Vehicle dimensions and mass permitting manual (volume 1)

Part G Specialist vehicle permits

Current as at 1 October 2021

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publication may be replaced or amended subsequent to this publication, and any references to legislation may become out of date if that legislation is amended.

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Record of amendments in this part

Note: Amendments are numbered consecutively and may affect individual or multiple parts in one or both volumes of the *Vehicle dimensions and mass permitting manual*. For a complete record of all amendments to the manual, please refer to the 'Record of amendments' at the start of both volume 1 and volume 2.

Amendment to 2nd edition	Description of changes in this part	Effective date
Amendment 7	Updates clarify permit eligibility and route description requirements. The following sections have been updated:	1 October 2021
	G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams : Notes added to clarify permit eligibility. For example, only ground-spreader trucks for agricultural use are eligible for specialist vehicle permits.	
	G2.3 Before you apply : Information added about checking or applying for correct road user charges (RUC) for specialist vehicles.	
	G2.5 Preparing prerequisite documentation for permit applications: For route descriptions, applicants should list all required roads and state highways, including start and end points. Maps may no longer be accepted.	
Amendment 2	Updates reflect an amendment to the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2016 that exempts buses with a load share ratio in a tandem axle set from the requirement to display a compliance plate. Changes also include minor clarifications.	1 June 2020
	The following sections have been updated:	
	G2.5 Preparing prerequisite documentation : Acceptable evidence of the load share ratio in a tandem axle set to be submitted with a permit application now includes a letter from the vehicle manufacturer.	
	G2.7 Completing and submitting a specialist vehicle permit application:	
	• Clarification added that false statements on the application form may incur penalties.	
	Third party applicant responsibilities clarified.	

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Part G: Specialist vehicle permits

Introduction

About this part

This part of the *Vehicle dimensions and mass permitting manual* (volume 1) describes Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's policy for issuing permits for specialist vehicles to exceed general access mass limits. It includes information on:

- specialist vehicle permit requirements, and
- how to apply for a specialist vehicle permit.

Legislative basis

The legislative basis for a road controlling authority to issue specialist vehicle permits is set out in section 5.11 of the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2016 (the VDAM Rule).

Audience

The intended audience for this part is:

- operators of specialist vehicles that require a permit to exceed general access axle mass limits
- Waka Kotahi staff and contractors involved in processing specialist vehicle permit applications
- · local road controlling authorities, and
- enforcement agents such as the Commercial Vehicle Safety Team (CVST) of the New Zealand Police.

In this part

This part contains the following chapters:

Chapter	See page
Chapter G1: Specialist vehicle permit requirements	G1-1
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Chapter G1: Specialist vehicle permit requirements

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter describes the requirements for obtaining a specialist vehicle permit from Waka Kotahi and for operating under such a permit.

In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

Section	See page
G1.1 General information about specialist vehicle permits	G1-2
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G1.1 General information about specialist vehicle permits

Legislative background

Until 2010, permits to exceed mass limits were available only to 'overweight' vehicles for transporting indivisible loads.

This changed in 2010 with an amendment to the VDAM Rule that introduced high productivity motor vehicle (HPMV) permits for divisible loads.

In 2015 and 2016, permits to exceed mass limits were introduced first to high capacity urban buses and then to a wider range of large passenger service vehicles.

The VDAM Rule 2016 broadened the eligibility for increased axle masses under a permit to a range of vehicle types referred to as 'specialist vehicles'. This category includes buses.

What are specialist vehicles?

Under the VDAM Rule, the following vehicle types are eligible for a specialist vehicle permit:

- passenger service vehicle (bus)
- concrete mixer
- · ground-spreader truck, and
- rubbish truck (fitted with a compactor).

For illustrations and notes about permit eligibility see the next section *G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams*.

Who issues specialist vehicle permits?

Waka Kotahi issues specialist vehicle permits for state highways.

Local road controlling authorities (RCAs) issue specialist vehicle permits for local roads under their control.

If a route involves a combination of state highways and local roads, then Waka Kotahi and the local RCAs involved liaise before issuing permits. Where practicable, they align permit periods and maximum axle mass limits that are safe for the entire route before issuing a permit.

Depending on local arrangements, Waka Kotahi or a local RCA may also issue joint permits that cover both state highways and local roads. To do so, the issuing authority must obtain the consent of the other RCAs involved for the use of roads under their control.

