

Information Bulletin

VS 11 (10.17)

Standards for Public Passenger Vehicle Type, Age and Use

This information bulletin outlines requirements that apply to motor vehicles used to provide public passenger services.

Vehicle definitions (for this guideline)

Bus means a motor vehicle with seating capacity for 9 or more passengers (excluding the driver).

Forward-control passenger vehicle means a motor vehicle of the vehicle category forward-control passenger vehicle (MB) under a vehicle standard made under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cwlth).

Light bus is a bus with a gross vehicle mass of not more than 5t.

Heavy bus is a bus with a gross vehicle mass of more than 5t.

Off-road passenger vehicle means a motor vehicle of the vehicle category off-road passenger vehicle (MC) under a vehicle standard made under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cwlth).

Passenger car means a motor vehicle of the vehicle category passenger car (MA) under a vehicle standard made under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cwlth).

Passenger vehicle means each of the following:

- A passenger car;
- A forward-control passenger vehicle;
- An off-road passenger vehicle;
- A motor vehicle of vehicle category light omnibus (MD) or heavy omnibus (ME) under a vehicle standard made under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (Cwlth).

People mover means a passenger car having at least 6 seating positions, including the driver's position, that are not limited for use by reference to a person's age or weight.

School bus means a bus being used to provide a school service outside or partly outside a defined urban area, even though the bus may be used for other purposes at other times.

Utility vehicle means a motor vehicle that is registered in Queensland as a vehicle that has a gross vehicle mass of not more than 4.5t and with any of the following body shapes: dual cabin; cabin and chassis; or utility.

Operating environment classifications

Some vehicle requirements vary depending upon the use of the vehicle. The following operating environment classifications are used in this guideline.

- **Open classification**

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

- **Regional classification**

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

- **Local classification**

A vehicle classified for local use may be used 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.

Vehicle type requirements

Vehicles used for public passenger services other than booked hire, community, courtesy or taxi services

- The vehicle must be a passenger vehicle; or
- For a tourist service, the vehicle must be a passenger vehicle, motor cycle and sidecar, or a motor tricycle.

Vehicles used for community or courtesy transport services

There is no restriction on the type of motor vehicle that may be used to provide a community transport service or courtesy transport service.

Booked hire vehicles, limousines and taxis

The following requirements apply to vehicles used under a licence to provide a booked hire service (including in a limousine) or a taxi service.

- For a booked hire service licence – a passenger vehicle that has no more than 12 seating positions, including the driver's position or utility vehicle that has no more than 12 seating positions, including the driver's position.
- For a limousine licence – a passenger vehicle that has a wheelbase of at least 2,800mm; or a passenger vehicle that is at least 30 years old from its date of manufacture.
- For a taxi service licence – a passenger vehicle that has no more than 12 seating positions, including the driver's position.

Vehicle age limits

Age limits, set out in the table below, apply to vehicles used to provide a public passenger service for which operator accreditation is required. Age limits do not apply to a vehicle while it is being used to provide a service for which operator accreditation is not required.

Vehicle type	Maximum Vehicle Age		
	Open Classification	Regional Classification	Local Classification
Heavy bus	25 years	25 years	25 years
Light bus	10 years	20 years	20 years
Any other vehicle	No limit	No limit	No limit

Determining vehicle age

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).

Bus life extension

Two types of life extensions are available for heavy buses. For details, refer to information bulletin [VS10 Standards for Heavy Bus Service Life Extensions](#).

Bus 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 ADRs 4 & 5.

Bus padding standards

Standard required	Open Classification	Regional 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 [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 used in wilderness areas

The following requirements apply to accredited operators who use a bus, forward-control passenger vehicle, off-road passenger vehicle or people mover in a wilderness area:

- The vehicle design must be able to protect the occupants overhanging foliage and inclement weather. The driver and front passenger seating positions must have full windscreen protection.
- The vehicle must provide adequate roll over protection for all occupants.
- All seats must be forward facing.
- Buses must comply with ADR requirements for non route service buses, at the date of manufacture.

Luggage and freight

The following requirements apply to accredited operators who use a bus, forward-control passenger vehicle, off-road passenger vehicle or people mover.

Luggage, other than passenger's light hand luggage, is not to be carried in the passenger compartment of vehicles classified for open or regional use. For these services, luggage must be in overhead luggage racks, overhead luggage lockers, or stowed in a separate luggage compartment or luggage trailer.

In local classification vehicles not fitted with luggage compartments, luggage must be carried only in a preselected seating area forward of the passengers and be secured with suitable tie downs or cargo nets. Luggage may also 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.

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](#).

Off-road passenger vehicles operating tourist services

Off-road passenger vehicles operating tourist services must be fitted with:

- a fire extinguisher that complies with the Australian Standards for fire extinguishers
- a device to prevent a damaged tail shaft from striking the ground.

If a tourist service is of more than 1 day's duration, the following equipment must also be fitted to the vehicle and in working order:

- winch
- first aid kit
- Royal Flying Doctor radio or a telephone that operates in conjunction with a satellite.

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](#).

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 a regional passenger transport office. Contact details can be found at translink.com.au/contact-us

The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994*, *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005* and *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010* can be accessed on the internet at legislation.qld.gov.au

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