

Registration requirements for light trailers manufactured before July 1991

For further information please write to the Manager, Vehicle Safety Branch
60 Denmark Street, Kew, 3101 or contact your local Registration Office.

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The information in this circular is a summary of the construction requirements in Victoria's Standards for Registration and the ADR's that apply to trailers up to 4.5 tonnes ATM manufactured **before** July 1991.

The introduction of the third edition Australian Design Rules (ADR's) and the Federal Motor Vehicles Standards Act has resulted in a number of changes to the registration and construction requirements for some vehicles.

Trailers built before July 1991 are required to comply with the standards specified in the Road Safety (Vehicles) (Vehicles Standards) Regulations 1999.

Trailers built on or after 1 July 1991 must comply in full with the applicable Australian Design Rules. A summary of these requirements is contained in the relevant edition of Vehicle Standards Bulletin No 1 produced by the Federal Office of Road Safety, copies of which are available from VicRoads Registration offices.

As well as requiring compliance with the relevant standards, owners are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition at all times. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that regular roadworthy checks are carried out on the vehicle. The condition of the towing coupling, safety chains, wheel bearings and tyres together with the operation of all lights and the braking system should be included in these checks.

Boat trailers in particular require regular wheel bearing and brake service as these components are subject to contamination by water during normal use.

Notes:

- **ATM**, or Aggregate Trailer Mass, means the total mass of the trailer when carrying the maximum load recommended by its manufacturer - includes the part of the mass transferred to the towing vehicle at the coupling;
- **GTM**, or Gross Trailer Mass, means the mass carried by the trailer's axles when it is coupled to a towing vehicle and is carrying its maximum load approximately uniformly distributed over its load space;
- Information contained in this Circular is a guide only. The precise and detailed requirements are contained in the Standards for Registration and the relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs).

1. Registration

The Road Safety Act requires most trailers to be registered to be used on public roads:

Exceptions to this are;

- small trailers, which are not boat trailers, and are not used for commercial purposes, and which weigh less than 200kg unloaded, are less than 3.0m in overall length (including any load) and are narrower than the towing vehicle;
- agricultural implements, portable grain storage bins and trailers for carrying bulk fruit bins.

However, in any case the trailer must be in a roadworthy condition and continue to comply with the applicable construction requirements. (refer to the basic check list on page 5).

2. Size and Mass

The following dimensions are the maximum allowed. It would be unusual for the size of a trailer intended for towing by a passenger car to approach any of the maximum permissible limits except width.

A maximum height of 4.3m applies to vehicles used on specified highways as published in the Victorian Government Gazette, 4.0m is the maximum height for any other highway.

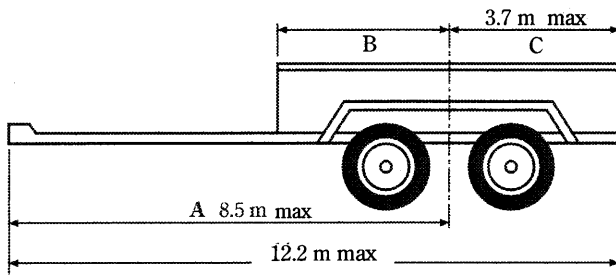


Figure 1

- Note: (1) Dimension B must be not less than C
(2) Maximum width is 2.5 metres

3. Ground Clearance

The Ground Clearance of a vehicle measured from a horizontal road surface to any point on the underside of the vehicle, except the tyres, wheels and wheel hubs when the vehicle is loaded to the Gross Mass specified by the manufacturer, must not be less than:-

- for any point in the width of the vehicle which is within one metre fore and aft of any axle, 100mm;
- for the mid-point between any 2 consecutive axles, the dimension in millimetres obtained by multiplying the distance between those 2 axles in metres by 33.33.

Note:

These are minimum requirements. For practical purposes many trailers will need more clearance particularly at the front and rear.

4. Mudguards

All wheels of a trailer must be covered with mudguards which protect other road users, as far as practicable, against stones, mud, ice, snow and water thrown up by the wheels, and which reduce the danger of contact with the moving wheels.

The mudguards must provide continuous protection, for the overall width of the tyres, between a point in area A and a point in area B as shown below.

Where two or more axles are fitted, separate guards for each wheel or a single guard which provides the required protection over all the wheels may be fitted. Mudguards may consist of permanent body structure or part structure and other components, including mudflaps to provide the required protection.

