

Livestock Transport

INFORMATION BULLETIN



Introduction

This information bulletin provides information that is relevant to operators and drivers involved in the transport of livestock. It details what is required to join the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme, including operating conditions, driver training and compliance.

The bulletin also summarises the operating criteria for livestock vehicles that are not party to the Scheme. At the end of the bulletin there is some information about working at heights and transporting livestock through tunnels.

Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme

The Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme is a voluntary scheme designed to facilitate the safe and efficient transportation of livestock by:

- reducing the chances of animals being injured;
- increasing the productivity of livestock transport;
- protecting road and bridge infrastructure; and
- reducing the chances of vehicles rolling over.

Road safety is enhanced by:

- requiring roll resistant air suspensions;
- reducing the ability of livestock to move to one side of the vehicle en masse; and
- the use of more stable low profile semi-trailers.

The Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme is limited to six axle articulated vehicles and nine axle B-doubles, provided they comply with the dimension limits, axle spacings and other requirements shown in this information bulletin.

Vehicles that participate in the scheme are exempt from complying with vehicle mass limits, but must comply with manufacturer's ratings.

Vehicles that do not participate in the scheme can still be used to transport livestock, but they are not exempt from complying with regulatory vehicle mass limits.

Livestock

Livestock, in this scheme, are defined as cattle, sheep or pigs.

Mass Controls

The scheme controls the mass of livestock vehicles by limiting:

- maximum trailer length and height (crate size);
- maximum vehicle tare mass; and
- the maximum number of animals determined by animal welfare codes and regulations.

Vehicles owned by registered operators and drivers who comply in all respects with these requirements are exempt from vehicle mass limits, except for the manufacturers' ratings, including Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM), Gross Combination Mass (GCM) and Gross Trailer Mass (GTM).

Dimension Limits

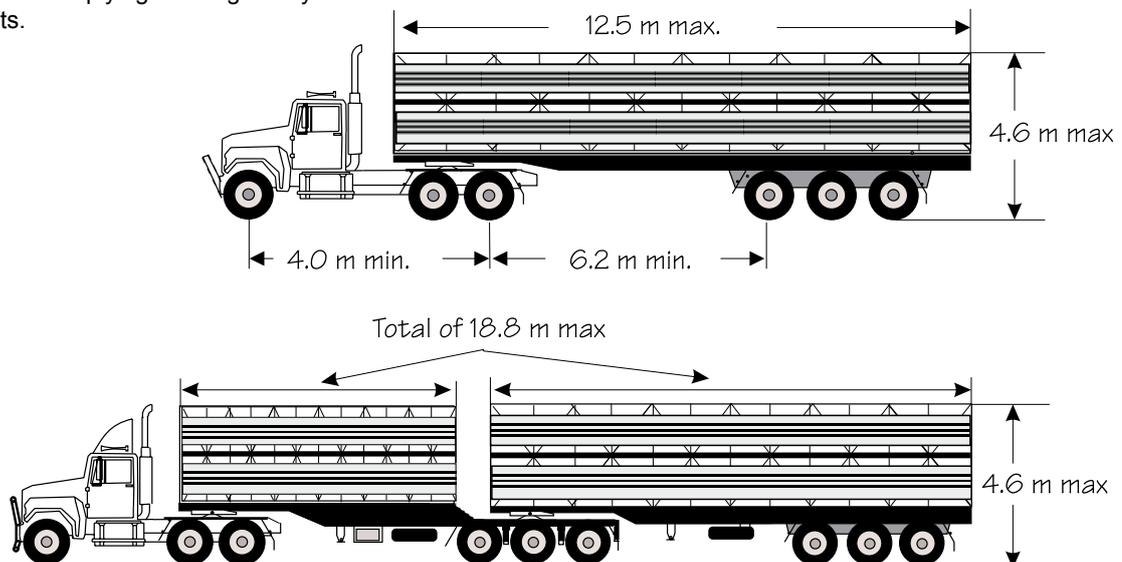
The national maximum loading space for livestock carrying vehicles is 12.5 m for semi-trailers, and a total of 18.8 m for B-double trailers, as shown below.

The loading space is measured from the inside of the front wall or door to the inside of the rear wall or door of the semi-trailer, with intervening partitions being disregarded.

Livestock vehicles may be constructed to a maximum width of 2.5 m and a maximum height of 4.6 m.

