

Safety Management System

Standard 2026

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Authority

This standard is approved by responsible Ministers on 13 May 2026 in accordance with s 654(1)(b) of the Heavy Vehicle National Law. It is the standard with which an operator's safety management system (SMS) must comply under s 457A to be considered for accreditation granted under s 461.

Construction Clause

This standard applies in relation to an application for heavy vehicle accreditation granted by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (the Regulator) in accordance with s 458 of the Act.

Part 2 contains the standard with which an operator's safety management system (SMS) must comply under s 457A to be considered for general safety accreditation granted under s 458 and in accordance with s 461.

The Regulator may grant alternative compliance accreditation under s 458 and in accordance with s 461 if satisfied the applicant:

- is applying for, or currently holds, general safety accreditation; and
- has an SMS that is consistent with prescribed operations requirements contained in national regulations for the purposes of s 457.

Purpose

This document is the safety management system standard that must be complied with for Heavy Vehicle Accreditation under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL). An operator seeking accreditation must establish and implement an SMS that complies with this standard.¹

An SMS for an operator of a heavy vehicle is the operator's group of policies, systems, and procedures relating to the safety of its transport activities and the driving of heavy vehicles.

The SMS must identify public risks associated with those activities and driving, assess the identified public risks, and specify the controls to manage and mitigate the identified public risks. The SMS must comply with the safety management system standard, including by addressing any matters required to be addressed by the safety management system standard.

Compliance with this Standard will be assessed using the PSOE methodology (Present, Suitable, Operating and Effective) as defined in the National Audit Standard. Existing NHVAS accreditations continue to be recognised until their expiry.

Operators must align their systems with this Standard upon renewal, consistent with transitional arrangements issued by the Regulator.

¹ Note that in using this document Part 2 sets out the compulsory requirements that must be complied with for general safety accreditation and the requirements contained in the relevant schedules apply only to operators seeking alternative compliance accreditation or an exemption to maintenance-related requirements in a participating jurisdiction.

Application and interpretation

- Outcome focus: Compliance is assessed on evidence that the safety management system is effective in managing public risk and achieving safe operations, not merely on the existence of documents.
- Detailed, auditable evidentiary requirements are set out for all heavy vehicle accreditation applications in Part 2. For alternative compliance accreditation or maintenance accreditation requirements, the operator's SMS must also comply with:
 - Schedule 1 for alternative compliance accreditation – fatigue;
 - Schedule 2 for maintenance accreditation requirements; or
 - Schedule 3 for alternative compliance accreditation - mass
- Terminology: Terms used in this Standard have the same meaning as in the HVNL.

Interpretive statement

- Evidence examples and indicative lists included in this Standard and its schedules are provided for guidance only.
- Evidence examples do not constitute mandatory or exhaustive evidence requirements, and are not intended to limit:
 - the types of evidence an operator may rely upon to demonstrate compliance; or
 - the matters an auditor or the Regulator may consider when assessing whether an SMS is implemented and effective.
- Auditors and the Regulator may consider any form of credible, relevant, and verifiable evidence that reasonably demonstrates:
 - implementation of the SMS; and
 - effectiveness of the SMS in managing public risk and achieving safe transport operations.
- Evidence relied upon for assessment may include, as appropriate:
 - documented policies, procedures, plans, and records;
 - observations of operational practices and work activities;
 - interviews or discussions with drivers, executives, and other relevant personnel;
 - demonstrations of how safety processes operate in practice; and
 - other sources of information that reasonably indicate how the SMS is implemented and functioning.
- The absence of a specific evidence example listed in this Standard does not, of itself, indicate non-conformance, provided the auditor or Regulator is otherwise satisfied that the relevant SMS requirement is met.

- Conversely, the presence of evidence that aligns with an example listed in this Standard does not, of itself, establish compliance, if the auditor or Regulator is not satisfied that the SMS is operating effectively in practice.
- Assessment of compliance is outcomes-focused and must be based on the substance, effectiveness, and practical operation of the SMS, having regard to:
 - the size, nature, complexity and risk profile of the operator's transport activities; and
 - the requirement for proportionality under the Standard.

Part 1 Preliminary

Definitions

Term	Definition
The Act	Heavy Vehicle National Law
Alternative Compliance Accreditation (ACA) - Fatigue	Fatigue alternative compliance accreditation as defined in s 5 of the Heavy Vehicle National Law
Alternative Compliance Accreditation (ACA) - Mass	Mass alternative compliance accreditation as defined in s 3 of the <i>Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation</i> .
Assurance	Information or processes for confirming that systems are working as intended.
Audit	A systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining audit evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.
Competency	The ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results.
Control	Measures which can be used to eliminate or minimise public risks.
Hazard	Anything with the potential to cause harm or damage, this could be an activity or behaviour, a physical object, a situation or a management practice.
Internal review	A process by which something is assessed through the collection of objective evidence.
Lagging indicator	A metric that gives an indication of past performance
Leading indicator	A metric that gives an indication of expected performance

Term	Definition
Non-conformance	A contravention of— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Act; • an Australian road law; or • a defined requirement, standard, specification, or expectation under the Act.
Operating limits	Tools that allow operators and drivers to plan, monitor and manage work and rest times to minimise the impact of fatigue, within all normal circumstances.
Risk	The potential harm or damage that could occur when a person or thing is exposed to a hazard.
Risk assessment	The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.
Roadworthy	Certified as roadworthy by a Heavy Vehicle Inspection Report issued by a road transport authority or, where permitted, by a suitably qualified and experienced heavy vehicle inspector. The inspection must be conducted in accordance with the National Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual (NHVIM) and the Australian Design Rules (ADRs).
Senior management	Any person, by whatever name called, who exercises control or influence over the management or direction of a transport activity.

Part 2 General Safety Accreditation Safety Management System Requirements

Construction Clause

These requirements apply to an application for general safety accreditation to be granted under s 458 of the HVNL, that is, a heavy vehicle accreditation not related to a prescribed operations requirement.

To obtain general safety accreditation, an applicant must have a safety management system that complies with the requirements outlined in this Part.

1. Leadership and Commitment

1.1 Responsibility and accountability

Demonstrate leadership commitment through governance arrangements and systems that assign responsibility and accountability for managing public risk arising from the operator's transport activities.

This includes ensuring that:

- the organisation's safety management system policies, procedures and processes are designed and implemented to manage identified public risks and that transport operations are conducted consistently with those arrangements;
- arrangements are in place to enable drivers and other personnel to report hazards, risks, incidents, and opportunities for improvement without fear of reprisal.
- persons with safety-related responsibilities have appropriate authority, competence and access to resources to discharge those responsibilities effectively; and
- leadership commitment is assessed by reference to the effectiveness of the operator's safety management system and its implementation.

Description

This measure requires the operator to establish, implement and maintain governance arrangements and systems that clearly assign responsibility and accountability for managing public risks arising from the operator's heavy vehicle transport activities.

A central feature of effective responsibility and accountability under this measure is that leadership:

- has a sound and shared understanding of the operator's operating context, and
- uses that understanding to inform how safety responsibilities are allocated, exercised and overseen.

For the purposes of this measure, the operator's operating context encompasses:

- how the business operates in practice;
- the nature and scope of its heavy vehicle transport activities;
- the hazards and public risks created by those activities; and
- the controls in place to eliminate or minimise those risks.

