

vehicle dimension & mass

Monitoring the VDM Rule

It's been a year since the VDM rule amendment came into force. The NZTA, the Ministry of Transport and Local Government New Zealand are developing a project to monitor the impact the rule amendment has had, and to identify areas that the NZTA can improve its implementation. It will also identify any matters that need to be addressed or improved.

The review will focus on four areas:

1. Economic benefits realised since 1 May 2010.
2. Operator experience, vehicles and permitting of HPMVs.
3. Issues from local government and other RCAs.
4. The effects of HPMVs on infrastructure including structures and pavements.

A consultant has been engaged to independently undertake the review. He will work with NZTA staff and there will be a web-based survey of a number of council staff and road transport operators in late May. Please contact Stephen Patience if you wish to be involved with the review. All information provided will be treated in confidence.

Get ready for axle weight flexibility

The NZTA has responded to the road transport industry's need for axle weight flexibility.

The methodology normally used for the assessment of bridges did not include an option for axle weight flexibility, and operators were having difficulty getting their loads distributed uniformly across all axles. An interim solution has been developed and over time the process will be refined to ensure we meet the needs of industry and protection of bridges.

'The change provides more scope for selecting vehicles and payloads,' says Kerry Arnold, Technical Manager for the Road Transport Forum. 'Industry now has more choice for their operations.'

The interim solution will make life easier for operators, particularly those hauling logs. However, there is a trade off between increasing axle weight flexibility and reducing gross weight.

Operators now have choices in terms of axle loading flexibility. Operators are able to opt for 'no flexibility', 'class 1 flexibility', 'HPMV flexibility', or 'user-defined flexibility'.

Compared to the no flexibility case, the class 1 flexibility may result in a reduction of up to 7 percent gross weight, and for HPMV flexibility there could be up to 12 percent reduction in gross weight.

The NZTA is finalising this new procedure and undertaking a rigorous evaluation of the methodology.

Once the process has been tested we will provide operators, as well as territorial authorities, with further guidance on how to prepare and process HPMV permit applications that include axle weight flexibility. Those operators not wanting axle weight flexibility will be able to continue to apply for permits as they do now. The NZTA is gearing up to process the new applications, which include axle weight flexibility, from early June.

Sample applications and permits will be available from our website and additional information made available in upcoming issues of transport publications.



New guidance maps for HPMV route capability

The NZTA has released a series of regional maps to provide operators with guidance on the HPMV capability of the state highway network.

The regional maps will help industry see where HPMV vehicles can or cannot travel on the state highway network. Some of the features of the maps, which are available on the NZTA website, include:

- Black routes – these indicate the capability of limited HPMV travel and up to possibly full HPMV, depending on your specific vehicle configuration.
- Blue routes – these indicate the capability of greater than class 1 but less than limited HPMV.
- Some bridges will be marked with a red cross indicating capacity of at least class 1, but less than limited HPMV, depending on your specific vehicle configuration.
- Remaining bridges marked with a green truck will have the capacity of at least limited HPMV, but less than full HPMV depending on your specific vehicle configuration.

Limited HPMV is defined as an HPMV vehicle with axle weights and gross weights between class 1 and full HPMV as defined in the common vehicle types and gross weight tables supplied with these maps. It is important to use this additional information when interpreting these maps. Furthermore, operators will still require permits to use a particular route.

The maps have been tested and the NZTA is confident they provide an accurate indication of travel for HPMVs. These maps will be updated as regions continue to assess HPMV applications and as bridges are strengthened to allow HPMV routes to be gradually opened up over time.

In addition to the guidance maps for full and limited HPMV routes, the NZTA has also updated maps indicating routes and permits issued to date. You can also review HPMV applications we have approved or declined by viewing the 'Status of applications' on our website.

All maps and other information can be found on our website: www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/your/over/hpmv.html

VDM makes vehicle distribution easier

Vehicle distributors have welcomed the changes made in 2010 to the Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule because they allow car transporters to distribute vehicles around the country more efficiently.

The Car Distribution Group (CDG) Executive Chairman Mike Tibbs says the changes are timely.

'In the last seven to eight years, new cars and light commercial vehicles have grown, both in terms of height and length,' says Mr Tibbs.

'This has resulted in the CDG's eight car transporters often carrying only six or seven vehicles, decreasing productivity and increasing costs.'

The pro forma vehicle dimensions, approved by the NZTA, allow a simple trailer combination unit to be 23 metres in length with limited overhang (1.3 metres). This allows more vehicles per unit and mitigates road transport cost inflation. It also allows more space between vehicles, which will reduce damage to vehicles in transit.

CDG is confident the change will allow them to recover part of this lost productivity over time.

Several CDG members including Car Haulways, Auckland Vehicle Deliveries, K&N Vehicle Transport and Garden City Haulage have embarked on a capital expenditure programme to introduce approximately 30 DAF 8*4 tractor units and to upgrade existing bodies and trailers.

With VDM-approved high productivity motor vehicles (HPMV), there will be fewer trucks on the road moving more freight which will deliver economic, environmental and safety benefits to all New Zealanders.



For more information

For more information, please contact:
Stephen Patience, VDM Project Manager
E: vdm@nzta.govt.nz
T: 04 894 6237
Visit the HPMV webpage at
www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicle/your/over/hpmv.html