Axle Spacings

To ensure that the mass of livestock vehicles is appropriately distributed on bridges, livestock vehicles must have the minimum axle spacings that are shown in the following diagrams.



Complying with B-double axle spacings as specified in Schedule 2 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 1999.

Prime Movers

The tare mass of a prime mover (with fuel) must not exceed 11 tonnes.

To ensure that the vehicles operate safely, the manufacturer's ratings for the vehicle and its components (eg axles and tyres), must not be exceeded.

The prime mover must have minimum manufacturer's ratings of at least:

- steer axle 6.0 tonnes;
- drive axle group 17.3 tonnes;
- GVM 23.3 tonnes;
- GCM (single articulated) 46.3 tonnes; and
- GCM (B-double) 68.0 tonnes.

Semi-trailers

The tare mass of a semi-trailer must not exceed 12 tonnes. The tare weight is the mass of the empty vehicle with water in any tanks.

The total tare weight of the prime mover and semi-trailer must not exceed 22.0 tonnes (note that this is less than the sum of the tare weights of the prime mover and the semi-trailer).

Fuel tanks must not be fitted to semi-trailers, and any water carried on the semi-trailer must be in quantities for personal use only.

Semi-trailers must have a tri-axle with 4 tyres per axle and a manufacturer's rating of at least 25.0 tonnes.

B-doubles

The total tare weight of the two semi-trailers in a B-double combination must not exceed 21.0 tonnes.

The total tare weight of the prime mover and two semi-trailers must not exceed 32.0 tonnes.

Vehicle Stability

To maintain vehicle stability, the livestock loading scheme is only available to 6 axle articulated vehicles and 9 axle B-doubles.

Vehicles of this type have fifth wheel couplings, which makes them more roll resistant than rigid trucks, or truck/trailer combinations joined by a draw bar. Vehicle stability is also improved by having the maximum number of axles.

To further improve vehicle stability, the following requirements have been included in the livestock loading scheme:

- air suspensions are required on prime movers and semi-trailers that were registered for the first time between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 1999; and
- road friendly suspensions are required on prime movers and semi-trailers that were registered for the first time after 1 January 2000.

Vehicles must be equipped with dual tyres on all non-steering axles to minimise road wear.

Driver Training

Drivers of livestock vehicles need training in compliance with the animal welfare codes and regulations, handling animals and driving vehicles up to 4.6 metres high. Driver training specific to high livestock vehicles must be obtained from a VicRoads' Accredited Provider.

Training Providers

For information on training providers and course dates contact the Livestock Transport Association of Victoria on Tel: 0400 933 713 or E-mail: ltav@bigpond.com

This service is available to LTAV members and non-members.

To obtain a certificate for successfully completing the driver training course, the driver will have to satisfy the trainer that he or she:

- has a good understanding of animal welfare codes and regulations;
- understands the techniques for loading and unloading livestock vehicles;
- understands the legal requirements for operating under the Livestock Loading Scheme in Victoria;
- understands the techniques for driving 4.6 m high vehicles and negotiating adverse road conditions;
- can use the VicRoads publication "Height Clearance on Roads" to plan a route to avoid low bridges; and
- can drive a high livestock vehicle in a safe manner.



Training in driving high vehicles is essential

Evidence of Compliance

All prime movers and semi-trailers are required to display VicRoads' issued plates (VLLS) signifying participation in the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme. Each plate is to be affixed in the vicinity of the registration plates on the front of the prime mover and at the rear of each semi-trailer.



Carrying Documents

The driver must carry the following documents in the driving compartment and must produce them for checking when requested by an authorised VicRoads officer or a Police Officer:

- this information bulletin;
- a copy of the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme certificate signed by an authorised VicRoads officer, showing vehicle ratings, tare weight and semi-trailer loading space; and
- a copy of the certificate from the driver training provider; and
- a copy of the current edition of the VicRoads booklet "Height Clearance on Roads".

Interstate Registered Vehicles

Vehicles registered in another State or Territory that are not currently part of a livestock loading scheme are eligible to apply for participation in the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme.

Interstate registered livestock vehicles participating in livestock loading schemes in other States or Territories are automatically included in the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme, provided that:

- they carry this information bulletin;

Vehicle and axle ratings must be adhered to

- the vehicles meet the required vehicle manufacturer's ratings;
- the tare weight of the vehicle is within the Victorian limits; and
- a copy of relevant documents relating to the livestock loading scheme in the other State or Territory is carried, including individual weighbridge docket(s) showing the tare mass of the prime mover and semi-trailer(s).

