

# Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule 2016

## Changes for passenger service vehicles

## INFORMATION SHEET

February 2017



The new Vehicle Dimensions and Mass (VDAM) Rule 2016 introduces a new vehicle type called 'specialist vehicles'. This includes passenger service vehicles, concrete mixers, rubbish trucks with compactors and ground spreader trucks.

Within the rule, there are specific details relevant to all passenger service vehicles (buses) – and some relevant specifically to public transport buses.

A public transport service bus is defined as a passenger service vehicle that is operating in a public transport service identified in or under a regional public transport plan, as defined in the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

### BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY CHANGES OR DECISIONS

The VDAM Rule 2016 is intended to set a reasonable balance between road safety, productivity and managing New Zealand's road infrastructure. Whether you are looking to change your fleet or make a permitting decision, we encourage you to gather information that helps you make an informed and balanced decision.

### INCREASES TO LIMITS AVAILABLE UNDER PERMIT FOR ALL PASSENGER SERVICE VEHICLES

The rule allows passenger service vehicles (and other specialist vehicles) to utilise increased axle mass limits under permit from 1 February 2017.

The increases are for single axles with twin tyres and tandem axles only – there is no increase to the gross masses able to be permitted.

#### PERMITTING SPECIALIST VEHICLES

FROM (currently only available for buses)	TO	RULE REFERENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8800kg – twin-tyred axle in any set</li> <li>14,600kg – twin-tyred axle with a single large-tyred axle in a tandem axle set and a 60/40 load share</li> <li>16,000kg – twin-tyred axle with a single large-tyred axle in a tandem axle set and a 55/45 load share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12,000kg</li> <li>16,000kg</li> <li>18,000kg</li> <li><b>NEW: 17,000kg</b> – two twin-tyred axles in a tandem axle set spaced less than 1.3m apart</li> <li><b>NEW: 18,000kg</b> – two twin-tyred axles in a tandem axle set greater than 1.3m apart</li> </ul>	Section 5.11 schedule 3, part 3, table 3.6.

## PHASED CHANGES FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUSES OPERATING ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES

Some bus routes are serviced using 2-axle buses. Currently, some urban centres are seeing consistent increases in passenger demand, especially at peak times through each day. The VDM Rule incorporates a two-stage approach to increasing axle limits, to help work towards easing passenger traffic by allowing buses to operate with higher axle weights on approved public transport routes.

1. From 1 February 2017, public transport buses (like passenger service vehicles in general) wanting to operate at axle mass limits above the current general access of 8200kg will require a specialist vehicle permit.
2. From 1 December 2018, 2-axle public transport services buses will not require permits for rear axle weights up to 9000kg. Prior to that date specialist vehicle permits are required. This provides time for road controlling authorities to assess relevant bridges and structures on selected routes and either post any restrictions required to maintain safety or undertake strengthening work.

After 1 December 2018, public transport service buses and other passenger service vehicles, including 2-axle buses over 9000kg axle weights, can continue to utilise increased axle mass limits if they have a specialist vehicle permit.

## NEW PERMIT PROCESS

You can apply for a permit by submitting an application to the road controlling authority of the road network you want to use, or through the online permit portal.

If you are applying for a permit for a long distance bus, predominantly travelling on the state highway network, we recommend you apply through the online permit portal.

Visit [nzta.govt.nz/specialist-vehicle-permits](http://nzta.govt.nz/specialist-vehicle-permits) for more information, including how to apply for a specialist vehicle permit.

## TEMPORARY ROAD USER CHARGES (RUC)

When operating a bus under a specialist vehicle permit, you are required to carry a RUC licence covering the extra weight allowed. This ensures there is a level playing field for everyone in terms of weight limits and paying a fair contribution to the cost of maintaining New Zealand's road network.

Temporary RUC rates are in place for specialist vehicles. For more detail on the rates, visit [nzta.govt.nz/specialist-vehicle-permits](http://nzta.govt.nz/specialist-vehicle-permits). You can also read the VDM questions and answers for more information on the temporary RUC rates.



### WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please check our website [nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016](http://nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016) for more information, including the VDM Rule 2016 and revised documents.

If you have any questions regarding how the rule impacts your work, you can send enquiries to:

1. Permitting/overdimension/specialist vehicles/network access: [frr@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:frr@nzta.govt.nz)
2. Vehicle questions: [Andrew.Hilson@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:Andrew.Hilson@nzta.govt.nz)
3. Temporary RUC rates: [RUCAssessments@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:RUCAssessments@nzta.govt.nz)