This understanding is not limited to abstract or high-level descriptions. It includes practical knowledge of the policies, procedures and systems of work established by the business that guide how employees perform their roles and make decisions affecting safety.

The focus of this measure is not on prescribing the content of those controls, policies or procedures.

Rather, it is on ensuring that:

- responsibility for their development, implementation and oversight is clearly assigned;
- accountability for safety is grounded in an informed appreciation of how the operator's business and transport activities actually operate; and
- governance arrangements support effective leadership oversight, decision-making and accountability for safety outcomes.

Criteria

1. Leadership understanding of operating context

Senior management has a sound and shared understanding of the operator's operating context in a heavy vehicle operations sense, including:

- how the business operates in practice;
- the nature and scope of its heavy vehicle transport activities; and
- the hazards and public risks created by those activities.

That understanding extends to the controls in place to eliminate or minimise public risks, and how those controls operate in practice. Leadership understanding is informed by practical knowledge of the policies, procedures and systems of work established by the business that guide how personnel perform their roles and make decisions affecting safety.

2. Governance allocation of responsibility and accountability

The operator has governance arrangements that clearly assign responsibility and accountability for the development, implementation and oversight of SMS-related policies, procedures and systems of work.

Those arrangements identify:

- who is responsible for key safety-related functions; and
- how accountability for safety outcomes is exercised and reviewed.

3. Delegation and authority for safety decisions

Safety-related decisions are made by personnel with an appropriate delegation of authority, consistent with their assigned responsibilities. Where leadership delegates tasks necessary for the operation of the SMS, overall accountability for safety outcomes is retained at the appropriate governance level.

4. Senior management competence and informed oversight

Persons with leadership or governance responsibilities for safety are competent to discharge those responsibilities, having regard to the nature of the operator's transport activities and associated public risks. Leadership competence includes the capability to:

- understand and oversee the management of public risks; and
- exercise informed judgment in relation to the effectiveness of the SMS.

5. Governance visibility of safety intelligence

Governance arrangements enable senior management to have visibility of safety-related information necessary to exercise effective oversight, which may include, for example:

- the operator's risk profile and changes to that profile;
- incidents and non-conformances relevant to public;
- the effectiveness of controls used to manage public risks; and
- outcomes of SMS reviews.

6. Reporting culture and protection from reprisal

The operator has arrangements that enable drivers and other personnel to report hazards, risks, incidents and opportunities for improvement. Those arrangements are supported at a senior management level and protect personnel from reprisal when making safety-related reports.

7. Governance enablement and integration

Governance arrangements ensure that resources necessary to establish, implement and maintain the SMS are available. Senior management oversight supports the integration of SMS requirements into the operator's business processes, to the extent necessary to enable effective safety governance and accountability.

8. Governance-level oversight of workforce capability

Senior management have oversight of workforce capability in relation to safety, sufficient to understand:

- what personnel are required to know and do to perform their roles safely; and
- whether systems of work are understood and applied in practice.

1.2 Development and implementation

Develop and implement practical policies and guidance that are tailored to the size, type, nature and complexity of the operator's transport activities to manage and reduce identified public risks.

These policies and procedures are to address relevant regulatory and operational requirements applicable to the operator's transport activities, which may include, where relevant to the operator's transport activities, heavy vehicle standards, mass, dimension and loading requirements, fatigue and fitness to drive requirements, and accreditation requirements, including alternative compliance accreditation.

Description

This measure requires the operator to develop, implement and maintain SMS arrangements that enable the safe conduct of its heavy vehicle transport activities in practice.

For the purposes of this measure, SMS arrangements may include policies, procedures and systems of work, whether standing alone or operating together, and are intended to guide how transport activities and associated roles are performed safely.

The scope and complexity of these arrangements should be proportionate to the size and nature of the operator's business, the range of transport activities undertaken, and the variety of roles involved.

A standalone safety policy that outlines the organisation's understanding of its safety requirements and its commitment to safety may be used to set direction and intent, and is recognised as good practice.

However, the existence of a particular document or artefact is not essential, provided the operator's SMS arrangements collectively perform that function.

Development and implementation of SMS arrangements under this measure must be informed by risk, including an understanding of the hazards and public risks arising from the operator's transport activities and the controls used to eliminate or minimise those risks.

This measure does not prescribe how risks are to be identified, assessed or controlled, but requires that SMS arrangements are designed and implemented in a way that reflects risk-related information generated elsewhere in the system.

Criteria

1. Purpose, scope and proportionality of SMS arrangements

The operator has developed SMS arrangements, which may include policies, procedures and systems of work, that are designed to enable the safe conduct of its heavy vehicle transport activities in practice.

The scope and complexity of those SMS arrangements are proportionate to:

- the size and nature of the operator's business;
- the range of transport activities undertaken; and

- the variety of roles performed.

2. Risk-informed development of SMS arrangements

The development of SMS arrangements is informed by risk, including information about:

- hazards and public risks arising from the operator's transport activities; and
- the controls used to eliminate or minimise those risks.

SMS arrangements reflect how identified controls are intended to be applied in practice, without prescribing specific risk management methodologies.

3. Coverage of transport activities and chain of responsibility functions

SMS arrangements address all heavy vehicle transport activities undertaken by the operator.

SMS arrangements guide how the operator performs its chain of responsibility functions, without transferring or diluting the operator's duties to employees or other parties.

4. Implementation and use in practice

SMS arrangements are implemented and used in practice to guide how work is performed, decisions are made and safety issues are addressed in day-to-day operations.

Personnel are expected to perform their roles in accordance with the SMS arrangements relevant to their activities and responsibilities.

5. Third-party and interface risk management

The development and implementation of SMS arrangements takes account of third-party and interface risks arising where transport activities involve, or are influenced by, other parties.

SMS arrangements support consultation, communication and coordination with relevant parties to enable shared or influenced transport activities to be conducted safely.

6. Empowerment and escalation

SMS arrangements support a safety-first approach, including:

- empowerment of personnel to raise safety concerns and escalate serious safety issues; and
- the ability to stop or pause activities where necessary to address public risks.

7. Regulatory awareness and adaptability

The development and implementation of SMS arrangements is informed by applicable HVNL requirements relevant to the operator's transport activities.

SMS arrangements are capable of being maintained and updated in response to changes in:

- transport activities;
- identified risks; or
- HVNL requirements.

8. Ongoing maintenance and improvement

The operator maintains SMS arrangements so that they remain current, effective and appropriate to its transport activities over time.

1.3 Resource allocation

Allocate and maintain resources appropriate to the nature, scale, complexity and public risks of the operator's transport activities to establish, implement and maintain an effective safety management system. Resources may include employees and personnel under the operator's management or control with responsibilities, authority and capability appropriate to their role in managing public risk.

The operator is to maintain arrangements proportionate to its transport activities, to coordinate and share relevant safety information with other parties in the chain of responsibility.

Description

This measure requires the operator to provide and manage appropriate resources, and to develop organisational safety capability, sufficient to support the effective operation of its SMS and the management of public risks arising from its heavy vehicle transport activities.

For the purposes of this measure, resources may include people, systems, equipment, technology and financial capacity, as relevant to the operator's activities. What constitutes appropriate resourcing will depend on the operator's context, including the size and nature of the business, the scope and complexity of its transport activities, and the associated public risks.

Resource provision under this measure is not a one-off exercise. It requires that the operator's arrangements for identifying, allocating and reviewing resources are integrated into normal business planning and decision-making, and are capable of responding to changes in operations, risks or system requirements over time.

