

Standard driving hours for the solo bus sector

A variation to standard hours for buses and coaches recognises the needs of some low risk applications

FACT SHEET 6



Introduction to the Bus Sector

New fatigue laws, implemented in 2008, set revised work and rest limits for heavy vehicle drivers and require better management of driver fatigue.

Recognising the diversity of the heavy vehicle industry and the need for flexibility across a wide range of transport operations, a standard driving hours option has been developed for the bus sector (see Table 1).

Table 1: Work and Rest Options

Module	Requirements
Standard Hours	Minimum prescribed rest and working hours
Standard Hours (Bus and coach sector)	As above, with variation for low risk bus applications
Basic Fatigue Management (NHVAS)	More permissive hours, with increased responsibility for fatigue management compliance-assurance
Advanced Fatigue Management (NHVAS)	Risk management and quality assurance approach to manage specific fatigue risks

The bus industry will have access to a Standard Hours (Bus Option). This option caters for the bulk of the bus industry who have a good safety record and undertake minimal night operations. Bus operations needing more flexibility will have access to the same Standard Hours option as the trucking industry. This option still targets low risk operations requiring up to 12 hours work each day but which require more night time rest.

If greater flexibility is needed, including more flexible hours, you should look at the Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) and Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM) options.

The basis of the reform is *working safer, not less hours*. If you manage the proven risk of working long hours and night shifts, BFM and AFM will give you a greater say in when you can work and rest. This includes taking steps to manage driver fatigue such as planning rosters, trips and schedules training drivers and schedulers and checking records for compliance.

Work and Rest

Work time refers to all driving and any other tasks related to the operation of a heavy vehicle including cleaning or refuelling the vehicle or completing record keeping etc. All other time is counted as rest. Time is counted in 15 minute intervals and is recorded according to the time of the driver's base.

Work time 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. Rest periods of 30 or 60 minutes can be taken in 15 minute periods, eg 2 x 15 minutes = 30 minutes.

Standard Hours (Bus Sector)

The Standard Hours option sets out minimum rest and maximum work hours which is an option for all heavy vehicle drivers. Note that work refers to all driving and any other activity which is not rest. This option sets the maximum amount of work at 12 hours in 24 hours but it also introduces more flexible short rest breaks.

A Standard Hours (Bus Sector) option introduces a specific variation to Standard Hours for bus and coach operations, which effectively allows days off to be 'banked' over 28 days for low risk bus operations. This variation will be limited to bus and coach applications where night work and total hours are low. The variation allows tour bus drivers time to fully recuperate after completing a tour and can be used by school bus drivers who work limited hours.

Table 2: Standard Hours (Bus and Coach Option)

Time	Work	Rest
In any period of....	A driver must not work for more than a MAXIMUM of ...	And must have the rest of that period off work with at least a MINIMUM 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
24 hours	12 hours work time	7 continuous hours stationary rest time ¹
7 days		6 x night rest breaks ²
28 days	288 hours work time	4 x 24 continuous hours stationary rest time

¹ 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.

² 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.

Night Work

Under the Standard Hours (Bus Sector) option a driver must take six nights rest in seven. This option is aimed primarily at low risk bus operations. This option also provides more flexibility over 28 days for low risk applications.

Flexible Short Rest Breaks

The Standard Hours (Bus Sector) 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 regulations this is 30 minutes) within the first five hours 30 minutes of work. This approach shifts the emphasis to taking regular short rest breaks later in a shift when a driver starts to feel tired.

Other Fatigue Modules

Bus drivers needing to work more night shifts can choose the regular Standard Hours option under which a driver needs a minimum 4 night rest in 14 days but must also have a 24 hour rest every seven days. As with truck drivers, bus operators who need more flexible hours can apply to operate under BFM or AFM in return for better management of driver fatigue. These options provide more flexible work/rest limits provided you put appropriate checks and balances in place to manage the higher risk of driver fatigue.

Checks and balances may include taking steps such as planning rosters, trips and schedules carefully ensuring your drivers have enough time to take rest breaks, driver and scheduler training, etc. See separate fact sheets on Standard Hours, BFM and AFM for more information.

National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme

BFM and AFM options will be new modules of the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) alongside the existing mass and maintenance modules. Bus operators looking for greater flexibility may be accredited either under existing bus accreditation schemes or directly through NHVAS.

General Duty

Under the new laws a 'general duty' (similar to OH&S laws) requires all parties take all reasonable steps to prevent the fatigue of heavy vehicle drivers. This means for example that:

- drivers must stop if feeling tired or fatigued;
- operators and schedulers must plan when drivers rest; and
- contracts that require a driver break the law are illegal.

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.

Further Information

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

www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

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