There is no need for vehicles participating in another livestock loading scheme to display the Victorian VLLS plates.

Loading And Operating

The number of decks used to transport livestock shall not exceed:

- 2 for cattle;
- 3 for pigs; and
- 4 for sheep.

Freight other than livestock must not be carried on a vehicle operating under this Scheme.

Vehicle owners, operators and drivers must ensure that they comply with the provisions of Victorian law and codes of practice relating to animal welfare during road transport, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, and the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Farm Animals During Transportation, January 2002, particularly in relation to the use of pens to separate livestock.

Weighbridge Checks

All drivers, including drivers of livestock vehicles, must pull into weighbridges when directed by a VicRoads' authorised officer, or a Police officer, or if a sign is displayed at the approach to a weighbridge.

Vehicles which comply in all respects with the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme will be exempted from complying with vehicle mass limits.

It will be an offence, however, if any vehicle or axle ratings are exceeded. Also enforcement officers may check road safety related matters, such as driving hours.



VICTORIAN LIVESTOCK LOADING SCHEME APPLICATION FOR VLLS PLATE

Registered owner of vehicle: _____

Address: _____

Contact Name: _____

Mail Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

I hereby apply to operate in the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme in accordance with the conditions of the current notice published in the Victoria Government Gazette and described in the information bulletin, "Livestock Transport"

Attached are applications for the following prime movers: (insert registration numbers)

and the following trailers: (insert registration numbers)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Owner / Agent)

Fill in this section also if applying for a change of ownership of a VLLS compliant vehicle.

Previous Owner: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

VICTORIAN LIVESTOCK LOADING SCHEME

VEHICLE CERTIFICATE

Vehicle

Prime Mover or Semi-trailer or Lead trailer of a B-double

Registration No: _____

Tare mass: _____

Manufacturer's Rating:

Prime Mover	or	Trailer
Steer _____		Triaxle _____
Drive _____		Maximum loading space _____ (deck length)
GVM _____		
GCM _____		

I certify that the above information is correct.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Owner / Agent)

Office use only

VicRoads Authorised Officer: _____

Date: _____

Safe Travel

The vehicle's registered operator and driver are responsible for planning each journey to ensure that:

- (a) the vehicle crosses bridges and negotiates curves in a safe manner, bearing in mind that some roads and intersections may not be capable of accommodating vehicles at the allowable dimensions;
- (b) the vehicle is not driven under a bridge or structure if the vehicle's height is the same as or exceeds the height limit on any sign;
- (c) the clearance to other overhead structures, cables, wires and trees is at least 200 mm greater than the height of the vehicle and sufficient to ensure safe passage; and
- (d) the vehicle is not driven on a road, bridge or structure if it would exceed any posted mass or dimension limit.

The VicRoads' information bulletin "Height Clearance on Roads" provides information about planning routes to avoid low bridges and some tram wires.

Copies of the "Height Clearance on Roads" bulletin may be obtained from VicRoads' Registration and Licensing offices, or downloaded from the VicRoads website.

Roads

Prime mover and semi-trailer combinations carrying livestock may travel on all roads throughout Victoria.

B-doubles carrying livestock may only travel on approved routes that are specified in a permit issued by VicRoads, or in a notice published in the Victoria Government Gazette.

B-double approved routes are described in the information bulletin, "B-doubles & Higher Mass Limits Trucks" and "Local Roads Approval for B-doubles and Higher Mass Limits Trucks". Copies of these publications can be obtained by contacting VicRoads or by viewing VicRoads' website.

Compliance

The livestock vehicle's operator and driver are responsible for complying with all of the requirements for operating in the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme. If any requirement is not adhered to, the operator and driver may be liable to prosecution.

This is in line with the chain of responsibility requirements where anybody - not just the driver - who has control in a transport operation can be held responsible for breaches of road laws. More information about the chain of responsibility can be found on VicRoads' website.