Resources must support not only the safe conduct of transport activities, but also the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of the SMS itself. This includes ensuring access to people with appropriate capability to support safety management functions, recognising that competence is a resourcing consideration rather than a standalone training requirement under this measure.

This measure also recognises that effective safety outcomes are influenced by the operator's organisational safety capability. Safety capability may be demonstrated in different ways depending on the scale and structure of the business, and may be supported through formal programs or less structured practices. Indicators of safety capability include effective communication, empowered personnel, and a willingness to listen, learn, adapt and change in response to safety issues.

Criteria

1. Provision of appropriate resources

The operator provides and manages resources that are appropriate to support the safe conduct of its heavy vehicle transport activities and the effective operation of its SMS.

Resources may include people, systems, equipment, infrastructure, technology and financial capacity, to the extent relevant to the operator's activities and risk profile.

2. Proportionality and context

The nature, scale and formality of resourcing arrangements are proportionate to:

- the size and nature of the operator's business;
- the scope and complexity of its transport activities; and
- the hazards and public risks arising from those activities.

Different approaches to resourcing and safety capability may be used, provided they are effective in managing public risks.

3. Integration with business planning

Arrangements for identifying, allocating and reviewing resources are integrated into the operator's normal business planning and decision-making processes.

Resource needs are capable of being considered on a forward-looking basis and reviewed to ensure resources remain appropriate over time.

4. Resourcing for the SMS lifecycle

Resources are available to support the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of the safety management system, in addition to the safe conduct of day-to-day transport activities.

5. Risk-informed resourcing

Decisions about resourcing are informed by an understanding of the operator's hazards, public risks and the controls used to eliminate or minimise those risks.

The operator recognises that inadequate or inappropriate resourcing may compromise the effectiveness of controls and safety outcomes.

6. Organisational safety capability

The operator demonstrates organisational safety capability through resourcing and practices that support:

- effective communication about safety;
- empowered personnel who can raise safety concerns; and
- the ability to learn, adapt and improve in response to safety issues.

Safety capability may be demonstrated through formal or informal arrangements, depending on the operator's context.

7. Competence as a resourcing consideration

The operator has access to people with appropriate capability to support safety management functions, recognising that competence is a consideration in resourcing rather than a standalone training requirement under this measure.

1.4 Safety culture

Support and reinforce a positive safety culture by implementing and maintaining systems, processes and practices that encourage safe behaviours and effective management of public risk. This includes, without limitation:

- providing opportunities for drivers, executives and other relevant parties in the chain of responsibility to participate in safety-related processes and decision-making;
- establishing arrangements that enable open communication of safety concerns, hazards and improvement opportunities without fear of reprisal; and
- embedding processes that support learning and improvement from incidents, monitoring and review activities.

Description

This measure requires the operator to promote and sustain a positive safety culture that supports the effective management of public risks arising from its heavy vehicle transport activities.

Safety culture is a component of the organisation's overall culture and reflects the shared assumptions, attitudes and behaviours that influence how safety is understood, prioritised and acted upon in practice. It is expressed not through formal statements alone, but through everyday decisions, interactions and responses across the organisation. Safety culture can be observed in what is encouraged, questioned, tolerated or addressed, and in how people behave when faced with safety-related issues.

A positive safety culture is shaped primarily by leadership behaviour. It is influenced by the extent to which leaders visibly demonstrate commitment to safety, engage with safety matters, and reinforce the importance of managing public risk through their actions and decisions. Leadership influence is reflected in how safety is discussed, resourced and responded to, and in the signals that leadership sends about the relative importance of safety in operational and commercial decision-making.

Safety culture is also reflected in the willingness and confidence of drivers and other personnel to raise safety concerns, report hazards, incidents and near misses, and contribute to safety improvement. An effective safety culture supports open communication about safety matters and encourages reporting and

discussion without fear of reprisal. The way the organisation responds to safety information, including how concerns are acknowledged and addressed, is a key indicator of cultural effectiveness.

The expectations under this measure are applied proportionately, having regard to the size, nature and complexity of the operator's transport activities. Demonstration of a positive safety culture does not require formal culture programs, surveys or maturity models. It requires credible evidence that safety is valued, discussed and acted upon in practice, and that the organisation's approach to safety supports ongoing learning and improvement.

Criteria

1. Leadership behaviours that promote safety

Leadership demonstrates, through its actions and engagement, that safety and the management of public risk are valued and prioritised in the organisation's operations.

This is evidenced by leadership behaviours that visibly support safety, reinforce its importance in decision-making, and encourage attention to safety issues in day-to-day activities, rather than by reliance on policy statements alone.

2. Support for open reporting and communication

The organisation supports open communication about safety matters, including the reporting of hazards, incidents, near misses and opportunities for improvement, and ensures that personnel are familiar with and able to use the reporting processes required under the relevant heavy vehicle accreditation.

Drivers and other relevant personnel are encouraged to raise safety concerns and provide feedback, and are able to do so without fear of reprisal. Organisational responses to reported safety issues reinforce trust and confidence in reporting processes.

3. Participation in safety by drivers and relevant parties

Drivers and other relevant personnel, including where appropriate parties in the chain of responsibility, are involved in safety-related discussions or activities that relate to their roles and influence.

Participation is proportionate to the nature of the operator's transport activities and reflects a genuine opportunity for those involved to contribute to the identification of issues and improvement of safety outcomes.

4. Shared awareness of public risks and issues

Safety-relevant information is gathered, shared and discussed in a manner that supports a shared understanding of public risks and issues within the organisation.

The organisation demonstrates that safety information arising from operations, incidents, near misses or feedback is used to inform awareness and decision-making, rather than being collected or communicated in isolation.

5. **Vigilance to emerging public risks**

The organisation demonstrates attentiveness to emerging public risks and early warning signs arising from its transport activities.

Potential issues are recognised and considered before they escalate into more serious safety events, and are treated as indicators of how systems or practices may need to be strengthened.

6. **Learning and continuous improvement orientation**

The organisation demonstrates a willingness to learn from experience, including incidents, near misses and operational feedback, and to use that learning to improve safety practices and controls.

Learning outcomes are reflected in changes to behaviours, practices or systems where appropriate, supporting ongoing improvement in the management of public risk.

2. Risk Management

Interpretive Note: Risk management processes under this Standard are to be applied in a manner proportionate to the nature and level of public risk arising from the operator's transport activities.

2.1 Hazard identification

Implement processes proportionate to the nature and public risks of the operator's transport activities to identify hazards arising from those activities and from the driving of heavy vehicles.

Description

This measure requires the operator to identify hazards that may give rise to public risks associated with its heavy vehicle transport activities.

Hazard identification is the starting point for effective risk management. It involves recognising sources of potential harm arising from how transport activities are planned, organised and carried out, rather than assessing the likelihood or severity of harm or determining how risks are controlled. The focus of this measure is on identifying what could cause harm, not on evaluating or treating risk.

Hazards may arise from a wide range of sources, including physical conditions, vehicles, equipment and loads, as well as from behaviours, practices, policies, procedures and systems of work. Hazard identification is not limited to the operator's internal activities and must take into account hazards arising from interactions with other parties in the chain of responsibility, as well as the practices of others that may affect the operator's ability to operate safely.

Hazard identification is an ongoing and proactive activity. It is undertaken during normal operations and informed by observation, experience and information arising from day-to-day work. It is not confined to periodic reviews or formal exercises, but forms part of how the organisation maintains awareness of potential sources of harm.

