

Information Bulletin

VS 11/09.18

Standards for Public Passenger Vehicle Type, Age and Use

Schedule 1 of the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010* requires operators to comply with specific vehicle requirements. This information bulletin outlines the requirements for types and ages of vehicles suitable for public passenger services. This information bulletin applies to heavy buses and light buses and must be read in conjunction with any other standards that may also be relevant.

Note: changes to legislation in June 2016 removed age restrictions for forward-control and off-road passenger vehicles.

Classifications

Public passenger vehicles are classified in accordance with one of the following operating environments:

- **Open classification**

A vehicle classified for open use may operate over an unlimited distance.

- **Regional classification**

A vehicle classified for regional use may operate within a radius of 350 km from the first passenger pick-up point.

- **Local classification**

A vehicle classified for local use may operate within a radius of 40 km from the first passenger pick up point, or a radius exceeding 40 km providing the journey is entirely within a single or contiguous urban area.

Age standards

STANDARD REQUIRED	OPEN CLASSIFICATION	REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION	LOCAL CLASSIFICATION
Maximum age ⁽¹⁾			
- Heavy bus (gross vehicle mass over 5t.)	25 years	25 years	25 years
- Light bus (gross vehicle mass less than 5t.)	10 years	20 years	20 years

Notes:

(1) The operator is responsible for proving the age of the vehicle. The age is calculated from the following dates (applied in order of availability):

1. Date of first registration anywhere.
2. Date on receipt for the first sale of the vehicle.
3. Date of manufacture of the original body (body compliance plate, or manufacturer's letter, etc).
4. Date of manufacture of the original chassis (chassis compliance plate or manufacturer's letter, etc).

NB: The maximum age is reached the day the vehicle turns the specified age.

Design standards

STANDARD REQUIRED	OPEN CLASSIFICATION	REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION	LOCAL CLASSIFICATION
Australian Design Rules (ADRs) for buses	Applicable to non-route service buses with high back seats ⁽¹⁾	Applicable to non-route service buses	Applicable to route service buses
Brakes	Dual circuit	Dual circuit	Dual circuit
Seating for buses	Forward or rearward facing coach style (high back) seats	Forward, rearward or side facing ⁽²⁾	Forward, rearward or side facing seats

Notes:

- (1) High back seats have a reference height of 1 metre or more, as defined by the ADRs. This is the vertical distance from the floor where the passenger's heels rest to the top of the seat. Buses with high back seats will generally be required to have seat belts in accordance with ADR 68 (please refer to ADR 68 for when exceptions might occur).
- (2) Side facing seats in buses in regional classification must be fitted with lap seat belts complying with ADR 4 and ADR 5.

Padding standards

STANDARD REQUIRED	REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION	LOCAL CLASSIFICATION	SCHOOL BUS ⁽²⁾
Safety padding⁽¹⁾	Applicable for all buses	Applicable for all buses which have entered service in Qld on or after 01/01/1997	Applicable for all school buses which have entered service in Qld on or after 01/01/1997; and From 05/07/2005, applicable for all light school buses less than 18 years old ⁽³⁾ at 05/07/2005; and From 05/07/2005, applicable for all heavy school buses less than 23 years old ⁽³⁾ at 05/07/2005

Notes:

- (1) Padding is to be fitted to those hard surfaces as set out in information bulletin VS12 "Standards for Safety Padding for Bus Handrails, Seats and Partitions". Specifications for the padding material are also set out in the standards. While padding is not mandatory for open classification buses, owners are advised to consider fitting padding to unprotected hard surfaces (e.g. modesty panel handrail).
- (2) For the definition of a school bus, refer to information bulletin VS01 "Standards for School Bus Warning Signs and Warning Lights".
- (3) See Note (1) under 'age standards' on how to calculate the age of the bus.

Vehicles for wilderness areas

Conventional enclosed vehicle bodies may not be suited to some applications in wilderness areas. Alternative body types are permitted provided design approval has been obtained from the Department of Transport and Main Roads. To avoid costly mistakes, written approval should be obtained before manufacture, modification, or purchase of a vehicle.

Dispensation cannot be given from meeting mandatory ADRs applicable to the age and classification of a vehicle.

Buses manufactured before 20 May 1992 may be exempted from some requirements of the Code of Practice S6 "Omnibus Licensing Evaluation" if the operator can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, that all relevant safety standards are maintained.

The vehicle design must be able to protect the occupants from overhanging foliage and inclement weather.

The following are considered mandatory for all vehicles of this type:

- the driver and front passenger seating positions must have full windscreen protection;
- adequate roll over protection must be provided for all occupants;
- all seating positions are to be forward facing; and
- buses must comply with ADR requirements for non route service buses, at the date of manufacture.

Luggage and freight

Luggage, other than passenger's light hand luggage or that stowed in overhead lockers, is not to be carried in the passenger compartment of vehicles classified for open or regional use. Vehicles in these classifications whose operations would normally require the carriage of bulk luggage and/or freight are to be fitted with luggage compartments and/or tow luggage trailers.

If local classification vehicles not fitted with luggage compartments are operating on services where other than light hand luggage is encountered, the luggage must be restricted to a preselected seating area forward of the passengers and must be secured with suitable tie downs or cargo nets. Otherwise, luggage must be carried in a trailer.

Under no circumstances may luggage be stowed in aisles, or in any other section of a bus, where it will impede passenger exit through doors or emergency exits.

Life extension

Two types of life extensions are available for heavy buses. For detailed information refer to information bulletin VS10 "Standards for Heavy Bus Service Life Extensions".

School bus warning signs and lights

Certain buses carrying school children must be fitted with warning signs and lights. Details of the applicable buses and the equipment requirements are contained in information bulletin VS01 "Standards for School Bus Warning Signs and Warning Lights".

Power-train retarders

Some buses carrying school children on certain steep roads must be fitted with power-train retarders. Details of the applicable buses and the equipment requirements are contained in information bulletin VS02 "Standards for Buses Requiring Power-Train Retarders".

Maintenance and inspection

A structural inspection is required for all heavy buses within the year before the bus turns 21 years of age (or earlier if signs of corrosion are detected). Details of this requirement are contained in information bulletin VS09 "Standards for the Structural Inspection and Repair of Buses".

Types of Vehicles and Equipment

Schedule 5 of the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018* (the Regulation) sets out what equipment is required to be fitted to particular public passenger vehicles.

Additional information

This bulletin has been produced as a guideline and is not a reference to a point of law. Clarification of any information in this bulletin may be obtained by contacting your local passenger transport office. Details of passenger transport locations can be accessed at www.translink.com.au/contact-us

The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*, *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2018* and *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010* can be accessed on the internet at www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Additional information about public passenger services is available on the Department of Transport and Main Roads internet site at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/information_bulletins.