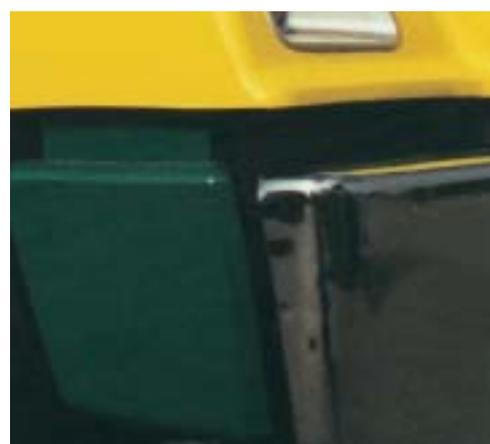
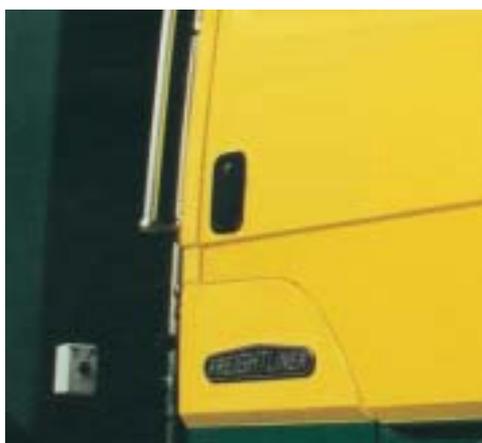




National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS)

- A guide for operators to the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS).
- The NHVAS can help all operators whether they are big or small.





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Overview of NHVAS

In the past, the sole means of ensuring that road transport operators complied with road transport law was for governments to use enforcement officers to stop and check vehicles at the roadside. Most operators do comply with the law by ensuring that their vehicles are roadworthy and loaded within the relevant mass limits, and the NHVAS has been introduced to take advantage of this.

Operators gain accreditation to the NHVAS if they can prove that they comply with the law. These accredited operators are then subject to much less enforcement activity. To become accredited, operators must be able to provide documentary and auditable evidence that they are complying with the standards. Accredited operators need to:

- Develop an in-house assurance system.
- Document the procedures that staff must follow to achieve compliance.
- Produce (and keep for audit) sets of documents that prove compliance.
- Undergo independent audits from time to time.

When an operator has developed an assurance system it must be subjected to a System Accreditation Audit. If the result is successful, the operator is accredited and the vehicles are identified to show this. Subsequently, Compliance Audits are required before accreditation is renewed.

At present, there are two modules for which accreditation can be granted:

- Mass Management.
- Maintenance Management.

Both of these modules have been tested in pilot studies, refined, and then approved for national implementation.

In the future, a Fatigue Management Module will also be introduced.

The component modules and their benefits

Mass Management Accreditation

Operators participating in this module must be able to demonstrate that their vehicles are always loaded within the relevant mass limits.

To become accredited, an operator develops a Mass Management System that documents the procedures that must be followed. The purpose of this system is to provide evidence that the operator is complying with a

set of national performance standards that have been provided by the RTA. The operator's Mass Management System must be independently audited before accreditation can be granted, and it is audited again at specified intervals so that accreditation can be maintained and renewed.

Being accredited in the Mass Management Module means that an operator is able to:

- Ensure that vehicles are loaded correctly at all times.
- Improve loading efficiency.
- Improve safety.
- Increase the life of vehicles and reduce maintenance costs.
- Reduce the likelihood of vehicles being rejected by customers for being overloaded.
- Improve relationships with enforcement agencies.
- Improve drivers' morale.

There are seven standards in the Mass Management Module with which operators must comply in order to be accredited. The standards relate to:

1. Responsibilities (ensuring that every task in an operator's Mass Management System is assigned to a responsible person).
2. Vehicle control (ensuring that accredited vehicles comply with the operator's Mass Management System).
3. Vehicle use (ensuring that a vehicle's mass is determined before every trip).
4. Records and documentation (ensuring that evidence is kept of the successful operation of the Mass Management System and that all relevant documentation is kept safely and is available to relevant staff and auditors).
5. Verification (ensuring that mass measurements are properly verified).
6. Internal review (ensuring that operators review their Mass Management System thoroughly, at least annually).
7. Training and education (ensuring that all staff participating in the Mass Management System know how to carry out their Mass Management System tasks).

The Mass Management Module and the standards are described in more detail in the Mass Management Accreditation Guide, which is available from the RTA website on www.rta.nsw.gov.au/heavyvehicles or from the RTA's Information and Analysis Unit.

Maintenance Management Accreditation

Operators participating in this module must be able to demonstrate that their vehicles are continuously maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition.

To become accredited, an operator develops a Maintenance Management System or set of procedures which he or she must follow. The purpose of the system is to provide evidence that the operator is complying with the Maintenance Management Standards, which cover such areas as daily checks, fault reporting and fault repairs.