Hazard identification is particularly important when circumstances change in ways that may affect safety. This includes changes to organisational arrangements, personnel, routes, contracts, equipment, vehicles, operating environments, processes or procedures. Such changes prompt consideration of whether new hazards may be introduced or existing hazards altered.

The identification of hazards may be informed by a range of sources, including workforce input, operational experience, incidents and near misses, inspections, observations and review of available information.

This measure does not require the use of specific methods, tools or registers. The approach adopted by the operator should be proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create.

Criteria

1. Identification of hazards arising from transport activities

The operator identifies hazards arising from its heavy vehicle transport activities, having regard to how work is planned, organised and performed in practice. Hazard identification extends beyond abstract descriptions of operations and reflects the realities of how transport activities are actually carried out.

2. Identification of physical, behavioural and systemic hazards

The operator identifies hazards arising from a range of sources, which may include physical conditions, vehicles, equipment and loads, as well as behaviours, practices, policies, procedures or systems of work that have the potential to cause harm. Hazard identification is not limited to visible or obvious physical hazards.

3. Consideration of interface and third-party hazards

The operator identifies hazards arising from interactions with other parties in the chain of responsibility and from the practices of other parties that may affect the safe conduct of its transport activities. This includes consideration of hazards that arise beyond the operator's direct control but that may influence public risk.

4. Ongoing and proactive hazard identification

The operator demonstrates that hazard identification is undertaken on an ongoing and proactive basis, rather than only in response to incidents, non-conformances or external prompts.

5. Hazard identification in response to change

The operator identifies hazards when changes occur that have the potential to affect safe operations, including changes to organisational arrangements, personnel, routes, contracts, equipment, vehicles, operating environments, processes or procedures.

6. Use of experience and information to identify hazards

The operator uses information arising from operational experience, incidents, near misses, observations or other relevant sources to inform the identification of hazards. The emphasis is on using available information to recognise potential sources of harm, rather than on formal investigation or review processes.

2.2 Risk assessment

Assess identified risks in a manner proportionate to their nature and potential impact, having regard to their likelihood and consequences.

Description

This measure requires the operator to assess and prioritise risks arising from identified hazards associated with its heavy vehicle transport activities.

Risk assessment under this measure involves characterising and comparing risks in order to understand their relative seriousness and to inform decisions about priority and timing of action. It focuses on the potential outcomes that could result from a hazard, the likelihood of those outcomes occurring, and the severity of the harm or loss that could arise. The purpose of this measure is to support informed judgment about which risks require earlier or greater attention, not to prescribe specific assessment techniques or tools.

Risk assessment is undertaken in the context of the operator's actual operating environment. The same hazard may present different levels of risk depending on factors such as the nature of the activity, operating conditions, interfaces with other parties, and the environment in which transport operations occur. Risk assessment therefore reflects the circumstances in which transport activities are performed, rather than relying on generic or abstract classifications.

Risk assessment may also take into account the presence of existing controls when characterising current risk exposure. This consideration is limited to understanding how risks are currently managed and does not involve formal testing or evaluation of control effectiveness, which is addressed elsewhere in the Standard.

Risk assessment supports the prioritisation of risk management activity. By comparing risks across different hazards and activities, the operator is able to determine the order in which risks should be addressed and the relative urgency of action. Where relevant, risk assessment may recognise that hazards can interact or compound, increasing the level of public risk.

The approach to risk assessment and prioritisation is applied proportionately, having regard to the size, nature and complexity of the operator's transport activities and the level of public risk they create. This measure does not require the use of formal risk matrices, scoring systems or registers. The operator may use qualitative, comparative or other approaches where they provide a credible basis for understanding and prioritising risk.

Criteria

1. Assessment of risks arising from identified hazards

The operator assesses risks arising from hazards identified under measure 2.1. Risk assessment occurs after hazard identification and is clearly distinguished from the identification of hazards themselves.

2. **Characterisation of risk to support comparison**

The operator characterises risks in a manner that enables meaningful comparison between different risks. This may include consideration of potential outcomes, likelihood and severity of harm or loss, without prescribing the use of specific assessment tools or scales.

3. **Prioritisation of risks**

The operator uses risk assessment outcomes to prioritise risks and to inform decisions about the order and urgency with which risks are to be addressed. Prioritisation reflects the relative seriousness of risks rather than their ease of management or administrative convenience.

4. **Context-specific risk assessment**

The operator's assessment of risk reflects the context in which transport activities are undertaken, including operating conditions, environments and interfaces relevant to those activities.

The same hazard may be assessed as presenting different levels of risk in different circumstances.

5. **Consideration of interacting or compounding risks**

Where relevant, the operator considers whether hazards or risks may interact or compound in a way that increases public risk, and reflects this in risk prioritisation.

6. **Consideration of existing controls in assessing current risk**

The operator takes into account the presence of existing controls when assessing current risk exposure, to the extent necessary to understand how risks are presently managed. This does not require formal evaluation or testing of control effectiveness.

2.3 Risk controls

Implement risk controls, proportionate to the level of risk, to eliminate or minimise public risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Description

This measure requires the operator to select and apply controls to address risks that have been assessed and prioritised under measure 2.2 (Risk Assessment).

Risk controls are measures used to eliminate public risks so far as is reasonably practicable, or where elimination is not reasonably practicable, to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Control selection under this measure focuses on choosing measures that are effective in reducing risk in

the operator's actual operating context, rather than adopting controls in the abstract or by reference to generic lists.

Controls may take a range of forms and may relate to equipment, vehicles, loads, scheduling, procedures, resourcing, roles or the way work is organised and performed. In many cases, a combination of controls may be required to manage a risk effectively. Where multiple controls are used, they operate together to achieve the intended safety outcome.

Where controls do not adequately address a risk, the operator considers alternative or additional controls to achieve the intended level of risk reduction. This measure does not prescribe how the adequacy of controls is to be monitored or reviewed, which is addressed elsewhere in the Standard.

The approach to selecting and applying controls is proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of the operator's transport activities and the level of public risk they create. This measure does not require the use of controls recommended in any code or standard, nor does it mandate the use of particular control hierarchies, tools or documentation.

Criteria

1. Controls selected to eliminate or minimise risk

The operator selects controls to eliminate risks so far as is reasonably practicable, or where elimination is not reasonably practicable, to minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

2. Controls are appropriate to the assessed risk

Controls selected by the operator are appropriate to the nature and level of the risk being addressed and are capable of achieving the intended safety outcome.

3. Controls are suitable for the operator's operating context

The operator selects controls that are suitable for its operating environment, activities, interfaces and conditions, rather than relying on generic or assumed solutions.

4. Use of combined or layered controls where necessary

Where a single control is not sufficient to manage a risk effectively, the operator uses a combination of controls to achieve effective risk reduction.

5. Controls are applied in practice

The operator applies selected controls in day-to-day operations, such that they are implemented and used as intended rather than existing only in documentation or planning.

6. Controls are supported so they can function as intended

The operator provides the necessary support for controls to operate effectively, which may include communication, access to information, coordination with other parties or allocation of appropriate resources.

7. **Adaptation where controls are inadequate**

Where controls do not adequately manage a risk, the operator considers and implements alternative or additional controls to achieve the intended level of risk reduction.

