

Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) Review – What You Need to Know

The HVNL Review is progressing, with major reforms expected to modernise fatigue, licensing, CoR responsibilities, and how vehicles are captured under the law.

Many companies, especially in building, construction, landscaping, civil, and residential works, regularly tow machinery, operate small trucks, or run mixed fleets. These changes will directly impact how you manage vehicles, drivers, and record keeping.

What You Need to Know – Vehicles from 4.5 tonnes GVM and above will be more formally captured. Any vehicle 4.5t GVM or above is treated as a heavy vehicle under the HVNL.

This includes:

- **Light rigid tipplers**
- **Service trucks**
- **Crane trucks**
- **Utes towing machinery trailers**
- **Small trucks commonly used on construction sites**

This strengthens CoR responsibilities relating to:

- Mass and loading
- Load restraint
- Vehicle standards
- Driver competency
- Fatigue (when applicable)

Many operators currently overlook these requirements for vehicles around the 4.5t mark.

Do LR and MR Drivers Need a Work Diary? ✓ Short answer: NO. LR and MR drivers do not need to keep a work diary under HVNL 2025.

Why Not? Work diaries are only required for:

- Fatigue-regulated heavy vehicles ≥12 tonnes GVM, or
- Operators under Basic Fatigue Management (BFM) or Advanced Fatigue Management (AFM).

LR and MR vehicles fall below the heavy-fatigue threshold.

What LR and MR Operators MUST Still Do. Even without a work diary, operators must comply with the expanded fitness-to-drive and Safety Management System (SMS) requirements:

- Daily fit-for-duty declarations
- Medical fitness evidence (Austroads standards)
- Licence & competency checks
- Verification of Competency (VoC)
- Supervisor oversight of work scheduling
- Safety Management System (SMS) procedures and recordkeeping

These are now mandatory for all heavy vehicles 4.5 tonnes GVM and above, even for local-area operators.



Local Area Work Diary Exemptions Still Apply, but Must Be Managed Correctly. The local area exemption allows some drivers to operate without carrying a diary, but it does not exempt them from fatigue rules. Rules for local area use include:

- Staying within local area radius
- Returning to the same base each day
- Not exceeding the local area boundary
- Maintaining supporting records
- Demonstrating compliance if stopped by an inspector

With upcoming fatigue reforms, expect these rules to tighten further.

Chain of Responsibility (CoR) Expectations Are Increasing. The HVNL review reinforces that all businesses must actively manage:

- Driver competency
- Fatigue risks
- Subcontractor compliance
- Mass and loading
- Training and induction
- Record keeping

These issues are persistent on worksites and will attract greater regulatory attention under the new HVNL model. Common issues identified include:

- Mixed fleets (vehicles + trailers + small trucks) operating above GVM or GCM
- Drivers not holding the correct licence class
- Lack of fatigue records (even when under 12t)
- No VoC or competency evidence
- Load restraint failures
- Poor training documentation

Under the HVNL Review, these areas will be under stronger scrutiny and more focus on businesses to verify and document compliance.

Importance of Training Records & Verification of Competency (VoC)

Training and competency records are increasingly being requested in:

- Site audits
- Insurance investigations
- Incident follow ups
- Regulator inspections
- Tender requirements

Companies must be able to demonstrate:

- Licences are valid
- Drivers are competent for the vehicle they operate
- Load restraint training is current
- Fatigue requirements are understood
- Any corrective training has been addressed



Fitness-to-Drive Requirements Apply to ALL 4.5t+ - Vehicles Under HVNL 2025, fitness-to-drive obligations expand to include every driver operating a vehicle from 4.5 tonnes GVM and above.

This includes:

- LR/MR trucks
- Small rig trucks
- Crane trucks
- Tippers
- Utes towing heavy machinery trailers

Drivers must meet:

- Daily fit-for-duty checks
- Medical fitness (Austroads standards)
- Reporting of medical conditions
- Fatigue and impairment monitoring
- Supervisor oversight of scheduling and workload

This is a major change affecting small operators and subcontractors.

What Beck's Transport Training Can Help You With

We're proud to support ACT transport operators with practical, affordable compliance solutions that reduce your risk, improve safety, and prepare you for tenders and audits.

We offer:

- Verification of Competency (VOC) assessments for cars, utes, trucks and trailers
- Chain of Responsibility Awareness Training (for drivers, admin, and management)
- Training record systems and refresher programs tailored to your business
- Load Restraint, Fatigue and Daily Safety Check toolkits
- Compliance health checks and transport consultancy support

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