Being accredited in the Maintenance Management Module means that an operator is able to:

- Have confidence in the condition of the firm's vehicles.
- Improve the accountability of drivers and mechanics.
- Improve the skills of drivers and mechanics.
- Increase the life of vehicles and reduce maintenance costs.
- Improve safety.
- Improve the firm's image and marketability.
- Improve relationships with enforcement agencies.
- Improve drivers' morale.
- Reduce vehicle down time.

There are eight standards in the Maintenance Management Module with which operators must comply in order to be accredited. The standards relate to:

1. Daily check (ensuring a daily check is made of each vehicle when it is in use).
2. Fault recording and reporting (ensuring that vehicle faults are recorded and reported so that they may be assessed and rectified).
3. Fault repair (ensuring that reported faults are prioritised and repaired).
4. Maintenance schedules and methods (ensuring that vehicles are being systematically maintained).
5. Records and documentation (ensuring that evidence is kept of the successful operation of the Maintenance System and that all relevant documentation is kept safely and available to relevant staff and auditors).
6. Responsibilities (ensuring that every task in an operator's Maintenance Management System is assigned to a responsible person).
7. Internal review (ensuring that operators review their Maintenance Management System thoroughly, at least annually).
8. Training and education (ensuring that all staff participating in the Maintenance Management System know how to carry out their Maintenance Management System tasks).

The Mass Management Module and the standards are described in more detail in the Mass Management Accreditation Guide, which is available from the RTA website on www.rta.nsw.gov.au/heavyvehicles or from the RTA's Information and Analysis Unit.



Gaining accreditation

Operators need to obtain a copy of the performance standards for each module and develop procedures for ensuring that they can meet those standards continuously. When an operator has developed a system, it must undergo an independent System Accreditation Audit, which is to ensure that the system meets the necessary standards. The audit reviews management controls, documented procedures and record-keeping.

An operator can apply for accreditation in one of the component modules or in all of them. A separate application is required for each module. The operator should apply for accreditation in the State where the firm's operations are based. Because the NHVAS is a national scheme, accreditation granted in one State will be recognised in all other States.

Operators are responsible for arranging and paying for their System Accreditation Audits.

When you become accredited you will be issued with Accreditation Labels – one for each nominated vehicle – which you must stick on the outside of the driver's side of the cabin. These labels help enforcement officers to identify accredited vehicles on the road. They also indicate to your customers that you are an accredited operator.

Steps for gaining accreditation

1 → Contact the RTA's NHVAS Accreditation Unit to let them know that you are interested. The address and phone number of the unit is given at the end of this guide.

→ Ask any questions you may have.

→ Get an application form and supporting information.

2 Work out what you are going to do in order to meet the standards required.

3 Write down the steps you and your staff will follow in order to comply with the standards. These will be your Mass or Maintenance Management System procedures.

4 Train your staff in the jobs they will have to do.

5 Conduct an internal review of your procedures and documentation.

6 Have your procedures audited by an accredited independent auditor. You can get a list of accredited auditing firms from the Quality Society of Australasia (QSA) and the RTA's Information and Analysis Unit.

7 Complete the application form and Schedule 2 list of nominated vehicles and send it to the RTA's NHVAS Accreditation Officer, together with your audit report.

8 If you are accredited, the RTA will send you accreditation labels to stick on your nominated vehicles.

Maintaining Accreditation

When an operator gains accreditation, this must be reviewed within six months by a Compliance Audit.

If the Compliance Audit is successful, accreditation is renewed for two years from the time the operator gained accreditation subject to continuing to meet performance standards. To show that the standards are continuously met, the operator must undergo a Compliance Audit before the two-year period expires. If an operator has achieved very high standards of compliance, accreditation may be renewed for three years instead of two.

It is the operator's responsibility to arrange and pay for Compliance Audits within six months of accreditation and 12 months or less before the current accreditation period expires.

The Compliance Audits described so far have been scheduled audits. A triggered Compliance Audit may also be conducted if there is reason to believe that an operator no longer conforms to the required standards.

Random Compliance Checks can be carried out from time to time, in order to collect information about scheme members' compliance. These random checks can take the form of:

→ On-road intercepts.

→ Random vehicle roadworthiness inspections.

→ Reviews of quarterly compliance statements.

→ Triggered Compliance Audits.

→ Any combination of these.

On-road intercepts may be carried out. Accredited vehicles must carry an Intercept Report Book issued by the RTA. An Intercept Report will be filled in by an RTA officer for each interception. The operator must keep the reports for a minimum of three years, for audit purposes.



The audit processes

Auditors of the scheme must be independent and registered with the Quality Society of Australasia (QSA). The QSA will have a list of accredited auditing firms. Audits are conducted according to strict guidelines. They verify that operators are complying with the performance standards of a particular accreditation scheme, and that compliance is continuous. The procedures that you need to carry out daily in order to comply with the performance standards will ensure that you are well placed to pass an audit.

