Vehicle dimensions and mass permitting manual (volume 1)

Part A

Introduction to vehicle dimensions and mass permits

Current as at 11 August 2017

Disclaimer

This publication is intended to provide general information about the permitting of vehicles that exceed dimension and mass limits. While every effort has been made to ensure the quality and accuracy of this information, readers are advised that the information provided does not replace or alter the laws of New Zealand, does not replace any legal requirement, and is not a substitute for expert advice applicable to the reader's specific situation. Readers should also be aware that the content in this publication may be replaced or amended subsequent to this publication, and any references to legislation may become out of date if that legislation is amended.

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Part A: Introduction to vehicle dimensions and mass permits

Introduction

About this part

This part of the manual provides background and overview information about vehicle dimensions and mass (VDAM) permits. It covers:

- the legislative background
- an overview of the different VDAM permit types
- which permit type to apply for and where to apply
- the general requirements when operating under a VDAM permit, and
- enforcement of VDAM permits.

Purpose

The purpose of this part is to give a high-level overview of the different VDAM permit types and to help applicants determine which permit type they may need to operate their heavy vehicles and loads.

This part is not intended as a full set of relevant policies for each permit type. Detailed information on the specific permit types can be found in subsequent parts of this volume of the manual.

Audience

The audience for this part is anyone who wants to gain a general understanding of VDAM permits and applying for permits. This may include:

- operators of heavy vehicles, buses, concrete mixers, ground spreaders or rubbish trucks
- Transport Agency permitting staff and contractors
- local road controlling authorities, and
- enforcement agents, for example the Commercial Vehicle Safety Team (CVST) of the New Zealand Police.

Terminology and abbreviations

Specific terminology and abbreviations are used throughout this manual. For definitions and explanations, see *Part I: Definitions and glossary*.

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Introduction continued

In this part

This part contains the following chapters:

Chapter A1: Overview of vehicle dimensions and mass permits

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter describes the legislation that governs vehicle dimensions and mass (VDAM) permits and the different permit categories and types.

In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

A1.1 Enabling legislation

VDAM Rule

The enabling legislation for VDAM permits is the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2016 (referred to in this manual as 'the VDAM Rule').

The VDAM Rule 2016 came into effect on 1 February 2017, repealing and replacing the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2002.

Purpose of the VDAM Rule

The purpose of the VDAM Rule is to ensure that heavy motor vehicles are operated efficiently and safely on New Zealand roads. It does this by setting limits to the standard configurations, dimensions and mass of vehicles so that they can be safely operated within the constraints of the road network.

At the same time, the rule enables road controlling authorities to issue permits that allow heavy motor vehicles to exceed standard dimension and mass limits. The rule sets the requirements for issuing, and operating under, such permits.

Other legislation applies

The VDAM Rule works in conjunction with and addition to other transport-related legislation, and does not set aside responsibilities or restrictions imposed by other legislation. For example, operators and drivers must be aware of the general responsibilities related to vehicle and load safety or driver behaviour under the Land Transport Act 1998.

This also applies to local bylaws such as posted mass limits on bridges, which override the mass limits prescribed under the VDAM Rule and may prohibit a vehicle exceeding the posted limit from crossing, even if the vehicle operates under a permit.

Permits issued before 1 February 2017

VDAM permits issued before 1 February 2017 under the 2002 VDAM Rule continue to be valid for the duration of the permit period, unless revoked or replaced.

A1.2 Overview of VDAM permit types

Guiding principles

There are two main categories of VDAM permit:

1. permits to exceed general access mass limits, and
2. permits to exceed dimension limits.

These two main categories are further divided into different permit types, depending on:

- whether the load is divisible or indivisible, and/or
- vehicle type, eg high productivity motor vehicle (HPMV) or specialist vehicle.

Specific permits for indivisible loads

Two VDAM permit types are specifically for indivisible loads:

- overweight permits, and
- overdimension permits.

Definition of 'indivisible' load

A load is considered indivisible if it cannot reasonably, without disproportionate effort, cost or risk of damage, be reduced in size or be divided into smaller sections for transport. This includes certain divisible loads specified in the VDAM Rule that may be transported together with an indivisible load, such as transformer oil, construction equipment or ballast.

Customs-sealed import/export ISO containers are also eligible for overweight permits.

Definition of 'divisible' load

A divisible load is a load that can be separated into smaller units without disproportionate effort. It is either fluid or has separate components, even though these components may be temporarily connected for handling, storage or transport. Examples are milk, gravel, logs, animals and bundles of steel or timber.

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A1.2 Overview of VDAM permit types continued

Permits for specific vehicle types

There are specific VDAM permit types for eligible vehicles that are either high productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) or 'specialist' vehicles, as follows:

If your vehicle is…	Then you should apply for a…
an HPMV (see *What is an HPMV?* below)	• higher mass HPMV permit, or • 50MAX HPMV permit, AND • overlength HPMV permit if your vehicle exceeds standard length limits.
a specialist vehicle (see *What is a specialist vehicle?* below)	specialist vehicle permit.

What is an HPMV?

A high productivity motor vehicle is a class of heavy vehicle that is used for regular freight movements and is no wider or higher than standard vehicles but operates under a permit to exceed:

- a gross mass of 44,000kg (but see section *A1.4 Higher mass limits without a permit (45,000 or 46,000kg)*, and/or
- standard vehicle length limits.

What is a specialist vehicle?

The VDAM Rule identifies the following vehicle types as 'specialist' vehicles that are eligible for a permit:

- passenger service vehicle
- concrete mixer
- ground-spreader truck, or
- rubbish truck (with a compactor).

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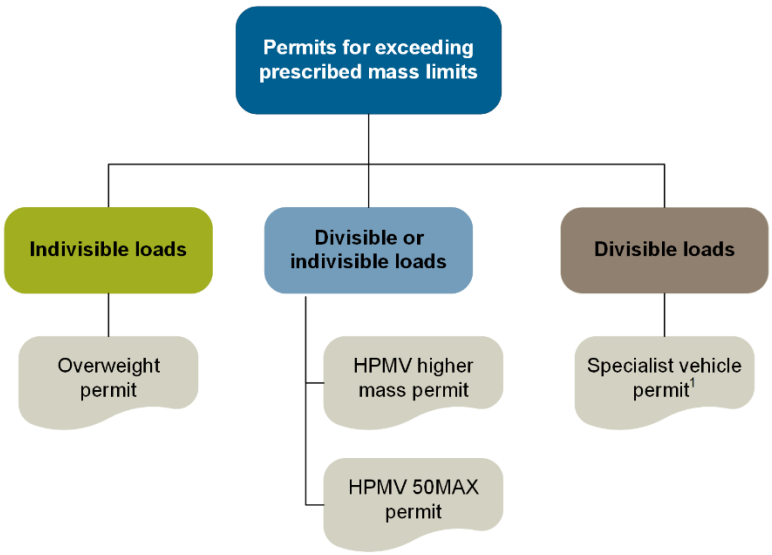
A1.2 Overview of VDAM permit types continued

Overview of permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits

This diagram shows the different permit types for exceeding general access mass limits, ie the mass limits prescribed in the VDAM Rule schedule 3, parts 1 and 2.



