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HVS After-hours Procedure for Tow Truck Approvals

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1	01/12/2021	Clarified business hours and after-hours.	s.2 & 3

DEFINITIONS

The following are definitions for terms used in these Guidelines. Refer to the definitions in the *Road Traffic (Administration) Act 2008* and the *Road Traffic (Vehicles) Act 2012* and any subsidiary legislation to these Acts for the meanings of any terms not defined in this section. If a definition in the relevant Acts or the subsidiary legislation conflicts with a definition in this section, the definition in this section prevails for the purpose of these Guidelines.

Term	Definition
After-hours Officer	The after-hours officers for the HVS Permits Section.
Articulated Vehicle	A motor vehicle with a pivot point between the front and rear wheels, such as an articulated bus or articulated mobile crane.
Excess Mass	A mass that exceeds statutory mass limits or the mass limits allowed under a Permit or Order.
Flat Tow	A method of towing a disabled vehicle where the front wheels of the towed vehicle are only lifted the minimal amount necessary to enable the towed vehicle to be steered without transferring excess mass onto the drive axle group of the towed vehicle.
Heavy Lift Tow Truck	A motor vehicle equipped with a crane used or intended to be used for the lifting, salvaging, carrying or towing of heavy vehicles and includes any motor vehicle to which is attached (temporarily or otherwise) a device or trailer, which is used or intended to be used for the lifting, salvaging and carrying of any heavy vehicle.
HVS	Main Roads Heavy Vehicle Services
Permit	A permit issued by HVS under the provisions of Part 4 of the Road Traffic (Vehicles) Act 2012.
Serious Safety Hazard	Any situation that imposes a significant safety risk to any road user or pedestrian, due to matters such as high traffic volumes, high speed environment, congestion, poor visibility etc.
Single Trip Permit	A single use permit issued to a specific vehicle on a specific route.
Tow Truck	A motor vehicle equipped with a crane used or intended to be used for the lifting, salvaging, carrying or towing of vehicles and includes any motor vehicle to which is attached (temporarily or otherwise) a device or trailer, which is used or intended to be used for the lifting, salvaging and carrying of any motor vehicle.
Vehicle Combination	More than one vehicle directly or indirectly attached to one another.

1 PURPOSE

The *Guidelines – Tow Truck Licensing and Permit Requirements* outline the permits and other approvals required for a heavy lift tow truck to tow a disabled heavy vehicle. This procedure outlines when a HVS Access Branch after-hours officer can issue an approval for a heavy lift tow truck to flat tow a disabled articulated vehicle or a vehicle combination.

2 SCOPE

This procedure only applies after-hours. During business hours (8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday), any requests from a tow truck operator to tow an articulated vehicle or a vehicle combination must be referred to the Manager Heavy Vehicle Road Network Access, Heavy Vehicle Access Improvement and Policy Manager or Heavy Vehicle Permits Manager.

3 AFTER-HOURS CONTACT

If an authorisation or permit is required after-hours (4:30pm to 8:30am Monday to Friday, or on Weekends), the tow truck operator must contact the Heavy Vehicle Helpdesk or the Main Roads Customer Information Centre, who will make direct contact with the on-call after-hours officer.

4 APPROVAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Period Permits are available to assist tow truck operators that need to tow heavy vehicles. Refer to the *Guidelines – Tow Truck Licensing and Permit Requirements* for applicable permits.
- 4.1.2 If the request from the tow truck operator is to flat tow a single heavy vehicle and they do not hold a valid period permit to cover the vehicle configuration, a *Single Trip Permit* may be issued, or in urgent situations, the after-hours officer can issue an email approval.
- 4.1.3 If the request from the tow truck operator is to tow an articulated vehicle or a vehicle combination, refer to Section 5.
- 4.1.4 There are a number of safety and road infrastructure matters relating to towing a disabled heavy vehicle that the after-hours officer will need to consider, including the following:
 - a) The tow trucks GCM rating must be sufficient to tow the disabled heavy vehicle;
 - b) Bridges may need to be assessed for the additional mass and changes to mass distribution;
 - c) The swept path of the vehicle or vehicle combination will be adversely impacted by the additional vehicle length; and
 - d) The additional vehicle length may cause other issues, such as exceeding available stacking distances at railway crossings / intersections.

4.2 Mass Limits

- 4.2.1 The after-hours officer should check RAVS to establish the tow truck's GCM and if there are any current permits issued to the tow truck.