G1.1 General information about specialist vehicle permits continued

Several permits per vehicle

If your route includes local roads under the control of different local RCAs, or local roads as well as state highways, you may need a separate specialist vehicle permit from each RCA involved.

Multiple permits must be carried together in the vehicle and are viewed together as a single permit.

Some RCAs issue permits on behalf of other RCAs with their consent. Check with the RCAs in your region for local permitting arrangements.

Permits not guaranteed

Not all specialist vehicles are eligible for a permit. See the next section *G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams* for details.

Also, the route you want to travel on may not be suitable for the weight you wish to carry. Waka Kotahi encourages operators to discuss permitting and route options first with all RCAs involved (ie local RCAs for local roads and Waka Kotahi for state highways) before implementing any weight increases.

RCAs may decide to restrict routes or issue a permit at lower axle mass limits than the maximum allowed under the VDAM Rule for safety reasons or to protect weak structures or pavements.

Variation of standard permit period

Waka Kotahi usually issues specialist vehicle permits for a period of 24 months. However, it may consider an alternative duration in some cases, for example, to align a permit period with the term of a local authority service contract, or with the duration of a permit issued by a local RCA.

Bus permits issued before 1 February 2017

Permits for buses issued before 1 February 2017 continue to be valid for the duration of the permit period unless revoked or replaced.

G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams

Introduction

This section shows common vehicle designs for specialist vehicles. The illustrations are a guide only.

Each vehicle type may have a single or a tandem rear axle set to be eligible for a specialist vehicle permit.

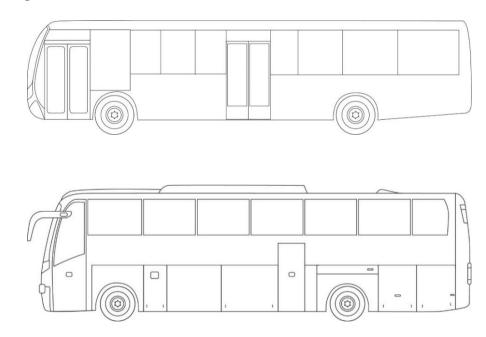
Also see the next section *G1.3 Maximum axle mass limits under a specialist vehicle permit* for more details about eligible axle types and axle configurations.

Passenger service vehicle

A 'passenger service vehicle' is:

- a motor vehicle used or available for use in a passenger service
- a motor vehicle with more than 12 seating positions, or
- a heavy motor vehicle with more than nine seating positions.

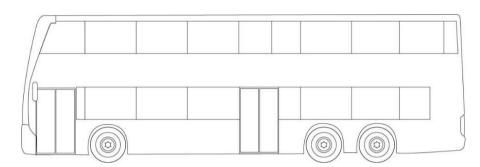
Single rear axle

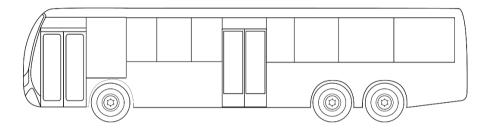


G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams continued

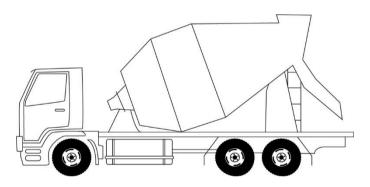
Passenger service vehicle (continued)

Tandem rear axle set





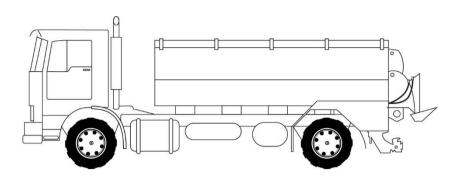
Concrete mixer



Note: Only concrete **mixers** are eligible for specialist vehicle permits. Trucks carrying concreting plant and equipment such as concrete pumps are not eligible.

G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams continued

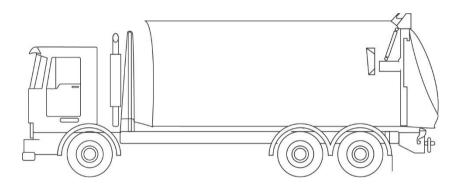
Groundspreader truck



Note: Only ground-spreader trucks for agricultural use as defined in the Land Transport Rule: Tyres and Wheels 2001 are eligible for specialist vehicle permits, ie:

[Vehicles] designed specifically for the carriage of powder or particulate artificial fertilisers on the road, and for the distribution of those fertilisers directly from the vehicle onto the land by means of a mechanical or pneumatic distributor that forms part of the vehicle.