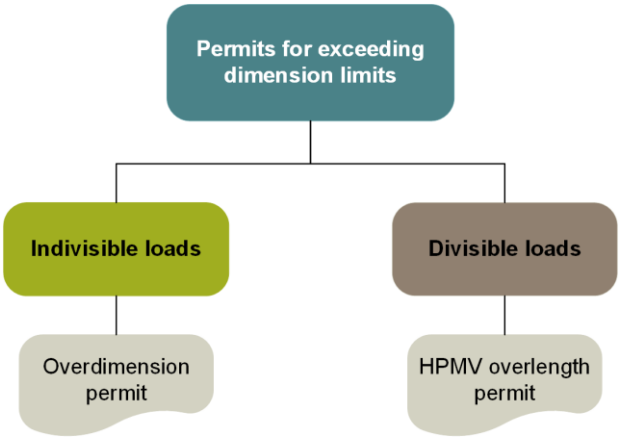
Note:

1. Specialist vehicle permits are for exceeding general access **axle** mass limits only. Standard gross mass limits apply.

For more details see the next section *A1.3 Permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits.*

Overview of permits for exceeding dimension limits

This diagram shows the different permit types for exceeding dimension limits.



For more details see section *A1.5 Permits for exceeding dimension limits.*

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A1.2 Overview of VDAM permit types continued

Several permits per vehicle	Vehicles that exceed both mass and dimension limits need separate permits. For example, a vehicle that carries a large indivisible load such as plant or machinery and exceeds both mass and dimension limits needs an overweight as well as an overdimension permit.
Separate permits for local roads and state highways	Depending on the permit type, your route and the region you are travelling in, you may also need separate permits for local roads and for state highways. For details see section *A2.2 Where to apply for a VDAM permit.*
Carrying multiple permits	Multiple permits must be carried together in the vehicle.

A1.3 Permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits

Four types of permit to exceed mass limits

There are four different types of permit for exceeding prescribed mass limits:

1. overweight permits
2. HPMV higher mass permits
3. HPMV 50MAX permits, and
4. specialist vehicle permits.

This section describes the different types of legal mass limit and the different permit types for exceeding them.

Different legal mass limits

The VDAM Rule prescribes three types of mass limits:

- general access mass limits
- restricted access mass limits up to a maximum gross mass of 45,000 or 46,000kg for certain vehicles without a permit (route restrictions apply until 1 December 2017), and
- permit mass limits.

Sets of mass limits

The VDAM Rule prescribes general access and permit mass limits for:

- individual axles
- axle sets, and
- groups of axles depending on the distance from the first axle to the last (gross mass limits).

However, restricted access mass limits apply to total gross mass only.

Rationale for mass limits

Axle mass limits are designed to manage the impact of heavy vehicles on pavements.

Axle set and gross mass limits are designed to manage the impact of heavy vehicles on bridges and other road infrastructure.

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A1.3 Permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits
continued

General access mass limits

The general access mass limits prescribed in the VDAM Rule represent the maximum mass that can be sustained under normal conditions without undue deterioration of the road network's pavement and bridges.

Subject to any specific, temporary or posted bridge restrictions, vehicles carrying loads within the general access mass limits can travel without a permit anywhere on the road network.

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule schedule 3, parts 1 and 2.

Restricted access mass limits

Heavy vehicle combinations with at least seven axles and a minimum wheelbase may carry increased gross mass up to specified limits without a permit. However, until 1 December 2017 travel is restricted to certain approved routes.

For details see the next section *A1.4 Higher mass limits without a permit (45,000 or 46,000kg)*.

Permit mass limits

The VDAM Rule specifies higher mass limits than general or restricted access limits that are available only under a permit (so-called 'permit mass limits'). However, the mass allowed on a permit is limited to the lowest of:

- the maximum permit mass limits set out in the VDAM Rule
- any of the vehicle's design or load limits, or
- the maximum limit that the lowest capacity structure on the route can safely support.

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule schedule 3, parts 3 and 4.

Note: In determining the maximum mass a vehicle can carry, operators should also refer to the VDAM Rule section 4.4: Axle mass limits.

Rationale for permit mass limits

Although there is no established right to exceed general access mass limits, it is not feasible to reduce some loads. Permit mass limits help to manage heavy loads using the network and thereby limit the consequent damage and help mitigate safety risks.

Higher mass loads carried on high productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) also increase freight efficiency by increasing the amount of freight that can be safely carried on New Zealand roads while at the same time reducing the number of vehicles and trips needed to carrying that freight.

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A1.3 Permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits
continued

Restrictions apply

Depending on the permit type, permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits may specify restrictions to:

- the routes on which the vehicle may operate
- the number of trips the vehicle is allowed to make
- the time of day when the vehicle is allowed to travel
- the vehicle's speed, or
- any other conditions under which the vehicle may be operated that the road controlling authority considers necessary to ensure the safety of road users, the protection of infrastructure or to provide for permit compliance.

Which permit to apply for?

See section *A2.1 Which VDAM permit do you need?* for more guidance on which permit to apply for, or refer to the part on a specific permit type in this volume.

A1.4 Higher mass limits without a permit (45,000 or 46,000kg)

Restricted access mass limits

Heavy motor vehicle combinations with at least seven axles are allowed to carry increased gross mass on certain routes without a permit, up to the following limits:

Vehicle requirements	Maximum mass (kg)
7-axle combination with a minimum wheelbase of 16.8m	45,000
8-axle combination with a minimum wheelbase of 17.4m	46,000

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule schedule 3, table 2.2.

IMPORTANT: Restricted routes until 1 December 2017

Until 1 December 2017, travel at the above limits is **restricted to routes approved by the Transport Agency** and published on its website. For more information go to www.nzta.govt.nz/commercial-driving/trucks-and-tow-trucks/45-46-tonne-general-access-changes/.

General access from 1 December 2017

From 1 December 2017, vehicles operating at the new limits have general access on all local roads and state highways, except where restrictions are posted.

A1.5 Permits for exceeding dimension limits

What are dimension limits?

The VDAM Rule specifies the maximum dimension limits for vehicles to operate on New Zealand roads. The dimension limits are designed to ensure that vehicles:

- fit safely on a road, and
- interact safely with other road users.

The VDAM Rule specifies maximum limits for the following dimensions:

- width
- height
- overall length
- forward distance
- front and rear overhang
- ground clearance, and
- inter-vehicle spacing.

The rule also specifies performance standards related to dimensions, such as maximum turning circle and minimum static roll threshold (SRT).

Standard vehicle dimensions

Only two dimension limits, width and height, are standard for all vehicles (except two-wheelers), ie:

- maximum width is 2.55 metres, and
- maximum height is 4.3 metres.