2.4 **Incident management**

Implement arrangements to report, record and respond to incidents and near misses that cause, or have the potential to cause, injury or harm, in a manner proportionate to their seriousness and risk. These arrangements are to support investigation, corrective action and recovery, and ensure that corrective actions are implemented and monitored where appropriate

Description

This measure requires the operator to respond to, investigate and learn from incidents, near misses, hazards and non-conformances associated with its transport activities.

Incidents, near misses and other issues provide important information about how risks are manifesting in practice and whether existing controls are operating as intended. The purpose of this measure is to ensure that such events are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that learning from them is used to prevent recurrence and improve the management of public risk.

When an incident, near miss, hazard or non-conformance is reported or identified, the operator responds in a manner proportionate to the seriousness and potential consequences of the event. This may include taking action to address immediate risks or consequences, where applicable, while ensuring that the underlying causes are examined.

Investigation under this measure is focused on understanding what happened, how it happened and why it happened. Investigations seek to identify contributing factors and systemic issues, including where relevant the role of human factors, work practices, equipment, procedures or interfaces with other parties. The emphasis is on learning and prevention rather than attributing blame.

The operator's approach to incident and non-conformance management is proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create. This measure does not prescribe specific investigation methods, timeframes, documentation requirements or reporting systems.

Criteria

1. **Response to incidents, near misses, hazards and non-conformances**

The operator responds to reported or identified incidents, near misses, hazards and non-conformances in a timely manner appropriate to their seriousness and potential consequences.

2. **Appropriate initial management of consequences**

Where relevant, the operator takes action to manage immediate risks or consequences arising from an incident or non-conformance, while ensuring that longer-term causes are addressed through investigation.

3. **Investigation undertaken to understand causes and contributors**

The operator investigates incidents, near misses and non-conformances to understand what happened, how it happened and why it happened. Investigations focus on identifying contributing factors and underlying causes rather than attributing blame.

4. **Consideration of systemic and contributing factors**

The operator's investigations consider whether systemic issues, work practices, equipment, procedures, human factors or interfaces with other parties contributed to the event.

5. **Identification and implementation of corrective actions**

The operator identifies and implements corrective actions aimed at preventing recurrence of incidents or non-conformances or their occurrence elsewhere. Corrective actions are directed at addressing underlying causes rather than solely addressing immediate symptoms.

6. **Communication of findings and learning**

The operator communicates relevant findings, outcomes and lessons learned from incidents and investigations so that they can be understood and applied by those affected in day-to-day operations.

2.5 Ongoing risk management

Evaluate the effectiveness of risk controls and review and update them in response to relevant triggers, such as incidents, changes in operations, emerging risks, or planned periodic review.

Description

This measure requires the operator to manage risk on an ongoing basis, recognising that risk management is not a one-off activity and does not end once controls have been selected and applied.

The management of public risk requires continued awareness of whether identified risks, risk priorities and risk controls remain appropriate as operations continue and circumstances change. Over time, changes in operating conditions, environments, interfaces, activities or information may affect the nature of risks or the suitability of existing controls.

Ongoing risk management involves remaining responsive to such changes and to information arising from day-to-day operations, experience, incidents, near misses and issues. This measure establishes the

expectation that this information is taken into account in maintaining effective risk management arrangements.

Where risks change, new risks emerge, or existing controls are no longer appropriate or sufficient, the operator adjusts its risk management arrangements as necessary. This may include reconsidering risk priorities or modifying controls so that public risk continues to be eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

This measure does not prescribe how risk monitoring or review is to be undertaken, nor does it require specific monitoring techniques, review cycles, performance measures or documentation. Detailed requirements relating to monitoring, review and assurance are addressed elsewhere in the Standard.

The operator's approach to ongoing risk management is proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create, allowing flexibility in how ongoing awareness and responsiveness are achieved.

Criteria

1. Risk management is ongoing

The operator recognises that risk management is an ongoing activity and does not end once risks have been assessed or controls have been implemented.

2. Continued awareness of risk and control suitability

The operator maintains awareness of whether identified risks, risk priorities and risk controls remain appropriate as operations continue.

3. Responsiveness to change and new information

The operator takes account of changes in operations, operating conditions, environments or interfaces, as well as new information arising from experience, incidents, near misses or issues, in maintaining effective risk management.

4. Adjustment of risk management arrangements where required

Where risks change, new risks emerge, or existing controls are no longer suitable or sufficient, the operator adjusts its risk management arrangements as necessary to manage public risk.

5. Integration with other risk management requirements

The operator's ongoing management of risk is informed by, and integrated with, hazard identification, risk assessment, control application and incident learning activities undertaken under this Standard.

3. People

Interpretive Note: People-related requirements under this Standard are to be applied in a manner proportionate to the nature and public risks of the operator's transport activities.

3.1. Fitness to drive

Implement mechanisms to support confirmation that drivers are appropriately licensed, and fit to perform safety-related tasks, having regard to physical and mental health, fatigue and impairment due to alcohol or drugs.

These mechanisms are to include arrangements that support drivers to disclose relevant conditions or circumstances without fear of reprisal, consistent with applicable privacy and employment obligations.

Description

The operator must have mechanisms in place to confirm that each driver is appropriately licensed and fit to drive at the time they are required to perform safety-related tasks. Fitness to drive includes a driver's physical and mental health, fatigue, and impairment due to fatigue, alcohol or drugs. The operator's mechanisms must be designed and implemented so that fitness issues are identified early, communicated effectively, and responded to in a way that prevents unsafe driving.

This requirement is applied proportionately to the size, type, nature, and complexity of the operator's transport activities. Evidence should demonstrate not only that the mechanisms exist, but that they are implemented and are capable of operating effectively in the operator's day-to-day context

Criteria

1. **Licensing verification is embedded in operational practice**

The operator has a defined mechanism to confirm that drivers performing safety-related tasks hold the appropriate licence for the relevant vehicle class and task, and that this mechanism is used in practice (including for new drivers, relief drivers, casual drivers, and changing duties where relevant). □

2. **Fitness-to-drive expectations are clearly defined and operationally usable**

The operator has articulated fitness-to-drive expectations that are practical and understandable for drivers and relevant personnel, covering fitness impacts from physical and mental health, fatigue, and impairment due to alcohol or drugs. The expectations are expressed in a way that enables decision-making at the point of work, rather than being merely aspirational or generic. □ □

3. **Drivers are empowered to stop work when unfit, and the system supports that decision**

The operator can demonstrate that drivers are empowered to cease driving (or not commence driving) when they consider themselves unfit, and that the operator's system supports this outcome. This includes

evidence that reporting pathways are available, that drivers understand the pathways, and that there are practical response options that do not penalise safety reporting. □ □

4. **Non-reprisal is made real through process design and management behaviour**

The operator has measures that protect drivers and relevant personnel from reprisal when reporting fitness concerns or making fitness-related driving decisions, and those measures are integrated into the way reports are received, recorded (where appropriate), escalated, and actioned. Evidence should indicate that the system encourages early disclosure and does not create barriers to reporting. □ □

5. **A defined escalation and response process exists for suspected unfitness**

The operator has a defined escalation pathway for circumstances where a driver is identified as potentially unfit to drive (including self-identification and identification by supervisors or other relevant parties). The process defines how concerns are raised, who makes decisions, what interim controls may apply, and how the outcome is implemented so that unsafe driving is prevented. □ □

6. **Practical contingency capability exists to prevent unsafe driving**

The operator can demonstrate that it has practical contingency arrangements to manage situations where a driver is unfit to drive or becomes unfit. Depending on operational context, this may include substitution by another driver, rescheduling, reassignment of tasks, or other measures that ensure the transport activity is not conducted in an unsafe manner. The focus is on capability and execution, not on any single mandated method. □ □

7. **Relevant personnel can recognise and act on indicators of unfitness**

The operator can demonstrate that personnel with relevant responsibilities (for example, supervisors or those responsible for scheduling decisions) are capable of recognising indicators that a driver may be unfit to drive and are capable of initiating the escalation and response process. Evidence may include guidance material, briefing content, or operational records that show the system is used and understood.