Rubbish truck



Note: Only rubbish trucks fitted with a compactor are eligible for specialist vehicle permits.

G1.3 Maximum axle mass limits under a specialist vehicle permit

Maximum axle mass limits for specialist vehicles The maximum axle masses you can apply for under a specialist vehicle permit are shown in the table below.

Type of axle set	Mass (kg)
Single large-tyred axle in a tandem axle set with a twin-tyred axle and a 55/45 load share	8100
Twin-tyred axle in any axle set	12,000
Two axles in a tandem axle set comprising:(a) A twin-tyred axle with a single large-tyred axle and a 60/40 load share(b) A twin-tyred axle with a single large-tyred axle and a 55/45 load share	16,000 18,000
Two twin-tyred axles:(a) Spaced less than 1.3 metres from the first axle to the last axle(c) Spaced 1.3 metres or more from the first axle to the last axle	17,000 18,000

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule 2016 schedule 3, part 3, table 3.6.

Qualifying axle configurations

If your vehicle's axle type and configuration are not covered in the table above, then it is not eligible for a specialist vehicle permit and must comply with general access mass limits.

For example, a concrete mixer with a tri-axle set is **not** eligible for a specialist vehicle permit.

General access mass limits otherwise apply

The mass on any axles other than those listed in the table above must comply with the general access mass limits prescribed in the VDAM Rule schedule 3, part 1.

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule section 5.11(4)(c) and (d).

Gross mass

Gross mass is limited to the general access total mass limits prescribed in the VDAM Rule schedule 3, part 2.

Legislation reference: VDAM Rule section 5.11(4)(c) and (d).

G1.4 Specialist vehicle operating requirements

Introduction

This section outlines specific requirements for specialist vehicles operating under a permit.

For general information about permit conditions, see *Chapter A3:* Operating under a VDAM permit in part A of this manual.

Permit mass limits apply

Specialist vehicles operating under a permit must not exceed the maximum axle mass limits specified on the permit.

Note: The mass limits on a permit may be less than the maximum limits available under the VDAM Rule to protect structures and pavements on the route.

Route specific

Permits for specialist vehicles are route specific. Vehicles operating under a specialist vehicle permit are allowed to travel only on the route specified on the permit.

No heavy trailer

Specialist vehicles must not tow a heavy trailer when operating under a permit.

No 'H' sign

Specialist vehicles operating under a permit must not display the yellow high productivity motor vehicle sign (the 'H' sign).

The 'H' sign is only required for vehicles operating under a high productivity motor vehicle (HPMV) permit.

Additional conditions

A specialist vehicle operating under a permit must comply with any additional permit conditions that the road controlling authority issuing the permit considers necessary. This may include conditions to safeguard other road users, protect infrastructure or ensure compliance with the permit.

Chapter G2: How to apply for a specialist vehicle permit

Overview

About this chapter

This chapter describes how to apply for a specialist vehicle permit.

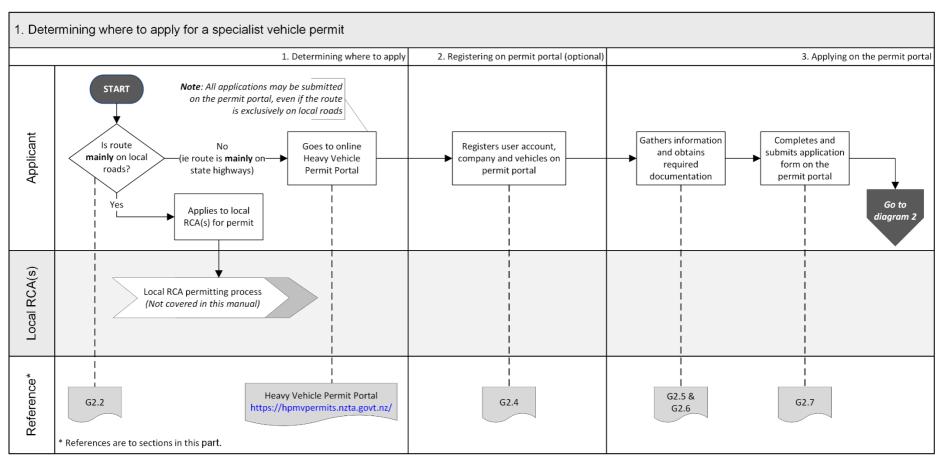
In this chapter

This chapter contains the following sections:

