

# Vehicle Dimensions and Mass Rule 2016

Introducing specialist vehicles,  
including passenger service vehicles, concrete mixers, rubbish trucks & ground spreader trucks

## INFORMATION SHEET

February 2017



Here you'll find a summary of the main changes in the new Vehicle Dimensions and Mass (VDAM) Rule 2016, specific to specialist vehicles. This will help give you a sense of what the changes mean for you and others you work with in the industry.

Please refer to the VDAM Rule 2016 as your main source of information, to ensure you know and understand all the details and specified requirements of how you can legally operate.

### BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY CHANGES OR DECISIONS

It's important to remember that the VDAM Rule 2016 is intended to set a reasonable balance between road safety, productivity and managing New Zealand's road infrastructure. If you are thinking of changing your fleet, we encourage you to gather information that helps you make decisions and obtain a permit if required.

### SPECIALIST VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS AND PERMITTING FOR INCREASED AXLE MASS LIMITS

The specialist vehicles list has expanded to include passenger service vehicles, concrete mixers, rubbish trucks and ground-spreader trucks.

A revised permitting process is in place for operators who want to use the increased rear-axle set mass limits detailed in the rule. Permitting ensures that structures (bridges) on the state highway network and local roads are capable of carrying an increased load, while taking into account the productivity and safety factors involved.

If you are an operator of these vehicle types, we encourage you to read the rule and discuss permitting and route options with the road controlling authorities in your area before you make use of the weight increase.

If you work with New Zealand's bus and heavy vehicle manufacturers, please allow them time to make any adjustments they need to provide vehicles in line with the changes to mass and dimension.

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

### DETAILS OF THE PERMIT PROCESS

It is important that road safety remains a priority, therefore the specialist vehicle permit application process includes an operator safety check which looks at traffic offence history, including permit breaches. Declining or placing conditions on a permit based on operator compliance history is at the permit issuing officer's discretion. You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the revised *Permit manual* (once available) for all the details and requirements.

Standard permitting procedures, such as conditions of operating a vehicle, will apply to specialist vehicles.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ROUTES

There are opportunities for you to take more passengers on buses or purchase electric or hybrid vehicles, utilising the increased rear-axle mass limits under permit.

In addition, from 1 December 2018, 2-axle buses with rear-axle mass limits of up to 9000kg will be able to operate on designated public transport routes (defined in regional road transport plans) without requiring permits. This is to help make the urban bus system easier to run. The 2 year lead-in time reflects the need to assess bridges on those routes and, where necessary, either post restrictions or undertake strengthening.

Before you make any changes to your bus fleet to increase the mass limit load, please talk to your local road controlling authorities (RCAs) to ensure you are able to obtain a permit for the routes you need to travel, including the NZ Transport Agency for any travel on state highways. In some instances, RCAs may decide to issue a permit at a lower axle limit (but above general access limits).

## WEIGHING TOLERANCES AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COMPLIANCE

Previous weighing tolerances are removed from the VDAM Rule 2016 and are instead set out in the updated Land Transport (Offences and Penalties) Regulations 1999. The changes to weighing tolerances reflect the accuracy of modern weighing techniques and technologies. It's important you are aware of the revised tolerances to ensure you remain compliant and help maintain safety on the road.

The Commercial Vehicle Investigation Unit (CVIU) has updated their enforcement processes and procedures to reflect these regulation changes.

### WEIGHING TOLERANCES

#### REDUCED TO (for all vehicles)

- **500kg** for all individual axles and gross mass limits.
- **1000kg** for axle sets (eg a tri-axle set at the rear of a semi-trailer) other than steer axles.

## CHANGES TO ROAD USER CHARGES (RUC)

A temporary RUC rate will be in place for permitted specialist vehicles which will become standard during the annual rate review process. The temporary type H vehicle RUC rate will reflect the increased weight of specialist vehicles under permit.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AFTER 1 FEBRUARY 2017

For more details on changes coming into effect after 1 February 2017, please refer to the *VDAM Overview of changes for the industry* summary guide available at [nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016](http://nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016)

## REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A number of documents are being updated to reflect the revised rule.

Please visit [www.nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/vdamrule2016) for more information.



## WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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

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