8. **Where third-party observations are relevant, reporting pathways exist and are workable**

Where the operator's operations involve interaction with other parties who may observe fitness-to-drive issues (for example, at customer sites or partner locations), the operator has a mechanism for those parties to report concerns promptly and for the operator to respond. This criterion is applied only to the extent it is relevant to the operator's operational model and risk context. □

9. **Confidentiality and appropriate handling of health-related information is addressed at a system level**

Where the operator collects, relies on, or stores information about a driver's health or fitness for the purpose of managing safety, the operator has high-level arrangements that support confidentiality, appropriate access, secure handling, and appropriate use for safety decisions. The intent is to demonstrate that the system can operate safely while treating sensitive information appropriately, without requiring disclosure of medical detail beyond what is necessary for safe operational decisions. □

10. **Review and improvement triggers exist for the fitness-to-drive mechanism**

The operator can demonstrate that it reviews the effectiveness of its fitness-to-drive mechanisms when there are relevant triggers (for example, repeated self-reporting events, incidents or near misses involving fatigue or impairment indicators, or feedback indicating reporting barriers), and that it takes corrective or improvement action where required

3.2. Training and competency

Implement and maintain training and competency arrangements to ensure personnel are aware of their safety-related obligations and competent to discharge them safely, having regard to their role, responsibilities and the risks associated with the operator's transport activities.

Training is to be provided at induction and as required in response to changes in role, operations, identified risks or incidents.

Description

This measure requires the operator to ensure that workers have the training, knowledge, skills and competence necessary to perform their roles safely and to contribute effectively to the management of public risk.

Training and competency are fundamental to the effective operation of the SMS. Workers at all levels, including those performing operational, supervisory and administrative functions, can influence safety outcomes through their decisions, actions and inactions. Accordingly, training is directed toward enabling workers to carry out their roles in a manner that manages hazards and risks associated with the operator's transport activities.

Training is not limited to initial instruction. It includes induction to roles and work practices, refresher training to maintain competence, and reactive training where changes occur or where experience, incidents, near misses or issues indicate a need to reinforce or develop skills and understanding. Where workers are new to a role, task, vehicle, equipment or operating environment, appropriate supervision and support are provided to assist them in developing and applying the required competence.

Workers are provided with sufficient awareness and understanding of the SMS as it relates to their role, including how their work contributes to the management of risk and the application of relevant controls. This awareness is functional and role-specific, supporting safe task performance rather than requiring detailed system-level knowledge.

The operator's approach to training and competency is proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create. This measure does not prescribe particular training programs, delivery methods, assessment techniques or record-keeping arrangements.

Criteria

1. Role-based competence requirements

The operator identifies the training, knowledge and competence required for different roles, taking into account the nature of the work performed, the operating environment, the equipment and systems used, and interactions with other parties.

2. Training aligned to managing public risk

Training and instruction provided to workers are directed toward managing hazards and risks associated with the operator's transport activities and the level of public risk those activities create.

3. Induction and role-specific instruction

Workers receive appropriate induction and role-specific training when commencing new roles, tasks, vehicles, equipment or operating environments, enabling them to perform their work safely in the operator's context.

4. Maintenance and development of competence

The operator provides refresher or additional training where necessary to maintain competence over time, including where work practices, equipment, environments or risk profiles change.

5. Reactive training informed by experience and events

The operator identifies and provides training where experience, incidents, near misses or issues indicate that additional skills, knowledge or understanding are required to manage risk effectively.

6. Supervision and support for developing competence

Where workers are inexperienced or developing competence, the operator provides appropriate supervision, guidance or support to enable safe performance of tasks.

7. Functional SMS awareness relevant to role

Workers have sufficient awareness and understanding of the SMS as it relates to their role, including how their work contributes to managing risk and applying relevant controls (for example, through the giving of actionable feedback).

8. Competence demonstrated in practice

The operator ensures that roles requiring specific licences, qualifications or experience are filled by personnel who hold and maintain those credentials. The operator does not treat formal qualifications alone as sufficient evidence of suitability, and verifies, where practicable, that personnel can competently apply their knowledge and skills in practice. All other roles are filled by personnel who are competent to perform the duties required.

3.3 Communication

Communicate safety-related expectations, requirements, and changes relevant to the operation of the safety management system clearly and effectively to affected personnel.

Description

This measure requires the operator to have communication mechanisms that enable the timely, accurate and two-way exchange of safety-related information necessary to manage public risk.

Effective communication supports safe operations by ensuring that workers and other relevant persons have access to the information they need to recognise hazards, understand applicable controls, and respond appropriately to public risks as they arise. Communication is directed toward operational use, not the creation of formal systems or artefacts.

The operator's communication mechanisms enable information to flow in multiple directions, including top-down, bottom-up and between workers. They provide practical avenues for questions, feedback and the raising of safety concerns, and support early identification and escalation of issues that may affect safe operations.

Safety-critical information is prioritised and communicated in a manner that supports timely understanding and action. This includes information arising from within the operator's activities and, where relevant, from external sources that may affect how work is performed safely.

Where changes occur that affect the way work is carried out or risks are managed, the operator communicates what has changed, why the change has occurred, and what it means for those affected. Communication is targeted and relevant to the work context, avoiding unnecessary complexity or information overload.

Communication mechanisms are designed so that information is accessible to workers at the time and place it is needed, taking into account the operator's operating environment, work locations and workforce characteristics. This measure does not prescribe particular communication channels, processes, frequencies or records.

The operator applies this measure in a manner proportional to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create. Evidence should demonstrate that communication mechanisms are implemented and are capable of operating effectively in the operator's day-to-day context.

Criteria

1. Communication mechanisms support the management of public risks

The operator has communication mechanisms that provide workers and other relevant persons with the safety-related information they need to identify hazards, understand applicable controls, and manage risks associated with the operator's transport activities.

2. **Communication is two-way and enables feedback and escalation**

The operator's communication mechanisms enable information to flow in multiple directions, including from management to workers, from workers to management, and between workers, and provide practical avenues for questions, feedback and the raising of safety concerns.

3. **Safety-critical information is prioritised and clearly communicated**

The operator ensures that information which is safety-critical is identified, given appropriate priority and prominence, and communicated in a manner that supports timely understanding and action by those affected.

4. **Communication reaches the right people at the right time**

The operator communicates safety-related information to the people who need it, when they need it, and in a form that is relevant to the work being performed, so that information can be acted on in practice.

5. **Changes affecting safe work are communicated clearly**

Where changes occur that affect how work is performed safely or how risks are managed, the operator communicates what has changed, why the change has occurred, and what the change means for those affected.

6. **Communication mechanisms are accessible in the work context**

The operator's communication mechanisms are accessible and usable in the operator's operating environment, taking into account factors such as dispersed or mobile workforces, different work locations, and workforce characteristics that may affect how information is received and understood.