All other dimension limits depend on the vehicle type. For full details see:

- Factsheet 13, available on the Transport Agency's website at www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/factsheets/13/, or
- VDAM Rule schedule 2.

Two types of permit to exceed dimension limits

There are two types of permit to exceed dimension limits:

1. overdimension permits, and
2. HPMV overlength permits.

These are described in more detail below.

Continued on next page

A1.5 Permits for exceeding dimension limits continued

What is 'over-dimension'?

'Overdimension' refers to an **indivisible** vehicle or load that exceeds one or more of the standard dimension limits.

See *Definition of 'indivisible' load* in section A1.2 above.

Overdimension categories

The VDAM Rule classifies overdimension vehicles and loads into four categories according to their width and forward distance combination, length, and front and rear overhang.

Overdimension categories 1 and 2 may operate without a permit provided they comply with the special overdimension operating requirements in the VDAM Rule.

Specific operating requirements also apply for vehicles higher than 4.3 metres.

Overdimension permits

An overdimension vehicle or load requires a permit from the Transport Agency if:

- its width and forward distance fall within categories 3 and 4
- its front or rear overhang exceeds 7 metres
- it is higher than 5 metres
- it is longer than 25 metres, or
- it is unable to comply with any operating requirements for its category.

Overdimension permit restrictions

Overdimension vehicles or loads operating under a permit must comply with the operating requirements in the VDAM Rule as well as any permit conditions. Generally, the larger the vehicle or load, the more restrictions apply.

Restrictions may include, but are not limited to:

- route restrictions
- speed restrictions
- use of pilot vehicles
- travel time restrictions
- use of hazard warning equipment and special lighting requirements, and
- special permissions and notification requirements.

For details see *Part C: Overdimension permits* in this volume, or the VDAM Rule section 6.

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A1.5 Permits for exceeding dimension limits continued

HPMV overlength permits

High productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) may exceed standard length limits (see table below) under an overlength permit provided they:

- have the equivalent safety performance of standard vehicles, and
- meet the Transport Agency's performance standards.

For example, a vehicle may need an overlength permit if it is longer overall to increase deck space, or a vehicle combination may have longer inter-vehicle spacing within standard overall length.

HPMV overlength permits are available for pro-forma and non pro-forma vehicles.

For details see *Part E: HPMV overlength permits* in this volume.

Standard vehicle lengths

This table shows the maximum lengths for standard vehicles and vehicle combinations. You need an overlength permit if your HPMV exceeds **any** of these standard length limits.

Vehicle		Maximum length (m)
Rigid vehicle	towing	11.5
	not towing	12.6
Towing vehicle and semi-trailer with:		
– a quad axle set with two steering axles (trailer must be first registered before 1 February 2017)		18
– any other axle set		19
Towing vehicle and full trailer:		
– excluding load		20
– including load if load overhanging the rear of the trailer does not exceed 2.3m in width or 1.15m from the longitudinal centre line of the vehicle		22
Towing vehicle and simple trailer		22
Any other combination		20

Chapter A2: Applying for a VDAM permit

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter gives guidance on which type of VDAM permit an operator may need, and where to apply for the different VDAM permit types. It also includes information on permit fees and processing times.

In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

A2.1 Which VDAM permit do you need?

Permits to exceed prescribed mass limits

If you need a permit to exceed prescribed mass limits, refer to the table below to determine which permit type to apply for.

Permit type	Apply if…
Overweight	• your vehicle carries an **indivisible** load[1] and exceeds the prescribed mass limits for any: – individual axle – axle set, or – the combined axle set limits, which depend on the distance from the first axle in any set to the last axle in any other set, OR • the mass on any axle of your vehicle exceeds a temporary limit specified by a road controlling authority to protect weak road pavements. For full details see *Part B: Overweight permits*.
HPMV higher mass	• your vehicle carries a load of more than 44,000kg[2] • it is an eligible vehicle design[3], and • you require route flexibility. For full details see *Part D: HPMV higher mass permits*.
HPMV 50MAX	• your vehicle carries more than 44,000kg[2] but not more than 50,000kg • the vehicle design conforms to a 50MAX-ready pro-forma design[4] • all units in your vehicle combination are registered, and • your route is entirely on the 50MAX network[5]. For full details see *Part F: HPMV 50MAX permits*.
Specialist vehicle	• your vehicle is either a: – passenger service vehicle – concrete mixer – ground-spreader truck, or – rubbish truck with compactor, AND • has no more than two axles in any axle set. For full details see *Part G: Specialist vehicle permits*.

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A2.1 Which VDAM permit do you need? continued

Permits to exceed mass limits (continued)

Notes:

1. The definition of 'indivisible' includes ancillary items associated with an indivisible load identified in the VDAM Rule, eg transformer oil, certain construction equipment, ballast or slurry. For details, see *Chapter B3: Payload requirements* in part B of this volume.
2. Vehicles with at least seven axles and a minimum wheelbase are allowed to carry increased gross mass on certain routes without a permit – see section *A1.4 Higher mass limits without a permit (45,000 or 46,000kg)*.
3. For eligible vehicle designs, see *Chapter D2: Vehicle requirements for HPMV higher mass permits* in part D of this volume.
4. 50MAX-ready pro-forma vehicle designs can be found on the Transport Agency's website at www.nzta.govt.nz/50max.
5. For details see section *F1.2 50MAX route requirements*.

Permits to exceed dimension limits

If you need a permit to exceed standard dimension limits, refer to the table below to determine which permit type to apply for.

Permit type	Apply if your vehicle…
Overdimension	• carries an **indivisible** load, and • exceeds one or more of the following dimensions: – width and forward distance combination within over-dimension categories 3 and 4[1] – height of 5m – front or rear overhang of 7m – overall length of 25m. For full details see *Part C: Overdimension permits*.

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A2.1 Which VDAM permit do you need? continued

Permits to exceed dimension limits (continued)

Permit type	Apply if your vehicle…
Overlength HPMV permit	• carries a divisible or indivisible load • exceeds any of the standard vehicle **length** limits[2] (but otherwise has standard dimensions) • is an eligible pro-forma design, and/or • is a non pro-forma design but meets the Transport Agency's safety performance standards. For full details see *Part E: HPMV overlength permits*.

Notes:

1. See section *C1.2 Overdimension categories,* or the VDAM Rule schedule 6, parts 1 and 2.
2. See *Standard vehicle lengths* in section A1.5 above.

A2.2 Where to apply for a VDAM permit

Issuing authorities

This table shows who can issue VDAM permits:

Permit type	Who can issue the permit?
Permits to exceed prescribed mass limits	• NZ Transport Agency for state highways • local road controlling authorities (RCAs) for local roads • Transport Agency for local roads under delegation from local RCA, or • local RCA for state highways under delegation from the Transport Agency (see *Delegation of issuing authority* below)
Permits to exceed dimension limits	Transport Agency

Delegation of issuing authority

Some local RCAs have delegated authority to issue permits on their behalf to the Transport Agency. The Transport Agency may also delegate authority to issue permits for state highways to a local RCA.

