

Consultation summary

Land Transport Rules Reform

Phase 1: Heavy vehicle productivity

Note: this is a summary of proposed changes. Before providing feedback, read the discussion document on our website.

Land Transport Rule Reform: Heavy vehicle productivity phase 1

Who this affects

Heavy vehicle drivers and operators, road controlling authorities.

What we're proposing

We're proposing amendments to the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2016 (VDAM Rule) to:

- remove 44T-50MAX permits, and
- remove H plates.

We're also proposing amendments to the Land Transport Rule: Heavy Vehicles 2004 (HV Rule) to:

- incorporate the Bolster Attachment Code by reference, and
- make a minor amendment to definitions.

Why we're proposing this

The government wants to ensure the land transport regulatory system contributes positively to New Zealand's economic growth, delivering a safer, more productive transport system that efficiently targets risk.

These proposed changes aim to reduce administrative requirements affecting heavy vehicles and use regulatory and enforcement resources more efficiently.

Proposal 1: removing 44T-50MAX permits

Currently, vehicles weighing between 44 and 50 tonnes (50MAX vehicles) require permits to operate. These permits involve paperwork and fees and must be renewed every 2 years. Applying for and renewing these permits creates extra work and costs for both operators and regulators.

Proposed changes

We're proposing to remove the permit requirement for 50MAX vehicles meeting specific design standards and operating on pre-approved routes. Permits will be replaced with downloadable 50MAX proforma design documents. These proformas would include relevant restrictions for that vehicle design, and route restriction information. Drivers would need to carry this documentation and present them to an enforcement officer if asked.

Proposal 2: removing H plates



H plates are yellow signs or stickers displayed on High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPMV) to show they're operating under a permit.

H plates were introduced to help enforcement officers identify vehicles operating under HPMV permits. HPMVs are now common and it's unclear if the original purpose of H plates is still relevant.

Many vehicles display H plates permanently, even when they don't need to. Some people assume vehicles displaying H plates are breaking permit conditions.

Proposed changes

We're proposing to remove the requirement to display H plates. Operators would still need to hold valid permits or documentation, and enforcement agencies would continue to rely on these records.

Proposal 3: Bolster Attachment Code

The Bolster Attachment Code (the Code) sets out detailed requirements for heavy vehicles fitted with bolsters carrying logs.

The Code must currently be written into the HV Rule, meaning any new version requires a formal HV Rule change for the Code to have legal effect. This is not an efficient way of keeping the Code up to date. These delays create uncertainty for the logging industry about what technical requirements to follow.

Proposed changes

We're proposing to incorporate the Code by reference. This would allow the Code to be updated quickly and easily, without needing to amend the Rule each time. Future versions would still require approval from the Director of Land Transport, and stakeholders would be informed of changes. The Code would be available online via the 'Incorporation by reference' page on the NZTA website.

Proposal 4: minor amendment to definitions

The term 'low volume vehicle' is defined in the HV Rule, but isn't used anywhere else in the HV Rule, and doesn't serve a regulatory purpose.

Proposed change

We're proposing to amend the HV Rule to remove this unused definition. Some updates to inspection manuals may be needed. This proposal only applies to the HV Rule; any other Rules using the term 'low volume vehicle' wouldn't be affected.

Tell us what you think

Read the discussion document and complete the online form at: www.nzta.govt.nz/consultations (preferred) or email: rules@nzta.govt.nz

All feedback will be considered before a decision is made by the Minister of Transport. Any Rule amendments would likely be signed by the Minister of Transport in mid-2026.

**Consultation
closes on
17 December
2025**