7. **Communication supports early identification of issues**

The operator can demonstrate that its communication mechanisms support the early identification and escalation of safety issues, rather than relying on issues being identified only after incidents or failures occur.

4. Assurance, Monitoring and Improvement

4.1. Performance targets and indicators

Establish safety performance objectives and appropriate indicators to monitor progress toward achieving them, having regard to the nature and public risks of the operator's transport activities.

Description

This measure requires the operator to establish and use performance targets and indicators that provide meaningful insight into whether the SMS, and the controls relied upon within it, are operating as intended to manage public risk.

Performance targets and indicators support assurance by enabling the operator to understand how safety-related activities and controls are performing in practice, and whether emerging issues can be identified before they result in incidents or harm. They are informed by the operator's understanding of its hazards, risks and critical controls, and are selected to focus attention on matters that are significant to public risks.

Performance targets and indicators are designed to be sensible, relevant and timely, so that performance information can be used to inform oversight and decision-making. The form and sophistication of indicators are not prescribed and may vary depending on the operator's operating context, available information and level of risk.

This measure does not require the adoption of specific metrics, benchmarks, thresholds or key performance indicators, nor does it prescribe how performance information is monitored, analysed, reported or acted upon. Those matters are addressed in subsequent requirements of this Standard.

The operator applies this measure in a manner proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create. Evidence should demonstrate that performance targets and indicators are defined and used in practice to support an understanding of safety performance, rather than existing solely as notional or administrative measures.

Criteria

1. Relevant aspects of safety performance are identified

The operator has identified aspects of safety performance that are relevant to its transport activities and that provide insight into whether hazards and risks are being effectively managed.

2. Performance targets or reference points are defined

The operator has defined performance targets, criteria or reference points that provide a basis for understanding whether safety performance is acceptable, improving or deteriorating, having regard to the nature of its operations and risks.

3. **Indicators are linked to risk and control effectiveness**

The operator's performance indicators are informed by its understanding of hazards, risks and critical controls, and are selected to provide insight into whether controls are implemented consistently and are operating as intended.

4. **Indicators provide meaningful and usable information**

The operator can demonstrate that its performance indicators provide useful information that supports oversight and decision-making, rather than relying solely on measures that do not meaningfully reflect risk or control performance.

5. **Appropriate use of leading and lagging information**

The operator uses leading indicators, lagging indicators, or a combination of both, as appropriate to its operating context, and does not rely exclusively on outcome measures where those measures are insufficient to identify emerging issues.

6. **Indicators are timely in relation to risk**

The operator's performance indicators are capable of being assessed at a point in time that allows emerging safety issues to be identified and considered before they result in incidents or harm.

7. **Indicators are proportionate and practicable**

The scope, number and sophistication of the operator's performance targets and indicators are proportionate to the size, nature and complexity of its transport activities and the level of public risk they create, and do not impose unnecessary administrative burden.

8. **Performance targets and indicators are used in practice**

The operator can demonstrate that performance targets and indicators are used to inform its understanding of safety performance in practice, rather than existing only as notional, static or purely administrative measures.

4.2 Monitor and review

Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of safety measures and implementation of the safety management system, to determine whether those measures are achieving their intended safety outcomes.

Description

The operator must have arrangements in place to monitor and review the effectiveness of its SMS and the risk controls implemented under it. Monitoring and review are used to confirm that risks are being managed as intended, that controls remain suitable and effective in practice, and that emerging or increasing risks are identified before they result in harm.

This requirement is concerned with obtaining reliable insight into system and control performance. It does not prescribe specific monitoring methods, review tools, or documentation formats, nor does it require particular outcomes following review. Evidence should demonstrate that monitoring and review are established, used in practice, and capable of informing timely and appropriate consideration of public risks

Criteria

1. Monitoring arrangements focus on the effectiveness of risk controls

The operator has arrangements in place to monitor whether risk controls and key system requirements are being implemented and are operating effectively in practice, rather than relying solely on high-level or outcome-based measures.

2. Monitoring is informed by known risks and control measures

The matters monitored are derived from the operator's identified hazards, risks, and control measures, such that monitoring activities are targeted at areas where failure, degradation, or inconsistency would materially affect safety outcomes.

3. Multiple sources of information are used to inform monitoring

The operator draws on a combination of relevant information sources to inform monitoring, which may include operational records, observations, feedback from personnel, incident or near-miss information, or other data that provides insight into how controls and systems are functioning.

4. Monitoring arrangements are capable of identifying change or emerging risk

The operator's monitoring arrangements are capable of detecting indicators of change, drift, or emerging risk, including patterns or trends that suggest increasing risk or reduced effectiveness of controls, before serious incidents occur.

5. Defined triggers exist for initiating review

The operator has identified circumstances that trigger a review of risks and controls, such as incidents, near misses, control failures, concerns raised by personnel, significant changes to operations, or the availability of new information relevant to safety.

6. Periodic review is undertaken at a frequency proportionate to risk

In addition to event-driven review, the operator undertakes periodic review of risks and controls at intervals that are commensurate with the level of risk, recognising that higher-risk activities require more frequent or more detailed review.

7. **Reviews examine both risk assessments and control effectiveness**

When reviews are undertaken, the operator considers whether risk assessments remain accurate and whether existing control measures continue to be suitable and effective, having regard to changes in operations, environment, or knowledge.

8. **Review considers whether control decisions remain appropriate**

The operator's review process includes consideration of whether previously adopted or rejected control measures remain appropriate in light of current circumstances, without presuming that change is always required.

9. **Monitoring and review arrangements operate in practice**

The operator can demonstrate that monitoring and review arrangements are used in practice and are capable of informing timely consideration of public risks, rather than existing only as documented or notional processes.

4.3. Continuous Improvement

Use information from monitoring, audits and incident reviews to identify opportunities for improvement and to implement changes to the safety management system where appropriate.

Continuous improvement is to be achieved through planned, risk-based review and improvement activities, including in response to incidents, changes in operations or emerging risks.

Description

The operator must have arrangements in place to improve its SMS and risk controls where information indicates that they are not achieving their intended safety outcomes or are no longer suitable for the operator's current risk profile. Improvement and corrective action are undertaken to address identified weaknesses, prevent recurrence of issues, and ensure the SMS remains effective and relevant over time.

This requirement does not prescribe specific improvement methodologies, corrective action techniques, or investigation tools, nor does it require continuous or ongoing change in the absence of identified need. Evidence should demonstrate that the operator's arrangements enable informed, timely, and proportionate improvement and corrective action in response to identified safety issues.

Criteria

1. Information is used to determine whether improvement or corrective action is required

The operator has arrangements that enable information from monitoring, review, investigations, audits, or other assurance activities to be considered in determining whether improvement or corrective action is necessary.

2. Decisions to act are risk-based and proportionate

Where improvement or corrective action is undertaken, the decision to act and the nature of the action taken are informed by the level of risk and the significance of the issue identified, rather than applied automatically or uniformly.

3. Corrective actions address underlying causes

The operator's corrective actions are directed at addressing the underlying causes of identified issues or control failures, rather than only treating symptoms or immediate effects.

4. Improvement actions are appropriately targeted

Improvement actions are selected and implemented in a way that is relevant to the issue identified and may involve changes to controls, procedures, systems, resourcing, competence, or other aspects of the SMS, as appropriate to the context.