Such arrangements vary from region to region and also depend on the permit type. See *Which authority to apply to for a permit* on the next page.

Routes involving multiple RCAs

An RCA may issue a permit to exceed mass limits that includes roads under the control of another RCA provided the RCA that issues the permit (the 'issuing authority') first obtains written approval for the use of roads under the control of the other RCA.

However, as with delegations of issuing authority (see above), in practice this depends on regional arrangements and permit type.

For permits to exceed dimension limits, the Transport Agency is the issuing authority for both state highways and local roads. It is not required to obtain approval for the use of local roads. However, it must not issue a permit for a local road if the local RCA has notified the Agency that it objects to a permit being issued for that road.

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A2.2 Where to apply for a VDAM permit continued

Which authority to apply to for a permit

The table below shows where you should apply depending on the permit type you need.

If your route involves roads in multiple RCAs, you should apply to the RCA where the journey starts.

Permit type	Where to apply
Overweight	• Transport Agency for state highways • Local road controlling authorities (RCAs) for local roads In some regions, local RCAs have delegated authority to the Transport Agency to issue permits on their behalf. Check with the permit issuing officer in your region[1].
Specialist vehicle	• Local RCA if your route is mainly on local roads • Transport Agency if your route is mainly on state highways
HPMV higher mass	Transport Agency[2]
HPMV 50MAX	Transport Agency[3]
HPMV overlength	Transport Agency
Overdimension	

Notes:

1. Contact details can be found at www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/hpmv-permit-application/permit-information/.
2. If the route includes local roads, the Transport Agency will in most cases liaise with local RCAs involved, obtain their approval for the use of local roads and issue permits for both state highways and local roads.
3. Most local RCAs have delegated 50MAX permit issuing authority to the Transport Agency. For the few exceptions see the 50MAX book of maps, available at www.nzta.govt.nz/commercial-driving/permits/high-productivity/50max/50max-information-for-operators-and-manufacturers/.

A2.3 Criteria for issuing a permit

Introduction

This section describes the criteria that road controlling authorities must apply when issuing permits under the VDAM Rule. These criteria are addressed during the permitting process.

Criteria for permits to exceed mass limits

Before issuing a permit to exceed prescribed mass limits, a road controlling authority (RCA) must consider:

- the safety of the vehicle
- the safety of road users, and
- the durability of roads and bridges on the route the vehicle may travel on.

As part of assessing the safety aspects of a permit application, an RCA may check an operator's safety and traffic offending history – see section *A2.4 Operator checks.*

Criteria for HPMV overlength permits

When issuing HPMV overlength permits, the Transport Agency must apply the same criteria as above. In addition, it must be satisfied that the vehicle has the equivalent safety performance of a standard motor vehicle for the proposed route on the permit.

A vehicle is considered to meet this requirement if it is a pro-forma design approved by the Transport Agency or meets the Transport Agency's safety performance requirements. For details see *Part E: HPMV overlength permits* in this volume.

Criteria for overdimension permits

When issuing an overdimension permit, the Transport Agency considers:

- potential effects on other traffic, such as congestion or safety risks
- whether risk management measures proposed by the operator are adequate, and
- the safety record of the operator (see section *A2.4 Operator checks*).

A2.4 Operator checks

Introduction

The Transport Agency has developed interim policies for permit applications it processes to assess operator safety with respect to legislated safety requirements. These interim policies are described in this section.

Policy purpose

For permits to exceed general access mass limits, a road controlling authority must assess three factors:

- the safety of the vehicle
- the safety of road users, and
- the durability of roads and bridges on which the vehicle may operate.

While the safety of the vehicle with respect to other road users and its impact on structures along the route is duly considered during the Transport Agency's permitting process, the assessment of any potential risk created by the operator responsible for the permit application is checked with reference to information on operator performance.

For overdimension permitting, the Transport Agency similarly assesses any potential operator risk by reference to breaches of conditions of previously issued permits and the operator's traffic offending history.

What information is assessed?

When assessing a permit application, the Transport Agency conducts an 'operator check' to determine any perceived increase in the risk to safety presented by the granting of a permit.

This is done through the examination of the operator's activity over the preceding 12 months, to look for trends in compliance with conditions on previously issued permits as well as safety-related transport legislation.

While the operator rating system (ORS) is the primary consideration, the Transport Agency reviews other compliance information, where available, including recent traffic offences that are not part of ORS, any weight-based offending or permit breaches.

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A2.4 Operator checks continued

Operator check outcomes

If the operator has a high ORS rating and high compliance with other safety related transport legislation and, where applicable, vehicle safety requirements are met, the permit can be granted.

If the operator's recent activity shows a high or improving ORS rating, but inconsistent compliance with other safety related transport legislation, then:

- the permit may be granted with conditions
- the permit may be granted with reduced duration, or
- the application may be referred to the appropriate regional Road Compliance Manager for advice.

If an operator is considered to present a significant risk to the safety of other road users as demonstrated by recent serious and/or repeated permit breaches and non-compliance with safety related legislation, then the permit application may be declined.

Review of decisions

Any operator who is granted a permit with conditions or reduced duration, or has an application declined, may request the Transport Agency to review that decision.

The review will look at all information considered during the initial issuing of the permit. The review will be carried out by a review panel.

The Transport Agency must respond to the applicant within 10 working days of the review request being received.

Appeal to District Court

Under section 106 of the Land Transport Act 1998, any person who is dissatisfied with any decision made under the Act by the Transport Agency may appeal to a District Court against that decision.

This applies to decisions in respect of the grant, issue, revocation or suspension of a land transport document sought or held by that person.

'Land transport documents' include VDAM permits.

An appeal must be lodged within 28 days from the date of notification of the decision appealed against.

A2.5 Permit fees

Legal basis

The fees for VDAM permits are specified in the Land Transport (Certification and Other Fees) Regulations 2014.

Fees

This table shows the standard fees payable for VDAM permits if three or more working days are available for processing.

If you need a…	Then the fee (GST exclusive) for a permit being issued is…
continuous overweight permit	$54.55
renewal of a continuous overweight permit	$9.09
single or multiple trip overweight permit	$18.18
overdimension permit	$28.00
HPMV permit	$54.55
specialist vehicle permit	

Additional fee for urgent applications

There is an additional fee of $9.09 for overweight, HPMV or specialist vehicle permit applications if there are fewer than three working days available for processing.

Additional fees may also apply for special investigations – see *Additional costs for investigations* below.

Permit amendment

If an application is subsequently modified to satisfy the requirements of the processing office, or an issued permit is amended, then only one permit processing fee is payable.

Account for fees

Fees are payable into the operating account of the road controlling authority that processes the permit application.

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A2.5 Permit fees continued

Additional costs for investigations

In addition to the permit fee, applicants may also be charged for an investigation into the feasibility of their proposed route(s).

Such an investigation involves technical work by bridge and pavement engineers at the applicant's cost.

