

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Road access requirements

This fact sheet explains the nature of access to the NSW road network for special purpose vehicles that exceed a general access mass or dimension limit and the responsibilities of their operators. NSW Road Transport legislation and Australian Design Rules limit the mass and overall size (height, width, length) and some internal dimensions of vehicles. These limits are applied in the interest of manoeuvrability, compatibility with road systems and safe travel with other road users. Your essential reference is the Class I Special Purpose Vehicle Notice 2011 (the Notice), which sets out the permitted mass and dimension limits; travel restrictions; pilot requirements; and signage and warning devices that apply to the use of oversize and overmass special purpose vehicles. **A copy of the Notice must be carried in the driving compartment of a vehicle operating under the Notice, and produced to a Police Officer or an Authorised Officer when requested.**

What is a Special Purpose Vehicle?

A special purpose vehicle is a motor vehicle (but not a Tow Truck or an Agricultural Machine such as a tractor or harvester) that is built for a purpose other than carrying a load except for water in the case of concrete pumps or fire trucks. These are known as Class I vehicles, and some common examples are:

- Mobile cranes including cranes with a boom dolly;
- Mobile drilling rigs;
- Concrete boom pumps;
- Mobile elevating plant (cherry pickers);
- Fire fighting trucks.

Vehicles which exceed statutory dimension and mass limits require individual assessment by the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) to determine whether approval can be given for their registration and operation on NSW roads. If approval is given to a special purpose vehicle registered in NSW, conditions can apply to the vehicles operation and these conditions will be endorsed on the Special Purpose Vehicle Approval/Exemption document.

Interstate special purpose vehicles are required to provide a registering authority's approval documents and a current Weightbridge Certificate.

What is a Class I Notice?

The RTA may publish a document in the NSW Government Gazette that exempts Class I vehicles from a mass or dimension limit specified in NSW road transport legislation. It cannot provide an exemption from a requirement that relates to a Gross Vehicle Mass

(GVM), Gross Combination Mass (GCM) or a manufacturers limit. The Notice will specify:

- the Class I vehicle(s) to which it applies;
- the areas or routes to which it applies;
- the provisions of NSW Road Transport legislation from which the exemption is being given;
- the conditions of the exemption (*this can include a condition requiring participation in a program involving the use of an Intelligent Transport System to monitor compliance*); and
- the duration it is to remain enforced.

What is a Class I Permit?

If a Class I vehicle exceeds any of the dimension or mass limits in a Class I Notice, an operator must apply to the RTA to obtain a Class I Permit. A copy of this permit must be carried in the vehicle at all times in addition to the applicable Notice. An application fee, which is adjusted annually in July, is payable for each Class I Permit. For more information, call the RTA Access Compliance Unit on 1300 656 371.

A Class I Permit:

- prescribes the travel conditions that apply to a particular vehicle;
- identifies the vehicle to which the permit applies; and
- identifies the registered operator of the vehicle.

What are General Access Limits?

General access vehicles, including combinations, are those that are within the dimension requirements of the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2007.

In addition to meeting the dimension limits, a general access vehicle must not exceed its manufacturer's GVM or GCM rating, or the mass allowed for the vehicle axle configuration under the Road Transport (Mass, Loading and Access) Regulation 2005, whichever is the lesser.

General access dimension limits are set out in the RTA publication Vehicle Standards Information – 5 (VSI-5), available on the RTA web site at www.rta.nsw.gov.au or from a RTA Motor Registry office.

Is the Notice a legal document?

Yes, the Notice takes legal effect upon publication in the NSW Government Gazette.

What has changed in 2011?

Previously, the operation of an oversize special purpose vehicle was authorised under the General Class I Oversize (Special Purpose Vehicle) Notice 2007, and the operation of an overmass special purpose vehicle was authorised under a Class I Permit issued at cost to the registered operator of the vehicle.

With the introduction of the Class I Special Purpose Vehicle Notice 2011 many of these vehicles will have their overmass operation included in the Notice and will no longer need to obtain an annual Class I Permit. Changes include;

- **Overmass Operation**
 - For vehicles that comply with the bridge formula calculation and tyre and axle mass limits,
 - Maps of overmass routes will be available on the RTA website.
- **Travel Zones**
 - Introduction of the NSW Urban Zone to replace the Sydney Metropolitan Zone, Newcastle Metropolitan Zone, Wollongong Metropolitan Zone and Central Coast Zones,
 - Extension of night travel in the NSW Urban Zone and the NSW Regional Zone,
 - Application of peak hour travel times on State Roads and clearway and transit lane travel times, across the NSW Urban Zone,
 - Amended Restricted Roads and access criteria,
 - Amended Critical Locations and access criteria.
- **Intelligent Access Program (IAP)**
 - Specified high risk mobile cranes must enrol in an intelligent transport system scheme managed by the RTA in addition to operation under the Class I Special Purpose Vehicle Notice 2011 and/or a Class I Permit.
 - This scheme is called the Intelligent Access Program (IAP) and uses satellite-based tracking technology to remotely monitor where, when and how

special purpose vehicles are operated on the road network with regard to approved routes, travel times and travel restrictions.

Why make these changes?

The NSW road network and the numbers of vehicles using it have changed over the years, and the demand for access by the heavy transport industry has increased.

Emergency Travel

In an emergency such as a fire, explosion or natural disaster, the RTA may exempt a vehicle or combination, or its driver or owner, from a requirement of this Notice if:

- a) The vehicle or combination is being used, or is intended to be used, to protect life or property, or to restore communication or the supply of energy or water or services such as sewage disposal, and
- b) The exemption does not present an unreasonable danger to other road users.

In such emergencies the operator must contact the Access Compliance Unit on 1300 361 570 for permission to travel.

If the emergency occurs out of office hours, the driver or owner must make and keep a written or electronic record of any travel under this exemption and contact the Access Compliance Unit with this information not later than 48 hours after the emergency, including details of:

- a) The date and time of travel;
- b) Identity of the vehicle used;
- c) The route travelled; and
- d) A description of the emergency and the intended use or role of the vehicle in the emergency.

The exemption ceases to have effect after the emergency has ended and any return travel must be made under standard operating conditions.