Unless rear marker plates are fitted, any trailer which is 2.2m or more in width and has a body with a vertical height of less than 300mm, must have the rear of the guards painted white or silver together with a white or silver band at least 75mm high painted across the full width of the rear of the trailer.

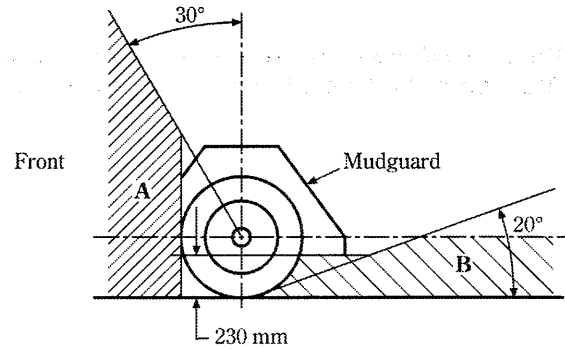


Figure 2

5. Number Plates, and Registration Label Holder

Provision must be made for a number plate to be fitted on the rear of a trailer so that no point of the plate will be higher than 1.3m above the ground.

If the trailer is of a type that has to be registered then a registration label holder must be fixed to the left hand side of the trailer.

In the case of a caravan it is acceptable for such a label to be fitted to a suitable window.

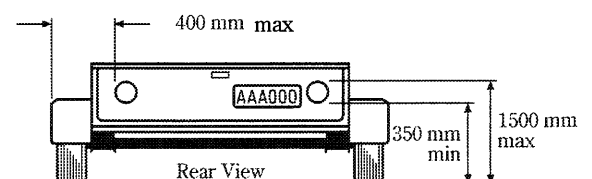
6. Lighting

The following lamps are required and generally apart from brake lamps and turn signal lamps, must emit a low intensity diffused light. Also, pairs of similar lamps which are installed on opposite sides of the trailer must be at the same height and at equal distance from the centre of the trailer.

7. The lamps and reflectors described in this part are required on all trailers.

- Rear Position (tail) lamps and Stop Lamps

Two red tail lamps and stop lamps must be fitted to the rear of a trailer as illustrated.

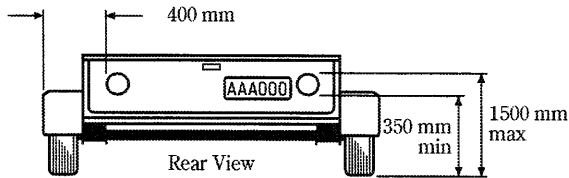


(b) Rear Registration Plate Lamp

A lamp directing white light onto the number plate and not to the rear, must be fitted on all trailers.

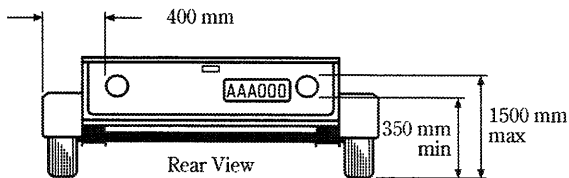
(c) Direction Indicator (Turn Signal) Lamps

Two turn signal lamps showing amber light must be fitted to the rear of the trailer as illustrated.



(d) Reflectors

Two red rear reflectors must be fitted to the



rear of the trailer as illustrated.

Note:

Trailers built before July 1973 do not require Direction Indicator (turn signal) lamps and are only required to have one stop and tail lamp. However, in the interest of Road Safety it is recommended that they comply with the above requirements.

8. In addition to the lamps and reflectors described in part (7) the following must be fitted to trailers where the width is 2.2m or more.

(a) End Outline (Clearance) Lamps

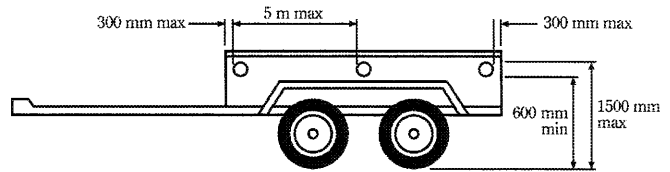
Two red lamps must be fitted to the rear not more than 400mm from the extreme outer edge of the trailer. There are no specific height requirements for these lamps which are in addition to the tail lamps required in part 7(a).

The rear clearance lamp and rear side marker lamp may be one lamp provided it can be seen from both the side and rear.

(b) Side Marker Lamps

Two side marker lamps must be fitted within 150mm of each side of the trailer at the front and two side marker lamps within 300mm of each side of the trailer at the rear. These lamps must show amber light to the front and red to the rear.