The Transport Agency will advise applicants of appropriate consultants to carry out such work.

Other additional costs

Any work to facilitate movement of an overdimension vehicle, eg the removal of overhead signs, will be a charge to the user to whom the permit is issued.

For overweight permits, fees for bridge engineering supervision and for bridge engineering self-supervision (BESS) registration may also apply. For details see chapters B6 and B7 in *Part B: Overweight permits* in this volume of the manual.

A2.6 Permit processing times

How long does it take to get a permit?

The Transport Agency endeavours to issue permits within the following timeframes:

VDAM permit type	Processing time (working days)
Overweight	5
Overdimension	3
HPMV:	
Higher mass (if no investigation is required)	5
50MAX	5
Overlength pro-forma vehicle design	5
Overlength non pro-forma vehicle design	10
Specialist vehicle	20

Notes:

- The timeframes above are operational targets and actual processing times may be less. However, complex applications requiring specialist input (eg from a bridge engineer) may take longer. Also see *Potential delays* below.
- In an emergency, the Transport Agency will process a permit application as quickly as possible.

Potential delays

The Transport Agency cannot guarantee that it will be able to meet the above timeframes. Some aspects of the permit issuing process are outside the control of the Transport Agency, for example, if multiple road approvals are required.

The operator may also need to delay travel if a permit requires external bridge engineering supervision, which must be arranged with at least 24 hours' notice.

Applicants should take such possible delays into account when applying for a permit.

Chapter A3: Operating under a VDAM permit

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter gives an overview of the requirements for operating under a VDAM permit.

In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

A3.1 Permit validity requirements

Permit must not be altered	A VDAM permit that has been tempered with, or altered without authority from the Transport Agency or road controlling authority that issued it, is invalid.
Linked to vehicle or load	HPMV and other permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits are valid only for the vehicle (or vehicle combination) identified in the permit. The vehicle(s) may be identified either individually or by type on the permit. Overdimension permits apply only to the overdimension vehicle or load described in the permit.
Linked to operator	Permits are also operator-specific and may be used only by the operator identified in the permit.
Carrying the permit in the vehicle	Permits must be carried in a readable format in the vehicle during travel for the period covered by the permit. They must be shown to an enforcement officer or authorised agent of a road controlling authority on request. Overdimension permits must also be shown to a load pilot on request.
Off route	A permit that specifies a route becomes invalid if the vehicle operating under it is travelling off-route, unless directed to do so by an enforcement officer.

A3.2 General VDAM permit operating requirements

Introduction

This section outlines the operating requirements that may apply to a vehicle operating under a VDAM permit.

Compliance with permit conditions

When operating a vehicle under a VDAM permit, all conditions in the permit must be complied with at all times. Breaches of permit conditions can incur significant fines – see *Chapter A4: Enforcement of VDAM permits*.

Two types of permit condition

The VDAM Rule distinguishes between **critical** conditions and **additional** conditions on permits. Operators must comply with all permit conditions, but breaches of critical conditions attract higher penalties. For details see the next section *A3.3 Critical permit conditions.*

Permit type-specific operating requirements

A VDAM permit may specify particular operating requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

- restrictions on the type and amount of the load transported
- tracking systems for monitoring compliance with route restrictions and mass limits, and
- vehicle signage and lighting requirements.

HPMV permits include special vehicle requirements such as stability control systems, higher SRT limits, and EBS brake systems.

Overweight and overdimension permits may also include:

- restrictions on the number of trips allowed
- travel time and speed restrictions
- piloting and bridge supervision requirements, and
- restrictions related to weather conditions.

For details, refer to the parts on specific permit types in this volume of the manual.

Continued on next page

A3.2 General VDAM permit operating requirements
continued

Additional local requirements

A local road controlling authority may place additional requirements on the operator to allow travel on local roads. For permits to exceed mass limits these may include:

- company mass compliance systems (eg weighing each load on departure)
- driver training accreditation
- approval of drivers following history check, or
- fatigue management system.

Such additional conditions are detailed on the permit.

Railway level crossings

Heavy and long vehicles can be slow in clearing railway level crossings, which may increase collision potential.

Operators of overweight and overdimension vehicles or loads must therefore obtain permission from the rail access provider to travel over railway level crossings and/or under overhead electrification if:

- specified level crossing tolerances (mass and dimension limits) are exceeded, or
- the vehicle length exceeds the safe stacking distance to an adjacent road intersection for the rail crossing to be driven over.

Details about level crossing tolerances can be found at www.kiwirail.co.nz.

Operators can obtain permissions to travel over level crossings by contacting KiwiRail at crossingpermits@kiwirail.co.nz.

A3.3 Critical permit conditions

Introduction

This section describes the critical permit conditions specified in the VDAM Rule.

Higher penalties

While operators must comply with all permit conditions, breaches of critical conditions attract significantly higher penalties – for details see *Chapter A4: Enforcement of VDAM permits.*

Critical conditions for permits to exceed mass limits

A vehicle operating under an overweight, HPMV or specialist vehicle permit must comply with the following critical conditions:

- the gross mass must not exceed the maximum gross mass specified on the permit
- the gross vehicle mass must not exceed any of the design limits of the vehicle (eg gross vehicle mass, gross combination mass or maximum towed mass), and
- the vehicle must not breach a travel restriction or requirement for a specified bridge or culvert.

Critical conditions for overdimension permits

A vehicle or load operating under an overdimension permit must comply with the following critical conditions:

- the vehicle or load must not exceed the lesser of:
  - the dimension limits for its category stated in the permit, or
  - the maximum width stated in the permit plus 0.5 metres, and
- any piloting requirements specified in the permit or as required under the VDAM Rule.

A3.4 'H' sign display requirements

When an 'H' sign must be displayed

While operating under an HPMV permit that specifies particular roads on which the vehicle may operate, the vehicle must display the high-productivity motor vehicle sign (the 'H' sign) on the front and rear of the vehicle:

A vehicle that does not have an HPMV permit must not display the 'H' sign.

For more details see section *D1.5 'H' sign requirements and specifications* in this volume.

Signage when load is reduced

If an HPMV with a higher mass permit carries a load within standard mass limits, then the 'H' sign may be removed but does not have to be.

However, if the vehicle is a non pro-forma overlength vehicle and operates on a route-specific permit, the sign must remain in place at all times.

Not required to display 'H' sign

Overlength HPMVs on a general access permit are not required to display the 'H' sign unless they are also operating on a higher mass permit.

For the avoidance of doubt, passenger service vehicle (buses) or any other specialist vehicles are not required to display an 'H' sign.

A3.5 Permit revocation

When can a permit be revoked?

The Transport Agency may revoke any VDAM permit if, in its view, there is a significant risk to public safety.

A permit to exceed mass limits may also be revoked by the road controlling authority that has issued it if it considers that:

- any of the permit conditions have been breached, or
- the vehicle operating under the permit may cause extraordinary damage to the road.

Revocation process

The Transport Agency or road controlling authority that has issued a permit must advise an operator as soon as practicable that it has revoked the operator's permit. The notice must include reasons for the revocation.