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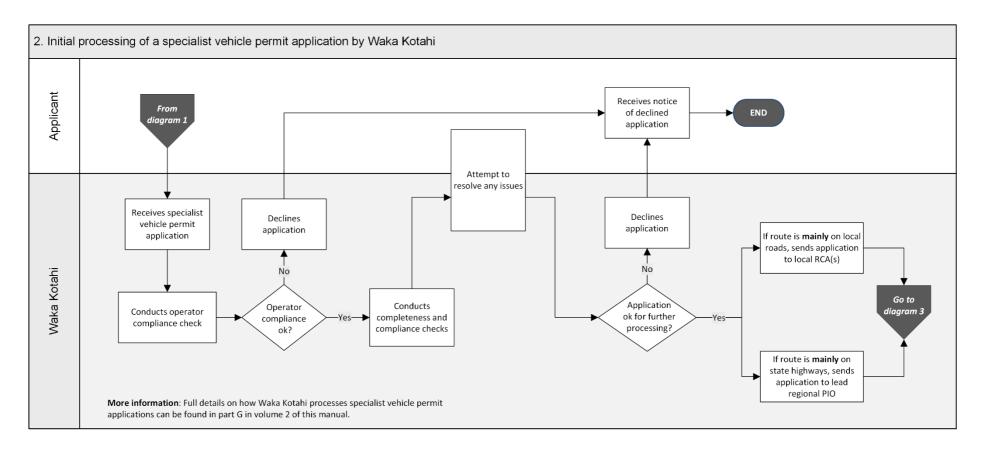
G2.1 Overview diagrams of the specialist vehicle permitting process

Diagram 1 This diagram illustrates the steps involved in applying for a specialist vehicle permit.



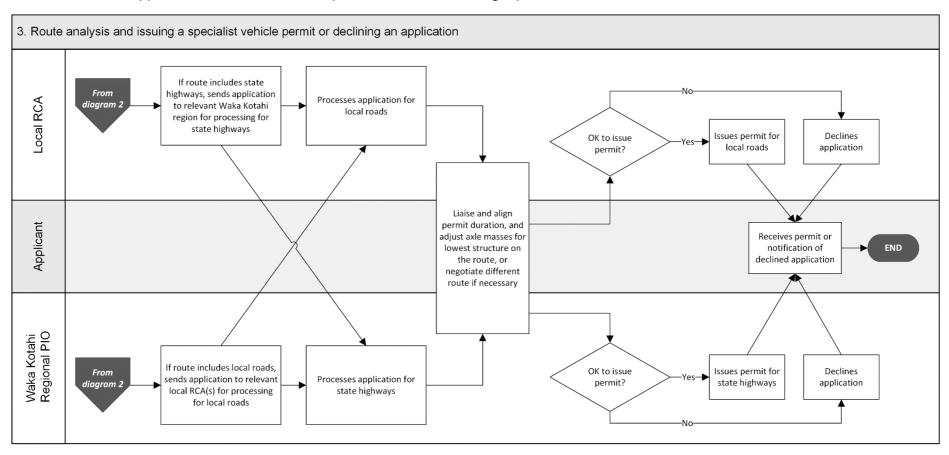
G2.1 Overview diagrams of the specialist vehicle permitting process continued

Diagram 2 This diagram shows the initial checks done by Waka Kotahi when processing a specialist vehicle permit application.



G2.1 Overview diagrams of the specialist vehicle permitting process continued

Diagram 3 This diagram illustrates how Waka Kotahi and local road controlling authorities (RCAs) process specialist vehicle permit applications for route suitability and liaise before issuing a permit.



G2.2 Determining where to apply

Where to apply for a specialist vehicle permit? Refer to the table below to determine where to apply for a specialist vehicle permit.

If your route is	Then you should apply for a permit
mainly on local roads	directly to the local RCA involved.
mainly on local roads involving several local RCA(s)	to the local RCA where the journey starts.
mainly on state highways	on Waka Kotahi's Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal.

