenger bus and that the module is fitted in accordance with recognised engineering practices.