The rear side marker lamp and rear clearance lamp may be one lamp provided it can be seen from both the side and the rear.



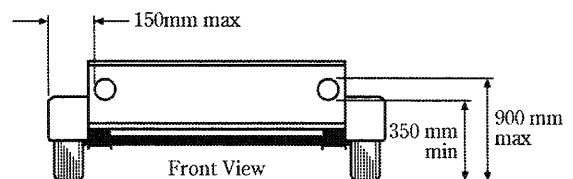
If the total length of the trailer exceeds 7.5m, then an additional lamp must be fitted on each side, midway between the front and rear lamps.

If the distance between the front and rear lamps would be less than 2.5m then only rear lamps need be fitted.

(c) Front Reflectors

Two white or amber front reflectors must be fitted so that they are:-

- (i) not more than 150mm from the extreme outer edge of the trailer; and
- (ii) not more than 1.5m above the ground.



9. Braking

All trailers with a gross trailer mass (GTM) exceeding 750kg must be fitted with an efficient brake system which operates on all wheels of at least one axle.

Where the GTM of a trailer exceeds 2 tonnes the brakes must be designed to be operated by the driver of the towing vehicle from the normal driving position and be fitted with equipment to automatically apply and hold the trailer brakes on for at least 15 minutes in the event of the trailer breaking away from the towing vehicle (breakaway brakes).

Over-run brakes are not permitted on a trailer with a GTM which exceeds 2 tonnes.

10. Safety Connections

Safety chains are required on couplings between the towing vehicle and trailer except where breakaway braking equipment is fitted to the trailer. While most trailers are required to have at least one chain, it is recommended two are fitted.

The chains must prevent the drawbar contacting the ground if the coupling between the trailer and towing vehicle becomes disconnected. The chains may be welded to the trailer drawbar provided the weld extends around 50% of the circumference of the link allowing free movement of the adjoining link.

11. Trailer Plate

Every trailer manufactured after June 1989 should have a trailer plate and tyre placard fixed in a prominent external position on which is displayed:-

- (i) The Manufacturer's name.
- (ii) Date of Manufacture.
- (iii) Gross trailer mass (in kg)
- (iv) Vehicle Identification Number and,
- (v) Tyre and rim data
(i.e. Rim size, tyre size, load rating and recommended tyre pressures).

A suggested layout for a trailer plate is shown below.

Manufacturer	
<input type="text"/>	
Trailer Model	Date of Manufacture
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
V.I.N.	Gross Trailer Mass
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> kg

NOTE:

- (i) The layout of the plate may vary depending on the manufacturer.
- (ii) All lettering on the trailer plate must be at least 2.5mm high.
- (iii) The information on the "Tyre Placard" may be placed on the "Trailer Plate"

A suggested layout for a Tyre Placard is shown below.

Wheel Rim Size/Profile	
<input type="text"/>	
Tyre Size	Tyre Pressure (cold)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> kg
The load carrying capacity of the axle/axle group	
<input type="text"/>	
The sum of the load carrying capacities of the tyres fitted to any axle or axle group of this vehicle shall not be less than the relevant load shown above.	
The Tyres fitted to this vehicle shall have a speed category not less than "L" (120km/h)	

12. Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

Every trailer first registered after February 1988 must have a unique vehicle identification number. This number must appear on the trailer plate (where fitted) but, in addition may also be stamped elsewhere on the trailer.

The number may have up to 17 individual characters in an alpha-numeric combination (e.g. ABC 1000). See Vehicle Standards Information No.14 for more details.

A trailer which does not have a vehicle identification number may be issued with a number at any VIC ROADS Registration Office.

Basic Check List for Trailers up to 4.5 tonnes and Manufactured before July 1991

This list may be used to check that the trailer meets the basic construction requirements. A "Yes" answer to each question indicates the trailer may be suitable for registration. For more detail please refer to the appropriate paragraph in this information sheet or the applicable standards.

For trailers manufactured after June 1991 refer to Vehicle Standards Bulletin No.1 published by the Federal Office of Road Safety.

Are the items listed below fitted to the trailer?	Yes	No	Reference Paragraph
Two tail lamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 (a)
Two stop lamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 (a)
One Number plate lamp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 (b)
Two turn signal lamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 (c)
Two red rear reflectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7 (d)
Braking system as required (see para.9)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Safety chains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Suitable mudguards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
Trailer plate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
In addition to the above the following items apply to trailers where the width is 2.2m or more.			
Two rear clearance lamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 (a)
Two side marker lamps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 (b)
Two front reflectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8 (c)