Examples

- 1. If you have a rubbish truck that operates mainly on a network of local roads, you should apply to the local RCA for a specialist vehicle permit.
- 2. If you have an inter-city or touring bus that operates between city centres and travels mainly on state highways, you should apply on Waka Kotahi's Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal for a specialist vehicle permit.

Waka Kotahi liaises with local RCAs

All permit applicants may apply on Waka Kotahi's Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal if they wish, regardless of their route.

If Waka Kotahi receives a specialist vehicle permit application with a route that includes local roads, it will liaise with the local RCA(s) involved and, depending on regional arrangements, forward the permit to them for local road processing, or issue a joint permit with their consent.

G2.3 Before you apply for a specialist vehicle permit

Is your vehicle a qualifying 'specialist vehicle'?

Before you apply for a specialist vehicle permit, you should confirm that your vehicle:

- is an eligible specialist vehicle type, and
- has the required axle types and configurations to be eligible for increased mass limits under a permit.

For details see sections *G1.2 Specialist vehicle diagrams* and *G1.3 Maximum axle mass limits under a specialist vehicle permit.*

Road user charges (RUC)

You must ensure that you are paying the correct road user charges (RUC) for the gross weight your vehicle is allowed to carry under a specialist vehicle permit.

Check the applicable RUC rate for specialist vehicles at: www.nzta.govt.nz/vehicles/licensing-rego/road-user-charges/ruc-rates-and-transaction-fees/#RUC-rates-for-distance-licences-for-overweight-specialist-RUC-vehicles.

Note: You must have a specialist vehicle permit issued first before applying for a specialist vehicle heavy RUC rate or purchasing additional RUC to cover the permit weight.

Preliminary tasks

If you are applying on Waka Kotahi's permit portal, it is advisable to complete the following preliminary tasks:

- 1. registering on the permit portal
- 2. preparing prerequisite documentation, and
- 3. gathering information required on the application form.

These preliminary tasks are described in detail in the following sections.

G2.4 Registering on the Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal

Benefits of registering

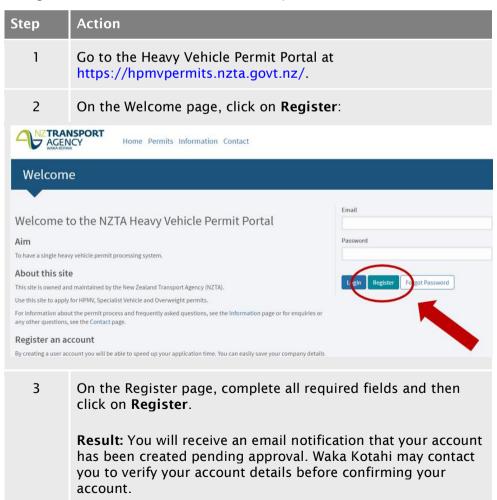
If you need more than one permit, you can save time and effort by registering on the permit portal. Registration is not compulsory, but benefits include:

- you only need to enter company and vehicle information once in the system
- common details are populated automatically for each new application when you fill in the application form
- you can save draft applications and complete them in stages, and
- you can monitor the progress of applications and access previous applications and permits.

Registering a user account

The first step is to register a user account on the permit portal. You will then be able to log in to the portal and set up company details and create a vehicle library.

To register a user account, follow these steps:

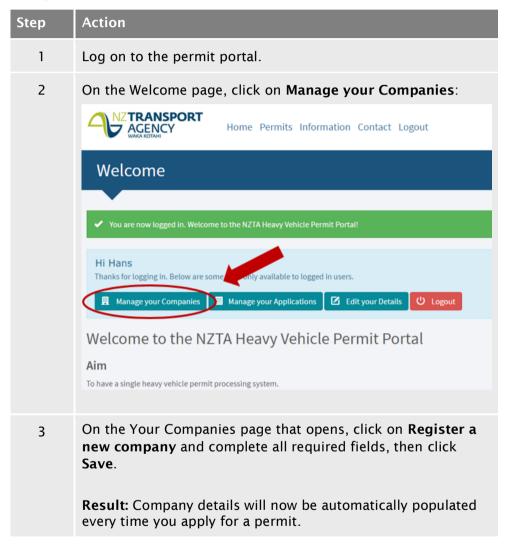


G2.4 Registering on the Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal

Registering a company

Once you receive confirmation of your permit portal user account, you can register your company details. This information will then be automatically entered in the application form every time you apply for a new permit under your saved company's name.