An audit may identify some areas of non-compliance that you need to correct. This won't necessarily mean that your accreditation won't be renewed, but you will have to demonstrate that you have taken corrective action.

Sanctions for non-compliance

The highest level of sanction for not complying with the scheme's performance standards is suspension or cancellation of accreditation.

A sanction can take one of the following forms, depending on the severity of the case and the circumstances:

- Counselling.
- A warning notice.
- A notice requiring corrective action to be taken within a specified period.
- Increasing the frequency of scheduled compliance audits.
- Varying the terms and conditions of accreditation.
- Issuing a 'show cause why accreditation should not be cancelled'.
- Suspension or cancellation of accreditation.

You will be given time to respond to any of these sanctions before further action is taken.

Fees

Operators are responsible for any costs involved in developing their Mass Management System or Maintenance Management System.

If your application for accreditation in one of the schemes is successful, you then pay an accreditation fee. There are separate fees for each of the scheme modules. The RTA's NHVAS Accreditation Unit has a schedule of accreditation fees.

Operators are also responsible for paying for their audits. You can choose which auditor you want to use and you should discuss the fees payable with the auditing firm.



Exiting from the scheme

You can withdraw from any of the modules at any time. All you need to do is advise the RTA in writing and remove the accreditation labels from your vehicles and destroy them.

Definitions

Accreditation

Formal approval by the RTA of an operator's Mass or Maintenance Management System so that the operator can be accredited to the scheme. It means that the operator is meeting the standards described in either the Mass Management Accreditation Guide or the Maintenance Management Accreditation Guide.

Accreditation period

Usually, accreditation is granted for up to two years, if the operator complies with the standards. If a Compliance Audit finds a very high standard of compliance, the auditor may recommend that the operator may be accredited for three years instead of two.

Audit

A systematic and documented review by an external, accredited auditor of an operator's management assurance system. There are two main types of audit: System Accreditation Audits and Compliance Audits. Compliance Audits can be scheduled or triggered.

A System Accreditation Audit is conducted after an operator has developed a management assurance system, conducted an internal review and applied for accreditation. The result of this audit determines whether or not the operator's vehicles are accredited.

A Compliance Audit is conducted before an operator's accreditation can be renewed. For a newly accredited operator, the first Compliance Audit is conducted within six months of accreditation being granted. Otherwise, scheduled Compliance Audits are conducted 12 months or less before an operator's accreditation period expires. An operator must conduct an Internal Review before arranging a Compliance Audit.

A Triggered Compliance Audit can be conducted at any time by an auditor engaged by the RTA, for example, if there is reason to believe that an operator is no longer complying with the mass management standards.

Internal review

A review arranged by an operator to ensure that his or her firm continues to comply with the standards. Internal Reviews must be conducted annually, and corrective action taken if necessary. An Internal Review should always be conducted before a Compliance Audit is arranged.

Mass Management Accreditation

A scheme for placing responsibility for mass management on accredited operators who have demonstrated that they are complying with mass-related road transport law and ensuring that their vehicles are loaded within relevant limits.

Mass Management System

An operator's procedures for ensuring that his or her firm complies with the Mass Management Standards.

Maintenance Management Accreditation

A scheme for placing responsibility for maintenance management on accredited operators who have demonstrated that they are complying with vehicle maintenance-related road transport law and ensuring that their vehicles are maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition.

Maintenance Management System

An operator's procedures for ensuring that his or her firm complies with the maintenance management standards.

Accredited operator

The owner or manager of a transport company which has been granted accreditation.

Schedule 2 list

Is a list of nominated vehicles for which an operator is seeking or has been granted accreditation.

Verification of mass

A check on mass measurement that confirms or invalidates the original measurement. Verification results provide auditable records of mass measurements.

Non-conformance

This means an operator's management assurance system does not fulfil a specified requirement of the NHVAS.

Non-conformance can apply to the lapsing or absence of management system elements required by the NHVAS module standards. It can also apply to the failure of the management system to comply consistently with the NHVAS module standards.

Minor non-conformance

Non-conformance resulting in a minor breach of the NHVAS module standards (eg a random or unsystematic error such as the failure to record properly the maintenance work done on a vehicle, even though the work was done).

Major non-conformance

Non-conformance so significant that it requires rectification prior to accreditation being granted/renewed (eg the absence of a significant element in the operator's management system or failure to conform to the agreed management system so that a serious breach of the NHVAS module standards arises).

Corrective action

Action taken to eliminate the causes of an existing non-conformity, defect, or other undesirable situation in order to prevent a recurrence.

Acknowledgement

The RTA wishes to acknowledge the contribution of VicRoads in the production of this publication.

Further enquiries

If you have any questions about accreditation, or the contents of this information sheet, contact:

The Roads and Traffic Authority
Information and Analysis Unit
Level 1, Cnr Macquarie & Charles Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Phone 02 9843 3851
Fax 02 9843 3824



For further enquiries:



www.rta.nsw.gov.au



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8.30am to 5pm Mon-Fri and 8.30am to 2pm Sat