Note: A notice of revocation is not required to be in writing.

When does a revocation take effect?

A revocation of a permit takes effect immediately when it is advised to the operator, or to an on-read supervisor if it is an overdimension permit. If the notice specifies a later time, then the revocation takes effect from the time specified.

Review of revocation decision

If the Transport Agency revokes a permit, the permit holder may request the Transport Agency to review its decision.

The review will be carried out by a review panel and look at all information considered for the revocation as well as information submitted by the permit holder.

The Transport Agency must respond to the permit holder within 10 working days of the review request being received.

Appeal to District Court

Under section 106 of the Land Transport Act 1998, a permit holder may appeal to a District Court against the revocation of a permit by the Transport Agency.

An appeal must be lodged within 28 days from the date of notification of the revocation appealed against.

Chapter A4: Enforcement of VDAM permits

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter describes how the Commercial Vehicle Safety Team (CVST) of the New Zealand Police enforces vehicle dimensions and mass (VDAM) permits (ie overweight, overdimension, HPMV and specialist vehicle permits).

Audience

The audience for this chapter is operators of vehicles operating under a VDAM permit.

BESS breaches

Breaches of the Bridge Engineering Self Supervision (BESS) conditions are dealt with in detail in *Chapter B6: Bridge Engineering Self Supervision (BESS)* in part B of this volume.

In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

A4.1 General guidelines for VDAM permit enforcement

Stopping vehicles

Enforcement officers may, at any time, stop and weigh or measure a vehicle travelling under a permit.

Permit validity

A permit is valid only for the vehicle (or vehicle combination) identified in the permit.

Permits are also operator-specific and may be used only by the operator identified in the permit.

Permits tampered with or altered without authority are invalid.

A permit also becomes invalid if it specifies a route and the vehicle travelling under the permit has deviated from the specified route (unless directed to do so by an enforcement officer).

Carrying the permit

The permit(s) applying to the vehicle must be carried in the vehicle in a readable format for the period of travel covered by the permit. They must be shown on request to an enforcement officer, or an authorised agent of the Transport Agency or a road controlling agency.

Operators must ensure that the permit carried applies to the exact vehicle or vehicle combination described in the permit, either individually or by type.

Conditions

The permit lists conditions under which the vehicle is allowed to operate. Enforcement officers will check your vehicle (its load, length, location and other characteristics) against the conditions on the permit, as well as any other conditions, for example route restrictions.

Permits have two categories of conditions: critical conditions and additional conditions. For the enforcement implications of breaching different permit conditions, see sections *A4.2 Enforcement of permits for exceeding mass limits* and *A4.6 Enforcement of overdimension permits*.

Continued on next page

A4.1 General guidelines for VDAM permit enforcement
continued

Weighing as a permit condition

For a permit to exceed prescribed mass limits, the Transport Agency or any of the local road controlling authorities (RCAs) involved in a movement may require the vehicle to be weighed at a specific locality as a condition of the permit. This requires either that:

- confirmation of axle weights from a certified weighing facility be sent to the permit issuing officer clearly indicating the permit serial number, or
- the weighing be done under the control of a person nominated by the permit issuing officer.

The Transport Agency or a local RCA may also require evidence of satisfactory load sharing of vehicles that have non-compliant suspension systems.

What is a breach?

A breach occurs when any of the provisions of the VDAM Rule or any conditions of the permit are not complied with. Breaches include (but are not limited to):

- operating without permit
- using an incorrect route
- operating an incorrect vehicle (ie the permit does not apply to the vehicle or combination used, whether individually or by type)
- carrying a different load (unless load is unspecified)
- exceeding permitted speed
- breaching bridge supervision requirements (where applicable)
- overloading, ie exceeding:
  - the permitted or prescribed mass limit on an individual axle, axle set or axle group
  - permitted gross mass
  - gross vehicle mass, or
  - the weight limit stated on the certificate of loading, or
  - a posted mass limit on a bridge, or
- breaching any prescribed dimension requirements.

Continued on next page

A4.1 General guidelines for VDAM permit enforcement
continued

Deviations from permitted route	If a route is specified on a permit, then it is a breach of a permit condition to deviate from the specified route unless directed to do so by NZ Police or the road controlling authority. If you are travelling on an HPMV higher mass permit, it is your responsibility to advise NZ Police or the road controlling authority of this to ensure you are not inadvertently directed over a weak bridge. If a road that is specified on the permit is temporarily blocked, for example, as a result of an accident or unforeseen event, then your vehicle needs to be parked on the roadside for the duration of the blockage. If a road specified on your permit is affected by a longer term closure, for example due to road works, then you need to apply for a permit for an alternative route.
Read your permit	Read your permit carefully. Anything listed as a condition on the permit may give rise to a breach.
Cautious approach recommended	Given that the penalties for exceeding the limits specified by the permit may be severe, you should take care to ensure that your vehicle does not exceed specified mass or dimension limits.
Legislative basis for fees and penalties	Infringement offences, fees and penalties are listed in schedules 1, 1A and 1B of the Land Transport (Offences and Penalties) Regulations 1999.
Revocation	If you breach your permit, you may have it revoked or not renewed.

A4.2 Enforcement of permits for exceeding mass limits

Introduction

This section deals with specific enforcement conditions applicable to permits for exceeding prescribed mass limits, ie:

- overweight permits
- HPMV permits (higher mass and 50MAX), and
- specialist vehicle permits.

Diverting vehicles for weighing

Enforcement officers may, at any time, stop and weigh a vehicle travelling under a permit for exceeding mass limits.

Enforcement officers are authorised to divert such vehicles up to a total of five kilometres from the approved route in order to weigh the vehicle, provided under-strength bridges are not included on the diversion.

If the site for weighing is unsuitable, for example because it is uneven or would pose a safety risk, then enforcement officers may divert a vehicle for up to 10 kilometres.

Two types of permit condition

The VDAM Rule distinguishes between critical conditions and additional conditions on permits for exceeding mass limits. Different penalties apply depending on whether a critical or an additional condition has been breached.

Critical conditions for permits exceeding mass limits are defined as follows in the VDAM Rule:

- the gross mass of the vehicle must not exceed the maximum gross mass specified in the permit
- the gross mass of the vehicle must not exceed the gross vehicle mass, gross combination mass, maximum towed mass or brake code mass if any of these limits apply to the vehicle, and
- the vehicle must comply with all bridge restrictions specified in the permit.

Additional conditions are any other conditions specified on the permit.

An axle overload is a breach of an additional condition. Infringement fees depend on the amount of overloading – see *Incremental fees for exceeding mass limits* below.

Breaches of critical conditions

Breaches of a critical condition incur an infringement fee of $2000.

The police may also issue overloading notices for any other mass limit offences detected.

Continued on next page

A4.2 Enforcement of permits for exceeding mass limits
continued

Breaches of additional conditions

Breaches of additional permit conditions incur an infringement fee of $370.