To register a company, follow these steps:

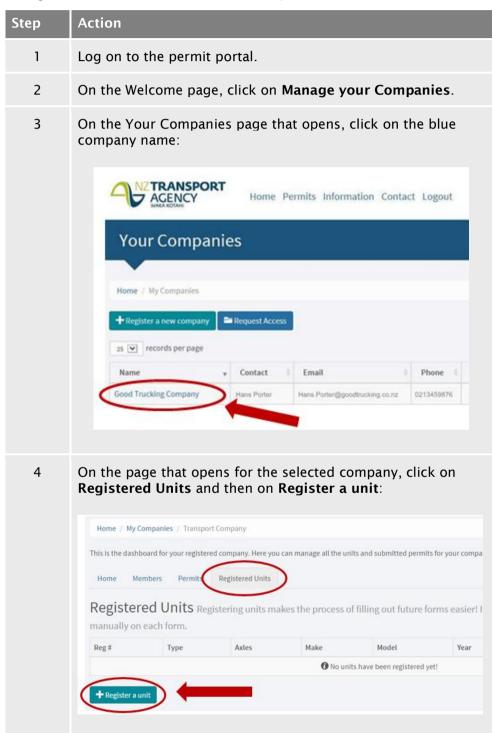


G2.4 Registering on the Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal

Registering vehicle details

Once you have registered your company, you can register vehicle details on the portal.

To register vehicle details, follow these steps:



G2.4 Registering on the Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal continued

Registering
vehicle details
(continued)

Step	Action
5	Complete all required fields and then click Save .
	Result: You can now select a saved vehicle when you apply for a permit, which will automatically populate vehicle details on the application form.

Authorised applicants

Using the Manage your Companies function, you can also register additional people who are authorised to apply for permits on behalf of the company.

Portal user guide

You can find more detailed help with using the permit portal in the user guide at https://hpmvpermits.nzta.govt.nz/home/information.

G2.5 Preparing prerequisite documentation

Prerequisite documentation

The following documents are required to be submitted as attachments with a specialist vehicle permit application:

- 1. route information
- 2. evidence of load share (for vehicles with a tandem axle set), and
- 3. confirmation of a service contract (if applicable).

The requirements for these attachments are described in detail below.

1. Route information

The route information you provide for a specialist vehicle permit application must include all roads and highways between the starting point of the journey and the final destination.

An acceptable format for route information is a complete list of all roads and highways that make up the route. Indicate start and end points or whether you require the full length of a road, for example:

SH1S from Wentworth St, Gore, to Kakapuaka Rd, Balclutha Te Houka Rd from SH1S to Ravensdown Fertiliser Plant Kakapuaka Rd (full length)

Acceptable file formats to attach with your application are MS Word documents or PDF files, up to a maximum file size of 20MB.

2. Evidence of load share

If your specialist vehicle has a tandem axle set with a twin-tyred axle and a single large-tyred axle, you must provide evidence of the load share percentage ratio (60/40 or 55/45) of the tandem axle set when applying for a permit.

Acceptable evidence of load share is any one of the following:

- a photograph of the compliance plate on the vehicle (if applicable), with clearly legible information
- a weight certificate from a Waka Kotahi approved heavy vehicle specialist certifier that includes load share information (see www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/heavy-vehicle-specialist-certifiers/), or
- a letter from the vehicle manufacturer with load share information.

Note: If you are applying for multiple identical vehicles (which must all have the same load share ratio), you need to submit evidence of the load share ratio for only **one** of the identical vehicles with your application (see *Multiple vehicle applications* in section G2.7 below).

G2.5 Preparing prerequisite documentation continued

2. Evidence of load share (continued)

Attributes check sheets not acceptable

HPMV attributes check sheets do not cover the required information for specialist vehicle permit applications. They are therefore not acceptable and cannot be used in place of the acceptable load share evidence described above.

3. Confirmation of contract

If you are operating under a local authority contract, Waka Kotahi may consider a variation of the usual 24-month permit period.

If you wish to apply for a permit period that aligns with a permit-related contract term, you must provide confirmation of the following:

- the parties to the contract
- contract purpose (ie description of the services to be provided), and
- the start and end dates for the provision of services under the contract.

