



Motor Vehicle Compliance Plates

Introduction

From the early days of the motor vehicle industry until the mid 1960's, requirements governing motor vehicle construction were quite basic. Vehicles were checked against these requirements by inspection and simple measurement, for example, limits in vehicle length, width and height.

However, from the mid 1960's onwards, safety requirements gradually expanded to include requirements which could not be checked by inspection, but which required laboratory or crash testing. These requirements are specified in the National Standards, more popularly known as the *Australian Design Rules (ADRs)* and cover such matters as seat belt performance and strength, seat belt anchorage strength, and the performance in crashes of collapsible steering columns and burst-proof door locks. All new motor vehicles manufactured for the Australian market must be built to the requirements of the ADRs.

The only practical way of checking that these requirements are met is for manufacturers and importers to test prototype vehicles (in many cases, to destruction) and for the final design to then be *type approved*. When compliance with the ADRs has been demonstrated, the Federal Office of Road Safety authorises the fitment of *compliance plates* by the manufacturer or the importer. A *compliance plate* indicates to registering authorities that the vehicle has been shown to comply with the ADRs.

For further information about applications for compliance plate approval you should contact:

The Administrator of Vehicle Standards
Federal Office of Road Safety
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6274 7111
Facsimile: (02) 6257 2505

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Compliance Plates

A *compliance plate* is a small metal plate (typically about 100mm x 50mm, smaller for motorcycles), which is attached to the vehicle. A *compliance plate* identifies the vehicle by make, model, date of manufacture and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)/chassis number. *Compliance Plates* are permanently affixed to vehicles and usually are fitted in vehicle engine bays, on vehicle door pillars or near the passenger side footwell. On motorcycles they are usually attached to steering heads.

Compliance Plates are usually **silver** although other colours are sometimes used. However, certain colours are reserved for particular purposes. A **red compliance plate** is for a partially completed vehicle (e.g. chassis cab) and a **green compliance plate** is for a vehicle produced in low volume. **Blue** is reserved for low volume trailer assessment plate and **yellow** for a personally imported vehicle plate.





Although information on a *compliance plate* may change from time to time, there is one feature which distinguishes it from other plates. That is a statement to the effect that the plate is affixed with the approval of the “Australian Motor Vehicle Certification Board” (AMVCB) or alternatively that the vehicle is “Manufactured to Comply with the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989”.

Examples of Compliance Plates

(typical dimensions shown in brackets)

AMVCB Second Edition Compliance Plates

(in use before 1 July 1988 and until 1 July 1991)

<p>GENERAL USE Colour: other than red, green blue or yellow</p>	 <p>Motor vehicles except motor cycles (90mm x 90mm)</p>	 <p>Motor cycles only (100mm x 40mm)</p>
<p>LOW VOLUME Colour: green</p>	 <p>Motor vehicles except motor cycles (90mm x 90mm)</p>	 <p>Motor cycles only (100mm x 40mm)</p>

AMVCB Third Edition Compliance Plates

(in use after 1 July 1988 and until 1 July 1992)

GENERAL USE Colour: other than red, green, blue or yellow	<p>Motor vehicles except motor cycles (100mm x 50mm)</p>	<p>Motor cycles only (95mm x 35mm)</p>
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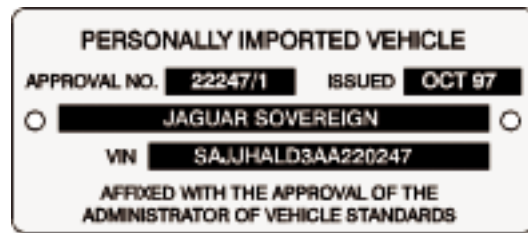
Motor Vehicle Standards Compliance Plates

(in use from October 1989 - current style)

GENERAL USE Colour: other than red, green, blue or yellow	<p>Motor vehicles except motor cycles (100mm x 50mm)</p>	<p>Motor cycles only (100mm x 40mm)</p>
	LOW VOLUME Colour: green	<p>Motor vehicles except motor cycles (100mm x 50mm)</p>
TRAILER Colour: other than red, green, blue or yellow	<p>Trailers over 4.5 tonnes ATM (150mm x 90mm)</p>	

Are there any other plates that serve a similar purpose?