Incremental fees for exceeding mass limits

In addition to the infringement fee for a breach of a critical or additional condition, incremental infringement fees apply to exceeding any of the mass limits specified on a permit, ie for:

- individual axles
- axle sets
- groups of consecutive axles
- gross mass, and
- gross vehicle mass.

Infringement fees range from $350 to $10,000 depending on the amount of overloading.

Legislation reference: Land Transport (Offences and Penalties) Regulations 1999 schedule 1B.

Weighing tolerances

The weight assessed for an infringement notice is reduced by the amount of the weighing tolerance. Weighing tolerances are as follows:

Permitted mass	Tolerance
Gross mass	500kg
Individual axle	
Twin-steer set	
Axle set other than twin-steer set	1000kg
Axle group[1]	

[1] Any two or more axles that together do not constitute a single tandem axle set, single tri-axle set or single quad-axle set.

Legislation reference: Land Transport (Offences and Penalties) Regulations 1999 schedule 1B, clause 5.

Continued on next page

A4.2 Enforcement of permits for exceeding mass limits
continued

Reference weight for overloading infringements

The weight assessed for an infringement notice is reduced by the amount of the applicable weighing tolerance.

Valid permit

If a valid permit exists, overloading infringement notices are based on the amount by which the mass limits recorded on the permit have been exceeded (minus the weighing tolerances).

Invalid permit

If a permit has been invalidated (see *Permit validity* in section A3.1), the police treat the vehicle as operating without a permit and issue an infringement notice for exceeding the general access mass limits prescribed in the VDAM Rule schedule 3, parts 1 and 2.

This means that the overloading amount will be calculated on the basis of the general mass limits (minus the weighing tolerances), not based on the limits specified in the invalid permit.

Continuation of travel/ offloading requirements

If an infringement notice for overloading has been issued, the vehicle is allowed to continue its travel unless a mass limit on the permit has been exceeded by more than 10% or 2000kg, whichever is the lesser. This applies to all specified mass limits, ie gross mass, individual axle, axle set or axle group limits or the gross vehicle mass limit.

If a specified mass limit has been exceeded by more than 10% or 2000kg, part of the load must be removed or rearranged to comply with the maximum permitted mass limits for the vehicle.

Offloading of buses

If a passenger service vehicle has been found to be overloaded, then the passengers must be transferred to an alternative vehicle if one is available within a reasonable time.

If another vehicle is not available within a reasonable time, the passenger service vehicle must be escorted at a slow speed by an enforcement officer to a safe location suitable for handling the passengers.

Continued on next page

A4.2 Enforcement of permits for exceeding mass limits
continued

Documentary evidence and ISO containers

When a vehicle carrying an ISO container under an overweight permit is stopped by an enforcement officer, the driver must immediately when requested give documentary evidence to the officer that the container has been loaded or packed for the sole purpose of export or import.

A permit may be revoked if it is shown that an operator has deliberately misrepresented the fact that a container was loaded or packed for the sole purpose of export or import.

See also *Chapter B3: Payload requirements* in part B of this volume.

A4.3 Weighing procedure for permits with mass limits

Introduction

Individual axle masses on multi-axled vehicles can be determined by calculation. This section describes the procedures for doing this.

Operators are advised to calculate the individual axle masses before applying for a permit, and to ensure they are complying with a VDAM permit once issued.

Legal basis

All weighing is to be done according to the Transport (Measurement of Weight) Notice 1997.

Supervision

If an applicant for a VDAM permit is to provide a weighbridge certificate, the police or a consultant approved by the Transport Agency supervises all weighing involved.

Weighing records

The weighing record must include a concise description of the vehicle and its loading condition, including the extent of operating gear carried and the description and position of the payload.

In general, enforcement officers accept these weighing records.

Information required

Calculations require the following information:

- vehicle dimensions and axle tare weights, and
- payload position and weight.

Obtaining the information

Payload weights can be obtained from plant handbooks, manufacturers' assessments or previous weighings. Previous weighings are preferable.

Principles

The payload is distributed to the axles and added to the tare axle masses. The method of distribution involves considering each rigid section of the vehicle in turn and proportioning the load on that section to the supporting sections.

Some allowance should be made for the possibility that the payload centre of gravity may vary from the assumed position.

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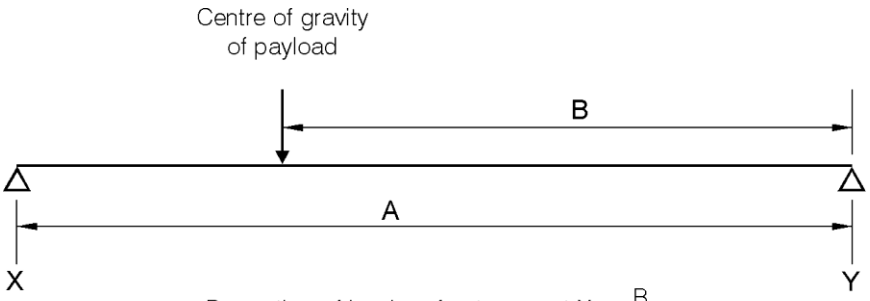
A4.3 Weighing procedure for permits with mass limits
continued

Formulas for calculating payload distribution

The formulas for calculating payload distribution are shown below:



Proportion of load on front support X = $\frac{B}{A}$

Proportion of load on rear support Y = $1 - \frac{B}{A}$

Example

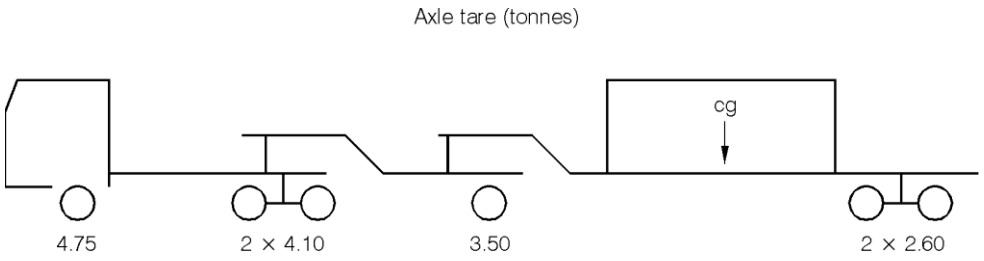
For an example of how to calculate the distribution of payload, see section *A4.4 Example of payload distribution calculation* on the next page.

A4.4 Example of payload distribution calculation

Introduction

The transporter in the diagram below consists of three units: tractor, dolly and trailer. The tractor and trailer have rear tandem axles with walking beam suspensions.

This example calculates the axle weights for a 40,000kg payload.



