

# Standard hours explained

Standard hours set prescribed work and rest limits for low risk heavy vehicle applications

## FACT SHEET 3



### Introduction to Standard Hours

New fatigue laws, implemented in September 2008, set revised work and rest limits for heavy vehicle drivers and require better management of driver fatigue. The fatigue reform makes all parties in the supply chain legally responsible for preventing driver fatigue. It includes three work hours options, linked to safety, that you can choose from to suit your business.

The Standard Hours option will suit most businesses. It sets default limits for work and rest. If you need more flexible hours, you can consider applying for Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) or Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) options (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Work and Rest Options**

Module	Requirements
Standard Hours	Basic work and rest time
Basic Fatigue Management (NHVAS)	More flexible work hours linked to accreditation
Advanced Fatigue Management (NHVAS)	Create your own safety management system and work hours linked to accreditation

The Standard Hours option sets out minimum rest and maximum work hours and contains basic record keeping requirements (see Table 2). The bus industry will have access to standard hours (bus option). For more information on this option see VicRoads Fact Sheet 6 – ‘Standard driving hours for the solo bus sector’.

**Table 2: Standard Hours (solo drivers)**

Time	Work	Rest
In any period of...	A driver must not work for more than a <b>MAXIMUM</b> of ...	And must have the rest of that period off work with at least a <b>MINIMUM</b> rest break of ...
5 ½ hours	5 ¼ hours work time	15 continuous minutes rest time
8 hours	7 ½ hours work time	30 minutes rest time in blocks of 15 continuous minutes
11 hours	10 hours work time	60 minutes rest time in blocks of 15 continuous minutes
24 hours	12 hours work time	7 continuous hours stationary rest time <sup>1</sup>
7 days	72 hours work time	24 continuous hours stationary rest time
14 days	144 hours work time	2 x night rest breaks <sup>2</sup> and 2 x night rest breaks taken on consecutive days

<sup>1</sup> Stationary rest time is the time a driver spends out of a regulated heavy vehicle or in an approved sleeper berth of a stationary regulated heavy vehicle.

<sup>2</sup> Night rest breaks are seven continuous hours stationary rest time taken between the hours of 10 pm on a day and 8 am on the next day (using the time zone of the base of the driver). These breaks can be part of a 24 continuous hours stationary rest break.



## Work and Rest

Work time refers to all driving and any other tasks related to the operation of a heavy vehicle. All other time is counted as rest. Time is counted in 15 minute intervals and is recorded according to the time zone of the driver's base (eg a 30 minute rest break can be taken as 2 x 15 minute rest breaks etc but seven hour or 24 hour rest breaks can not be split up).

Work is a maximum so is always rounded upwards, eg a period less than 15 minutes is counted as 15 minutes work, a period more than 15 minutes up to 30 minutes is counted as 30 minutes work etc.

Rest is a minimum period so is always rounded downwards, eg a period less than 15 minutes does not count towards rest while a period of 15 minutes but less than 30 minutes is counted as 15 minutes rest etc.

The Standard Hours option gives drivers more opportunities to take short rest breaks when they feel tired, especially later in a shift when fatigue starts to cut in. Drivers must take a minimum 15 minute rest break (under current laws this is 30 minutes) within the first five hours 30 minutes of work.

This shifts the emphasis to taking regular short rest breaks later in a shift when a driver starts to feel tired.

## Night Work

Under the Standard Hours option a driver must take four nights rest including one pair of consecutive nights rest in any 14 day period. For example, in a 14 day period, a driver would be able to work up to six night shifts (between the hours of midnight to 6 am) in one week and four night shifts the following week. Night rest is seven hours rest taken between 10 pm and 8 am (this can include a 24 hour continuous rest).

## Work Diary

A new work diary has been designed for drivers replacing the log book. If working more than 100 km from base the driver will be required to use the work diary to record all work and rest activities. Local area drivers can use the work diary as a means of recording how they are complying with the new laws but use of this document is optional.

## General Duty

Under the new laws a 'general duty' (similar to OH&S laws) requires all parties take reasonable steps to prevent drivers fatigue. For example, this means:

- drivers must stop if they are feeling tired or fatigued;
- operators and schedulers must plan when drivers rest;
- a loading manager must take steps to ensure queuing is managed properly; and
- contracts that require a driver to break the law are illegal.

## More Information

Those operating under Standard Hours should also see VicRoads:

- Fact Sheet 7: What records you need to keep: A guide for record keepers; and
- Fact Sheet 8: How to use and complete your new work diary.

This fact sheet does not explain all of your obligations under the new laws. For further information on managing driver fatigue contact VicRoads on 1300 360 745 or visit the VicRoads website:

[www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)

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