

Motor Vehicle Registry Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin

VIB24 – Red Rear Indicator Lights and Flashing Brake Lights (motor vehicles built before 1973)

Introduction

This bulletin aims to clarify the use of red rear indicators that can be perceived as flashing brake lights.

For a vehicle built before 1973 that has a pair of brake lights that also functions as indicator lights, a vehicle standards exemption has been issued to allow for a single left hand brake light when the right hand indicator is activated.

Background

To be considered roadworthy, a vehicle must comply with the requirements of relevant Northern Territory legislation, which incorporates the Australian Vehicle Standards Rules (AVSRs) and relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs).

These rules contain mandatory requirements for the safe design, construction and maintenance of vehicles and for the control of emissions and noise. For vehicles manufactured prior to 1969, AVSR requirements apply; after 1969, ADRs will apply.

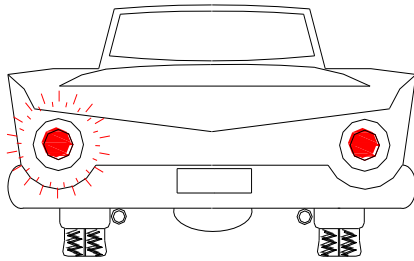
Issue

Some pre 1973 vehicles imported from the United States of America have brake lights that also double as indicator lights. When activated, the indicator function has priority over the brake light function.

This creates the effect of a single flashing brake light when both brake and indicator lights are activated such that the effect of a single left hand brake light does not comply with the AVSRs (see **Scenario 2**). An exemption now allows for this arrangement.

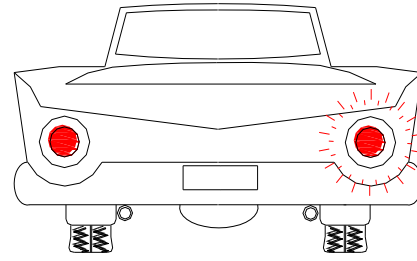
AVSR - Indicators - Rule 104(3) allows for a yellow or red rear indicator light for a vehicle built before July 1973. From July 1973, yellow or amber is required.

AVSR - Brake lights – Rule 98(1)(2)(6) requires a minimum of one brake light for a vehicle built after 1934 and a pair of brake lights for a motor vehicle built after 1959. If only one brake light is fitted, it must be fitted in the centre or right side at the rear of the vehicle.



Scenario 1

If the driver activates the left indicator with brakes on, the right hand brake light will activate (stay on) and comply with Rule 98 (i.e. right hand side brake light).



Scenario 2

If the driver activates the right hand indicator with brakes on, the left hand brake light will activate (stay on) but NOT comply with Rule 98 (i.e. left hand side brake light) as the rule does not allow for a single left hand brake light.

Exemption

In the case where the left hand brake light is on and the right hand indicator is flashing, this creates a non-compliance with Rule 98. In the new Australian Light Vehicle Standards Rules that has been drafted to replace the current AVSRs, the brake light rule has been drafted to include a single left hand brake light where a right hand brake light is also fitted. The rule applies to a motor vehicle with 4 or more wheels built before 1973; from 1973, yellow or amber indicators are mandatory.

Imported vehicles with shared brake and indicator lights represents a very small group of vehicles which is progressively declining in numbers due to the age of the vehicles and their availability. The negative effect on road safety from a single left hand brake light is minimal. The exemption provides for a consistent approach for vehicle inspectors and motor vehicle enthusiasts for the inclusion of shared brake and red rear indicator lights.

Up until the NT adopts the Australian Light Vehicle Standards Rules, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles has issued an exemption to align with the updated rule – see Government Gazette No. S97 dated 24 August 2016.

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA
Motor Vehicles Act
EXEMPTION FROM MOTOR VEHICLES (STANDARDS) REGULATIONS
Brake Light Exemption

I, SIMON PHILLIP SAUNDERS, Registrar of Motor Vehicles, pursuant to section 59(2) of the Motor Vehicles Act, exempt a class of vehicle, as described in the Schedule, from the requirements of Rule 98(6) of Schedule 6 of the Motor Vehicles (Standards) Regulations.

Schedule

An exempt class of vehicle is a vehicle that:

- *has a pair of brake lights fitted to the rear that function as both brake lights and direction indicator lights; and*
- *is a motor vehicle with 4 or more wheels; and*
- *is built before 1 January 1973.*

Dated this 23rd day of August 2016

S.P. Saunders
Registrar of Motor Vehicles

Summary

Shared brake and rear indicators are permitted for a motor vehicle with 4 or more wheels built before 1973 and are not required to be retrofitted with yellow or amber indicators.

Applicability Matrix

	Applicability	Minimum Requirements
1.	After 1934 to 1959	One brake light fitted to the centre or right hand side at the rear
2.	After 1959	A pair of brake lights fitted – one brake light fitted to the left side and one to the right side
3.	After August 1966 to June 1973	A pair of red or yellow rear indicators – one indicator fitted to the left side and one to the right side
4.	From July 1973	Yellow or amber indicators

More Information

Email MVR.Authorisedinspectors@nt.gov.au

Telephone (08) 8999 3127

Region	Telephone	Fax
Darwin	8999 3133	8999 3187
Katherine	8973 8791	8973 8762
Alice Springs	8951 5297	8951 5313