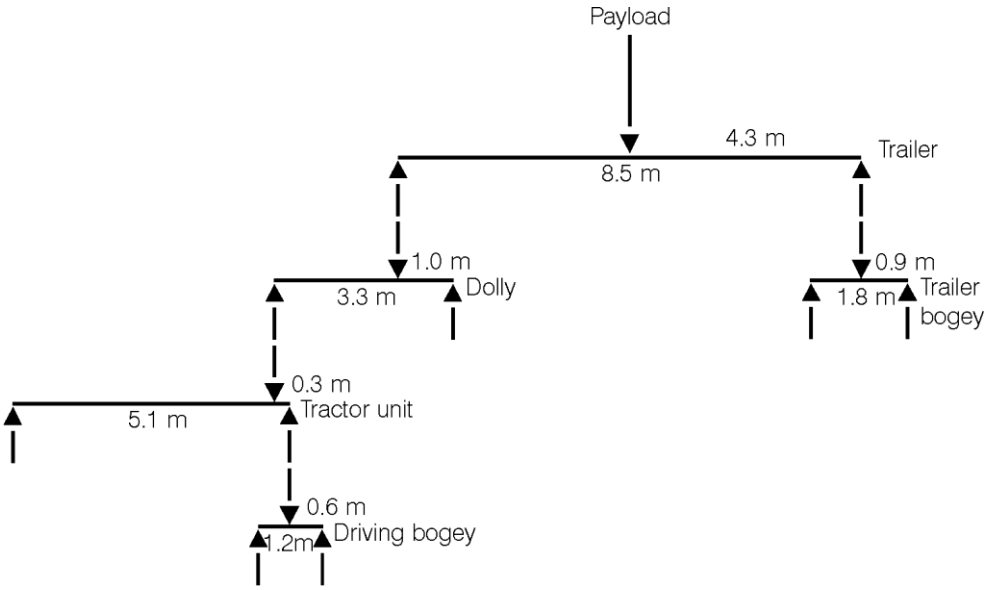
Distribution

The payload is carried by the trailer and is distributed to the dolly and the rear bogey.

The load on the dolly is distributed to the dolly axle and to the tractor.

Diagram of distribution

Distribution of the payload to the axles can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



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A4.4 Example of payload distribution calculation continued

Proportions of distribution

Applying the formulas shown on page A3-10 and the dimensions shown in the diagram of distribution on the previous page, the proportion of the load on each axle is calculated as shown below:

Part of vehicle	Proportion of payload	Percentage of load (%)
Trailer	1.00	100
Trailer bogey	0.49	49
Trailer axles	0.50 x 0.49 = 0.245 each	24.5
Dolly	0.51	51
Dolly axle	0.70 x 0.51 = 0.36	36
Tractor	0.30 x 0.51 = 0.15	15
Steering axle	0.06 x 0.15 = 0.01	1
Driving bogey	0.94 x 0.15 = 0.14	14
Driving axles	0.50 x 0.14 = 0.07 each	7

Note: Figures in the table are rounded.

Axle masses

Applying the proportions (or percentages) from the table above to a 40,000kg payload, the axle masses are as follows:

Part of vehicle	Axle masses (in tonnes)					
	Steering	Driving		Dolly	Trailer	
Payload	0.40	2.80	2.80	14.40	9.80	9.80
Tare	4.75	4.10	4.10	3.50	2.60	2.60
Gross	5.15	6.90	6.90	17.90	12.40	12.40

A4.5 Mobile plant and mobile crane certified weights

Mobile plant

Fixed mass mobile plant that has constant axle masses and dimensions (eg motor scrapers, forklifts and mobile cranes) may have their overweight permit endorsed with their certified masses obtained from a supervised weighing site. Mobile cranes may also have a Mobile Crane Weight Certificate (see below).

Enforcement officers recognise such certification as an alternative to roadside weighing, providing:

- the weighing and dimension checks for the certification are conducted under police supervision
- approved and certified weighing equipment is used for the certification
- the endorsement applies only to the journeys listed on the permit and ceases to have effect when the permit expires
- no modifications that affect the certified weights have been made to the vehicle or load
- the vehicle has either a current certificate of fitness or warrant of fitness
- the vehicle complies with the mass limits imposed by the certificate of loading, and
- the vehicle complies with all the provisions of the Road User Charges Act 2012.

In addition, police may weigh any mobile plant, including any cranes with a Mobile Crane Weight Certificate, if they consider there is good reason to do so. This may be the case, for example, if they have reason to believe that changes have been made that would cause a significant increase in the masses listed on any endorsement or certificate.

Mobile crane weight certificates

To avoid repeated enforcement weighing of a fixed weight mobile crane, operators may obtain a Mobile Crane Weight Certificate from the Crane Association of New Zealand.

The certificate includes a detailed description of major accessories likely to significantly affect the mass along with photographs. See *Chapter B4: Weight determination* in *Part B: Overweight permits* in this volume of the manual.

A4.6 Enforcement of overdimension permits

Overdimension permit breaches

Breaches of an overdimension permit include but are not limited to:

- no permit held
- incorrect route used if the route is described on the permit
- incorrect vehicle or load used (ie the permit does not apply to the vehicle, combination or load described in the permit)
- permit dimensions exceeded
- pilot requirements not fulfilled
- hazard warning requirements not fulfilled
- travel time requirements not fulfilled, or
- any other operating requirements not complied with.

Two types of permit condition

As for permits for exceeding mass limits, the VDAM Rule distinguishes between critical and additional conditions on overdimension permits. Breaches of critical conditions attract higher infringement fees than breaches of additional conditions.

Critical conditions on overdimension permits are defined in the VDAM Rule as follows:

- the vehicle or its load must not exceed the lesser of –
- the dimension limits for its category as stated in the permit, or
- the maximum width if stated in the permit, plus 0.5 metres, and
- the operator must ensure that pilots as specified in the permit are provided or, if not specified in the permit, as required by the VDAM Rule.

Additional conditions are any other conditions specified in the permit.

If a breach occurs

If the vehicle is found to be in breach of any of the conditions set by the permit, then enforcement officers:

- issue an infringement notice for the permit in every instance in which an overdimension permit is breached (see below for infringement fees for critical and additional permit conditions)
- may also issue notices for any other offences detected
- may allow the operator to continue the journey if the load can be adjusted to comply with the permit, and/or
- may escort the vehicle to a place of safety.

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A4.6 Enforcement of overdimension permits continued

If a breach occurs (continued)	If the load dimension breaches a lower dimension category, the operator can choose to comply with the conditions of a higher category in order to continue the journey, or apply to the Transport Agency for a new permit to cover the actual dimensions. For details on overdimension operating requirements by category, refer to the VDAM Rule schedule 6, or to *Part C: Overdimension permits* in this volume of the manual.
Penalty for breaches of critical conditions	Breaches of a critical condition incur an infringement fee of $2000.
Penalty for breaches of additional conditions	Breaches of additional permit conditions incur an infringement fee of $370.
Powers of enforcement officers	Enforcement officers may prohibit the use of a road by an overdimension vehicle at any time on reasonable grounds of safety or traffic management. In an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, enforcement officers may also: • approve the immediate use of an overdimension vehicle on a road in an emergency or unforeseen circumstance, and • impose any special conditions to ensure that the vehicle is operated safely.