G2.6 Gathering required information

Have details on hand

If you apply for a permit as an **unregistered** user, it is advisable to have the company and vehicle details described below on hand so that you can complete the application in one session. Otherwise, if you get interrupted while completing the application form, you will lose all information you have entered. Only registered users can save entered data and return to it later.

Company information

You must provide the following company information on the application form:

- legally registered company name
- company contact details (including contact person and postal address), and
- your transport service licence (TSL) number (if applicable).

Required vehicle details

You must provide the following vehicle details on the application form:

- vehicle registration number(s)
- axle types and load share ratio (if applicable)
- mass applied for (total unit mass and individual axle masses)
- tyre sizes
- suspension types
- · track outer distances, and
- axle spacings.

Measuring axle spacings

Axle spacings must be measured on the laden vehicle from the centre of the first axle to the centre of the last axle.

For details see section *D3.3 How to measure axle spacings* in part D of this volume.

G2.7 Completing and submitting a specialist vehicle permit application on the permit portal

Checklist for required documents

Use this checklist to ensure you have electronic copies of the documents that must be submitted together with a specialist vehicle permit application:

- ☐ detailed list of all roads and state highways on the route(s) you wish to travel on
- evidence of load share if the vehicle has a tandem axle set with a twintyred axle and a single large-tyred axle, and
- ☐ confirmation of permit-related contract details, if applicable.

For details see section *G2.5 Preparing prerequisite documentation* above.

Multiple vehicle applications

You may apply for multiple identical vehicles on the same application form.

To be considered identical, vehicles must be the same make and model and have:

- identical axle spacings
- the same tyre sizes
- the same load share ratio (60/40 or 55/45) on the rear tandem axle set (if applicable), and
- sufficient GVM for the mass applied for.

G2.7 Completing and submitting a specialist vehicle permit application on the permit portal continued

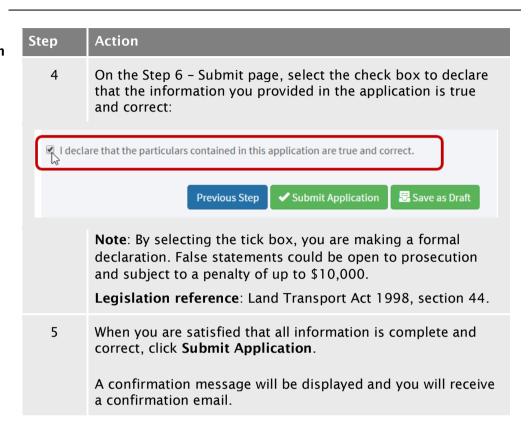
Completing form

To complete and submit the specialist vehicle permit application form, the application follow these steps:

Step	Action
1	Go to the Heavy Vehicle Permit Portal at https://hpmvpermits.nzta.govt.nz/.
	Log in if you are a registered user.
2	Click on Permits and then on Online Specialist Vehicle Permit Application :
	NZTRANSPORT AGENCY Home Permits Information Contact
	Permits
	Home / Permits
	For online permit applications choose the relevant link
	Online HPMV Permit Application
	Online Specialist Vehicle Permit Application
	Online Overweight Permit Application
3	On the application form that opens, complete all required fields marked with an asterisk (*) or, if you are a registered user, select saved information from the drop-down lists.

G2.7 Completing and submitting a specialist vehicle permit application on the permit portal continued

Completing the application form (continued)



Obligations of third party applicants

Third party applicants applying for a specialist vehicle permit on behalf of a transport operator are bound by the declaration on the application form. They must ensure that they are duly authorised to make the application and that the details provided are complete, true and correct to the best of their knowledge.

Third party applicants must forward all relevant information, terms and conditions to the eventual user of the permit.

Help

If you require help with a specialist vehicle permit application, please call Waka Kotahi's contact centre on 0800 699 000 or email info@nzta.govt.nz.

G2.8 Permit fee and processing time

Permit fees

For the standard permit fees, see section A2.5 in *Part A: Introduction to VDAM permits* in this volume.

Processing time

Waka Kotahi makes every effort to process specialist vehicle permit applications as quickly as possible and generally issues permits for routes exclusively or mainly on state highways within 20 working days.

However, some aspects of the permitting process are outside Waka Kotahi's control, for example, if approvals from local road controlling authorities (RCAs) are required.

If you have applied to a local RCA for a specialist vehicle permit, please contact the local RCA about processing times for permit applications.