The **yellow** *Personally Imported Vehicle* plate serves a similar purpose as a *compliance plate*. It identifies that the importer of the vehicle was granted the concession provided under the personal import vehicle scheme of not having to show proof that the vehicle met the Australian Design Rules (see Vehicle Standards Information (VSI) No 4 - Imported Vehicles for further information). These plates have been fitted to *personally imported vehicles* since August 1990. Vehicles imported before August 1990 were not fitted with a *personally imported vehicle plate*.

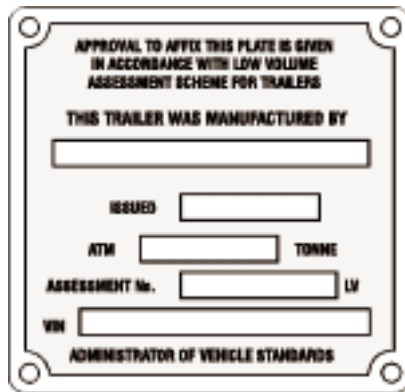


(110mm x 50mm)

For heavy trailers there is a **blue** *Low Volume Assessment Plate*. For trailers that weigh less than 4.5 tonnes aggregate trailer mass (ATM) there is a *Trailer Plate* which includes a statement on it to the effect that *the trailer was manufactured to comply with the applicable Australian Design Rules*. These plates serve a similar purpose as a *compliance plate*.

Heavy Trailer
"Low Volume
Assessment Plate"

(90mm x 90mm)



General use "Trailer Plate" for trailers less than 4.5 tonnes ATM

(colour and dimensions to manufacturers specifications)

Vehicles required to be fitted with compliance plates

Motor vehicles manufactured on or after 1 August 1972 (1 October 1976 for motor cycles) are required to be fitted with *compliance plates*. Trailers were required to be fitted with compliance plates as from the following dates:

Trailer category	Date of manufacture
semi-trailers with a gross trailer mass over 20 tonnes and up to 60 tonnes	on or after 1.7.84
all other trailers with a gross trailer mass over 15 tonnes and up to 60 tonnes	on or after 1.7.85
all trailers with a gross trailer mass over 4.5 tonnes and up to 60 tonnes	on or after 1.7.86

- *low volume assessment plates* where applicable were fitted to heavy trailer and semi-trailers over 4.5 tonnes and up to 15 tonnes manufactured on or after 1 July 1986.
- light trailers with an aggregate trailer mass of up to 4.5 tonnes and manufactured on or after 1 July 1990 were fitted with *trailer plates*.

Vehicles not required to be fitted with compliance plates

Motor vehicles and trailers made prior to the above dates are not required to be fitted with *compliance plates*. In addition, there are certain types of vehicles which are exempt from the requirement to have a *compliance plate* fitted. *Compliance Plates* are not issued for:

- plant vehicles not based on a production truck chassis e.g. forklift trucks, mobile cranes.
- vehicles not designed primarily for road use e.g., agricultural equipment, earth moving, road making and maintenance plant (backhoes, graders), agricultural motorcycles, golf buggies.
- individually constructed or *home-made* vehicles (one-off specially constructed vehicle built by a person for their own use).

Compliance Plates are not required on the following types of imported vehicles:

- personally imported vehicle (a yellow “personally imported vehicle” plate is fitted instead of *compliance plate*)
- imported vehicles more than 15 years old (excepting heavy trucks, heavy trailers and buses)
- other specially imported vehicles given import approval by the Federal Office of Road Safety and granted an exemption from the requirement to comply with Australian Design Rules, such as competition vehicles (e.g. rally vehicles) and competition support vehicles, engineering or market evaluation vehicles, farm vehicles (e.g. agricultural motorcycles, 3 or 4 wheel buggies intended primarily for use on farms), mining company vehicles, tourist and visitor’s vehicles.
- vehicles brought to NSW by United States defence forces (e.g. Status of Forces Agreement or “SOFA” vehicles)

Letter of Compliance

In certain cases, a vehicle without a compliance plate may be registered if the vehicle has been shown by a *letter of compliance* to meet all applicable Australian Design Rules. A *letter of compliance* is a statement from the manufacturer indicating that the vehicle complies with the Australian Design Rules applicable at the time of the vehicles’ manufacture. A *letter of compliance* can only be issued by an authorised representative of the manufacturer.

Dealers or distributors do not have authority to sign a *letter of compliance*.

The statement must be in a format similar to the sample at right and must positively identify the vehicle submitted for registration. It must also certify that it is identical in every way to a vehicle model that has been shown to conform to all applicable Australian Design Rules and in respect of which a *compliance plate approval* has been issued (approval number and relevant design rule numbers must be specified).