How to Join the Scheme

Operators applying to participate in the Scheme must supply the following items to VicRoads:

- a completed Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme Application Form (attached);
- a completed Livestock Loading Scheme Certificate for each prime mover and semi-trailer;
- a document from the manufacturer of the prime mover stating the ratings for:
 - steer axle;
 - drive axle group;
 - GVM; and
 - GCM;
- a document from the manufacturer of each semi-trailer stating the rating for the tri-axle group and the maximum loading space;
- separate weighbridge dockets showing the tare weight of the prime mover and the trailer(s) ready for operation; and
- a cheque or money order for each VLLS plate. This cost changes annually. Check with VicRoads for the current price.

The Application Form and Certificate may be photocopied, filled in and mailed or faxed to:

VicRoads
Registration and Licensing
(Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme)
GPO Box 1644N
Melbourne Vic 3001

Tel: (03) 9854 2374
Fax: (03) 9854 2316

Upon approval, a VLLS plate and certificate will be mailed to the applicant.

If it is not possible to readily obtain a letter from the vehicle manufacturer, the vehicle may be rated by an engineer participating in the Victorian Vehicle Assessment Signatory Scheme (VASS). A list of the engineers covered by the scheme and competent in heavy vehicles can be obtained from VicRoads.

What do I do when selling my vehicle?

When a VLLS compliant vehicle is sold, the new owner will still be able to keep the plates without paying a fee. However, the change of ownership must be submitted to VicRoads on the attached application form.

Livestock Vehicles Not Covered by the Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme

The Victorian Livestock Loading Scheme is a voluntary scheme. Vehicles that are not covered by the scheme, may be used to transport livestock provided they operate:

- (a) up to a maximum height of 4.6 m, which applies to any vehicle built to carry livestock. Note that the driver must carry in the driving compartment, and produce, when requested, a copy of the VicRoads information bulletin, "Height Clearance on Roads";
- (b) within the general mass and dimension limits contained in Part 4 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 1999, ie that livestock vehicles must not exceed the mass limits applicable to general freight vehicles; and
- (c) the maximum length of the trailer is 12.5 metres, ignoring any drawbar.

However, larger trailers may be used.

Part 4 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 1999 states that 14.6 m is the maximum length of a semi-trailer built to carry cattle, sheep or pigs that is towed by a 3 axle prime mover, and has:

- (a) a tri-axle group; and
- (b) a maximum height of 3.9 m; and
- (c) one deck to carry cattle or 2 decks to carry sheep or pigs.

New Safety Regulations - Working at Heights

The Occupational Health & Safety (Prevention from Falls) Regulations 2003 came into effect in Victoria on 31 March 2004. The Regulations require safety risks to be addressed for persons working more than two metres above the ground. This has resulted in transport operators seeking to comply with the new regulations by fitting driver safety harnesses to livestock vehicles.

The Victorian regulations stipulate a maximum vehicle width of 2.5 m. This measurement is exclusive of indicator lights, reflectors and rear vision mirrors which may exceed this limit by up to 230 mm each side of a vehicle.

What does this mean for you?

Victoria has provided a width exemption for existing in-service vehicles, first registered before 30 June 2005. These vehicles may retro-fit driver safety harnesses that protrude up to a maximum of 50 mm each side of the vehicle. This is provided that the projection is more than two metres off the ground.

To comply with the exemption, a driver of a vehicle first registered before 30 June 2005 must carry a copy of the information bulletin, *Retro-Fitting Tarps and Safety Harnesses August 2005*.

New vehicles, first registered from 30 June 2005, must comply with the 2.5 metre width limit. The width exemption will not apply to these vehicles. Industry advice is that driver fall arrester systems can readily be fitted to new vehicles within the regulatory width limit as part of the manufacturing process.

Avoiding Tunnels when Loaded

Over a period of time a number of incidents have occurred in tunnels involving livestock striking overhead signs and equipment. In livestock trailers, which do not have their top deck enclosed, cattle and sheep can jump up and cause the vehicle to exceed the tunnel height limit and the legal vehicle height of 4.6 metres.

Exceeding the tunnel height limit can cause tunnel signs and equipment to drop onto the road and create a hazard for other road users. Additionally, livestock may be injured or killed.

Consequently, when transporting livestock plan your journey to avoid tunnels (unless the top deck trailer is empty or it is covered/enclosed).

Further Enquiries

For detailed information, contact VicRoads' Permit Issuing Officers on telephone (03) 9881 8852 in the metropolitan area or telephone 131 171 in rural areas.

For further information, visit the VicRoads' website at: <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

For enquiries on the application process, telephone 9854 2374.

For further information: Please visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au Telephone: 13 11 71