4.2.2 If the tow truck or towed vehicle exceed a statutory axle / axle group mass limit or a gross mass of 42.5 tonnes, the after-hours officer will need to establish the actual mass, based on advice from the tow truck operator. If the mass limits are within the limits of a period permit product, the after-hours officer may approve the access, subject to the approved access relevant to the period permit product. For example, if the mass limits are equivalent to an Accredited Mass Management (AMMS) Period Permit, the Single Trip Permit may be issued allowing access on the corresponding AMMS Network. Similarly, if the mass limits are equivalent to a Heavy Lift Tow Truck Period Permit, the Single Trip Permit may be issued subject to the Heavy Lift Tow Truck Restricted Bridges.

4.2.3 Where the mass limits are outside of those covered by a period permit, the after-hours officer will need to contact the Structure Engineering Branch (SEB) after-hours contact. If the SEB after-hours contact cannot be reached, the Single Trip Permit may be issued, and the after-hours officer will need to advise SEB of the approval the following business day.

4.3 Height Limits

4.3.1 Consideration must be given to overhead structures before the after-hours officer approves the movement of a heavy vehicle connected to a tow truck.

4.3.2 If the height of the towed vehicle exceeds 4.3 metres when connected to the tow truck, consideration must be given to powerlines. The RAV Networks can be used as a guide, i.e. RAV Network 2 will generally accommodate 4.6 metre high vehicles.

4.3.3 Where the after-hours officer is only giving permission for a vehicle to be towed a short distance, so it no longer constitutes a hazard, the after-hours officer may rely on verbal advice from the tow truck driver confirming there is no bridge or power line(s) between them and their destination.

4.4 Swept Paths

4.4.1 If the after-hours officer gives permission to flat tow an articulated vehicle or vehicle combination, the swept path of the combination, including the tow truck, must be considered. The RAV Networks can be used as a guide, e.g. RAV Network 2 will accommodate a combination up to 27.5 metres in length.

4.4.2 Where the after-hours officer is only giving permission for a vehicle to be towed a short distance, so it no longer constitutes a hazard, the after-hours officer may rely on verbal advice from the tow truck driver confirming they will not have any issues negotiating the turns into the destination area.

5 ARTICULATED VEHICLES & VEHICLE COMBINATIONS

5.1 Authorisation to Flat Tow an Articulated Vehicle

5.1.1 The after-hours officer may give permission to enable a heavy lift tow truck to flat tow a disabled articulated vehicle to a place where it will not constitute a hazard, if it is considered unsafe or unviable to uncouple the vehicle to tow part of the vehicle only.

5.1.2 The after-hours officer will need to establish if the structure of the articulated vehicle has been compromised, e.g. if the vehicle has been involved in an accident. Where the vehicle has been involved in an accident, permission should be granted to move the vehicle the minimum distance necessary, so it no longer constitutes a hazard and can be safely loaded onto a suitable trailer. The tow truck operator will be required to confirm that the articulated vehicle is safe to flat tow.

5.1.3 If the structure of the articulated vehicle has not been compromised, e.g. the vehicle is disabled due to engine failure, the after-hours officer may grant permission for the articulated vehicle to be flat towed to a nearby place of repair.

5.1.4 If permission is granted, the after-hours officers must provide written authorisation, which may be in the form of a permit or an email in urgent situations.

5.2 Flat Towing a Vehicle Combination

5.2.1 The after-hours officer must only give permission for a heavy lift tow truck to flat tow a disabled vehicle combination if this is deemed to be the safest option. However, in most cases it is a much safer option to disconnect the prime mover and tow the disabled vehicle separately.

5.2.2 The after-hours officer must only give permission for a disabled vehicle combination to be flat towed if it is causing a serious safety hazard and the prime mover cannot be replaced safely at that location. Permission must only be granted to move the disabled vehicle combination as far as necessary, so the vehicle no longer constitutes a hazard and can be safely disconnected or repaired.

5.2.3 If the trailer(s) on the vehicle combination are not fitted with landing legs, the after-hours officer must only give permission for the disabled vehicle combination to be moved as far as necessary, so the vehicle no longer constitutes a hazard and can be safely disconnected or repaired. The transport operator will need to make necessary arrangements if the vehicle needs to be disconnected, e.g. use portable landing legs.

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

The following documents relate to this procedure and are available on the Main Roads website:

Document Number	Description
D21#508039	Guidelines - Tow Truck Licensing and Permit Requirements