**Sample manufacturer’s
“Letter of Compliance”**

letterhead of manufacturer

I hereby certify that _____ (make, model, body type) _____ bearing engine number _____ and chassis number _____ was manufactured in _____ (month, year) and is identical to those vehicles covered by Australian Motor Vehicle Certification Board compliance plate approval number _____ in all respects pertaining to its complying with Australian Design Rules, numbers _____

Name _____
(signed) _____
(date) _____
Title _____
For _____
(name of company)
Tel. No. _____

Registration requirements

A. Vehicles with Compliance Plates

A vehicle can be registered without delay if an authentic *compliance plate* is fitted. This is providing the vehicle is roadworthy and is not modified such that it no longer complies with the applicable Australian Design Rules.

Note: The compliance plate where fitted will be disregarded and the vehicle will be considered a “vehicle without a compliance plate” if:

- the identifying number on the *compliance plate* does not match the chassis number or the vehicle identification number (VIN) stamped on the vehicle.
- the details on the plate are obliterated, over-stamped, altered or tampered with in any way.
- the details on the plate are obscured by wiring or other objects (e.g. wiring going through the plate or screws fastened anywhere unusual).
- the plate is damaged, scratched or bent rendering the plate details illegible.
- the plate is not attached to the vehicle by tamper-proof rivets, hammer-drive screws or welding. Adhesives are unacceptable.
- the plate is not made of metal (usually aluminium) and the details displayed are not embossed, etched, engraved or indented.
- the format of the *compliance plate* is not identical to the format in the vehicle specification, or the plate is fitted in a different position to that specified by the manufacturer.
- the plate does not contain any one of the following certification statements or a statement to the same effect:
 - “..... was manufactured by.....to comply with Australian Design Rules, Nos.....”, or
 - “This plate is affixed with the approval of the Australian Motor Vehicle Certification Board”, or
 - that on motorcycles the second phrase may read “Compliance Plate Approval No. Australian Motor Vehicle Certification Board”, or
 - “This vehicle was manufactured to comply with the Motor Vehicle Standards Act, 1989”.
 - “This plate is affixed with the approval of the Administrator of Motor Vehicle Standards”.
 - “Administrator of Vehicle Standards”.

B. Vehicles without Compliance Plates

If there is no *compliance plate* fitted to the vehicle, registration may be effected only if it falls into one (or more) of the following categories:

1. Vehicles currently registered in NSW

A vehicle currently registered in NSW and not fitted with a *compliance plate* can continue to be registered providing it remains roadworthy.

2. Previously registered vehicles

a) Previously registered in NSW (registration expired)

A vehicle in this category can be registered if the owner can produce conclusive documentary evidence of the previous registration (such as a previous Certificate of Registration which positively identifies the vehicle) and the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) records confirm the previous registration.

If previous registration in New South Wales is claimed but no evidence is available, the vehicle cannot be registered immediately. Instead the application for registration, including any documents showing the vehicle's origin and ownership together with a completed RTA Form 1106 - Unregistered Vehicle - No Compliance Plate prepared by an Inspector, Vehicle Regulation (IVR) of the RTA or an Authorised Unregistered Vehicle Inspection Station (AUVIS) Examiner, must be sent to the RTA's Vehicle Standards Section for assessment.

b) Previously registered in another State or Territory - vehicle clearly identifiable as a model manufactured in Australia and accepted by the Federal Office of Road Safety as complying with all applicable ADRs

A vehicle in this category can be registered if the owner can produce conclusive documentary evidence of the previous interstate registration (such as a previous Certificate of Registration which positively identifies the vehicle or a letter from the interstate registration Authority confirming previous registration).

If previous interstate registration is claimed but no conclusive evidence is available, the vehicle cannot be registered immediately. Instead the application for registration including any documents showing the vehicle's origin and ownership together with a completed RTA Form 1106 prepared by an IVR or an AUVIS Examiner must be sent to the RTA's Vehicle Standards Section for assessment.

c) Previously registered in another State or Territory - imported vehicles

A vehicle in this category can be registered if the owner can produce conclusive documentary evidence of the previous interstate registration (such as a previous Certificate of Registration which positively identifies the vehicle or a letter from the interstate registration Authority confirming previous registration). Referral to the RTA Vehicle Standards Section is not required provided the applicant produces documentary evidence (such as an expired certificate of registration or a letter from the interstate Registration Authority) confirming proof of previous registration in another State or Territory of Australia for at least **two calendar years**, or, if the period of registration is less than two years, documentary evidence of previous registration in Australia under the import conditions issued to that vehicle by the Federal Office of Road Safety.

Note. With the exception of heavy trucks, heavy trailers and buses, imported vehicles not meeting the above requirements but are more than 15 years old can be registered without a compliance plate providing the vehicle has been brought up to a standard such that the vehicle is:

- *right-hand drive,*
- *issued with an Engineering Certificate prepared by a recognised Engineering Signatory certifying that the vehicle meets the intent of all the relevant ADRs (and covering any vehicle modifications done on the vehicle) and the Motor Traffic Regulation, and*
- *roadworthy*

NOTE: If the vehicle does not qualify with any of the above requirements, registration may be granted providing a letter of compliance is obtained for the vehicle and subject to approval by the RTA's Vehicle Standards Section.

3. No previous registration in Australia but vehicle is clearly identifiable as a model manufactured in Australia and accepted by the Federal Office of Road Safety as complying with all applicable ADRs

An application to register a vehicle in this category must be referred to the RTA Vehicle Standards Section. You will usually be asked to have the vehicle fitted with a compliance plate or to obtain a letter of compliance from the vehicle manufacturer for such a vehicle.

4. Engineering and market evaluation vehicles

Vehicles may be conditionally registered for engineering or market evaluation by bona-fide manufacturers or their agents. Guidelines for these vehicles are set out in Vehicle Standards Information Sheet No. 20 “*Registration of Engineering and Market Evaluation Vehicles*”.

5. Individually constructed vehicles

The guidelines for individually constructed vehicles are set out in Vehicle Standards Information Sheet No. 6 “*Guidelines for Light Vehicle Modifications*” and the RTA’s “*Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Modifications*”.

6. Vehicles not required to be fitted with compliance plates

C. Vehicles with Compliance Plate discrepancies

A previously registered vehicle (second hand vehicle) where the chassis/VIN number stamped on the body does not match the chassis/VIN number on the compliance plate, may be registered at any motor registry where:

- the vehicle is known to have been manufactured in Australia and known to be of a model that complies with the Australian Design Rules,
- satisfactory evidence is provided as to the previous registration of the vehicle and
- the vehicle is roadworthy (this may require the presentation of an engineers certificate where the vehicle had been modified).

Note: Where the chassis/VIN number stamped on the body is the same as shown on the vehicles’ registration documents, but is different to the number shown on the compliance plate, the vehicle will be considered as a *vehicle without a compliance plate* and **the owner will be directed by an Authorised Officer of the RTA to stamp a line on the differing number on the compliance plate.**

Alternatively, where the chassis/VIN number on the compliance plate is the same as the number indicated on the vehicle registration documents, but different to the number stamped on the body, the owner will be advised by an Authorised Officer of the RTA to provide evidences as to the origin of the number on the body. Where satisfactory evidence has been provided (i.e. sales receipts, repair invoices, etc.) and the body is found to comply with all the relevant ADR’s applicable to the vehicle (**this requires the presentation of an engineers certificate**), the owner will be directed to stamp a line on the differing number, and the chassis/VIN number (shown on the compliance plate and registration documents) stamped as close as possible to the location specified by the vehicle manufacturer.

VEHICLES WHICH DO NOT CONFORM TO ANY OF THE ABOVE CATEGORIES CAN NOT BE REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

FURTHER INFORMATION

RTA Blacktown:

Vehicle Regulation Unit
Level 1, 85 Flushcombe Rd
PO Box 558
BLACKTOWN NSW 2148

Tel: (02) 9830 5555
Fax: (02) 9831 0913

RTA Wollongong:

Vehicle Regulation Unit
104 Market Street
PO Box 5398
WOLLONGONG NSW 2500

Tel: (02) 4226 7007
Fax: (02) 4225 8844

RTA Charlestown:

Vehicle Regulation Unit
Cnr Pacific Hwy & Frederick St
PO Box 585
CHARLESTOWN NSW 2290

Tel: 1 800 049 920
or (02) 4940 5555
Fax: (02) 4921 0827

RTA Parkes:

Vehicle Regulation Unit
PO Box 334
PARKES NSW 2870

Tel: 1 800 809 388
Fax: (02) 6862 8496