5. Improvement and corrective actions are implemented in practice

The operator can demonstrate that improvement and corrective actions decided upon are implemented as intended, rather than remaining at the level of plans, recommendations, or unresolved findings.

6. The effectiveness of actions taken is considered

Where improvement or corrective action is implemented, the operator has a mechanism to consider whether the action taken has been effective in addressing the issue and improving safety outcomes or control performance.

7. Learning is captured and applied across the SMS

The operator's arrangements support learning from identified issues, corrective actions, and improvement activities, and enable relevant lessons to be applied more broadly within the SMS to prevent recurrence or emergence elsewhere.

8. Improvement arrangements support ongoing SMS suitability

The operator can demonstrate that its improvement and corrective action arrangements contribute to maintaining the SMS as suitable, effective, and relevant as risks, operations, and knowledge change over time.

4.4. Evidence

Assurance, monitoring and improvement activities under this Standard are to be applied in a manner proportionate to the nature and level of public risk arising from the operator's transport activities. Maintain evidence sufficient to demonstrate the effective operation of the safety management system and compliance with this Standard.

Description

The operator must maintain sufficient evidence to demonstrate the effective operation of its SMS and to support assurance that public risks are being managed as intended. Evidence serves to substantiate that the SMS is implemented in practice, is used to inform decision-making, and is capable of achieving its stated safety purpose.

Evidence may be drawn from information generated through the operation of the SMS, including material arising from monitoring, review, improvement, investigations, or other assurance-related activities. The form of evidence is not prescribed and may include records, data, reports, or other material that credibly demonstrates how the SMS functions in the operator's day-to-day context.

The nature, extent, and form of evidence maintained are proportionate to the size, complexity, and risk profile of the operator's transport activities. The focus is on maintaining evidence that is sufficient to support confidence in the effectiveness of the SMS, rather than on comprehensive documentation of every activity or decision.

This requirement does not require specific document types, record formats, or retention periods, nor does it impose additional monitoring, review, or improvement obligations. Evidence is required to demonstrate outcomes and effective operation, not to establish parallel record-keeping systems. Evidence should be capable of supporting assurance and accountability in relation to the SMS, without creating unnecessary administrative burden.

Criteria

1. Evidence is sufficient to demonstrate effective operation of the SMS

The operator maintains evidence that is sufficient to demonstrate that the SMS is implemented and operating effectively in practice, rather than existing only as a documented framework.

2. Evidence reflects actual SMS activities and outcomes

The evidence maintained by the operator reflects how the SMS functions in day-to-day operations, including how public risks are identified, managed, monitored, and improved over time.

3. Evidence supports informed safety decision-making

The operator can demonstrate that evidence generated through the SMS is used to inform safety-related decisions, including decisions arising from monitoring, review, investigations, or improvement activities.

4. **Evidence demonstrates follow-through on identified issues**

Where issues, deficiencies, or opportunities for improvement are identified through SMS activities, the operator maintains evidence showing that appropriate actions are taken and tracked to completion.

5. **Evidence is accessible and understandable to relevant decision-makers**

The operator maintains evidence in a form that can be accessed and understood by those with safety responsibilities, enabling assurance, oversight, and accountability.

6. **Evidence supports confidence in ongoing SMS effectiveness**

Taken as a whole, the evidence maintained by the operator is capable of supporting reasonable confidence that the SMS is functioning as intended and contributing to the management of public risks over time.

5. Safety Systems

5.1. System integration

The safety management system is to operate as an integrated system across the organisation and within day-to-day transport operations.

Description

This Standard requires that the operator's SMS functions as an integrated, organisation-wide system that is embedded into the way transport activities are planned, conducted, and reviewed. The SMS must operate as a practical framework for managing public risks through everyday business decisions, rather than existing as a separate or parallel set of processes.

An integrated SMS aligns safety responsibilities, processes, and information flows across the organisation, enabling consistent and coordinated risk-based decision-making at all levels. This includes integration across operational, supervisory, and management functions, and, where relevant, coordination with contractors and other parties in the Chain of Responsibility whose activities may affect safety outcomes.

The form and complexity of integration are not prescribed. The resources applied to the SMS, and the mechanisms used to integrate it into operations, are scaled to the size, nature, and complexity of the operator's transport activities. The focus is on whether the SMS operates coherently in practice and shapes operational behaviour and decisions, rather than on any particular organisational model or documentation structure.

Criteria

1. **The SMS is integrated into operational decision-making**

The operator can demonstrate that the SMS actively informs how transport activities are planned, prioritised, and conducted, including decisions made at frontline, supervisory, and management levels.

2. **Safety responsibilities are aligned across the organisation**

Safety roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities arising from the SMS are clearly aligned across relevant business functions and levels, enabling coordinated management of public risks rather than fragmented or siloed approaches.

3. **SMS processes operate coherently in practice**

The operator can demonstrate that SMS processes (such as risk management, communication, monitoring, and improvement) operate as a coordinated system in practice, rather than as disconnected or standalone activities.

4. Information flows support timely risk-based action

Safety information generated through the SMS is communicated through appropriate channels so that it reaches relevant decision-makers in time to inform actions that manage or mitigate public risks.

5. Interfaces with other parties are managed through the SMS where relevant

Where the operator's activities involve contractors or other parties in the Chain of Responsibility, the operator can demonstrate that SMS arrangements support coordination and management of shared or interfacing public risks.

6. The SMS influences how work is organised and resourced

The operator can demonstrate that safety considerations arising from the SMS influence how work is organised, resources are allocated, and changes are implemented, rather than being considered only after operational decisions are made.

7. Integration arrangements are proportionate and fit for purpose

The extent and form of SMS integration are scaled to the size, nature, and complexity of the operator's transport activities, focusing on effective risk management outcomes rather than adherence to a prescribed organisational model.

8. The SMS operates as a single, organisation-wide system

Taken as a whole, the operator's arrangements demonstrate that the SMS functions as an organisation-wide system that shapes behaviour and decisions in practice, rather than as a collection of parallel or purely documentary processes.

5.2. System coordination

Ensure the safety management system provides for coordination of safety-related activities across the organisation, with responsibilities and accountabilities defined to the extent necessary to manage public risk effectively.

Description

This requirement requires that the SMS provides for effective coordination of safety-related activities across the organisation. The purpose of coordination is to ensure that safety responsibilities, actions, and decisions are aligned and mutually reinforcing, so that public risk is managed coherently rather than through fragmented or siloed efforts.

System coordination is concerned with how different parts of the organisation work together on safety matters. This includes how responsibilities and accountabilities are defined, how safety activities are

aligned across functions and roles, and how safety-related decisions are coordinated where multiple areas of the business contribute to a shared risk.

The requirement does not prescribe an organisational structure, governance model, or coordination mechanism. Coordination arrangements are expected to be proportionate to the size, nature, and complexity of the operator's transport activities, and sufficient to ensure that public risks are managed effectively in practice.

Criteria

1. Safety responsibilities are defined to support coordination

The operator has defined safety-related responsibilities and accountabilities to the extent necessary to support coordinated management of public risk across relevant parts of the organisation.

2. Safety-related activities are coordinated where risks span roles or functions

Where public risks or controls involve multiple roles, teams, or functions, the operator can demonstrate that activities are coordinated so that responsibilities are clear and actions are aligned.

3. Coordination arrangements support effective risk management outcomes

The operator's coordination arrangements enable public risks to be identified, managed, and responded to effectively in practice, rather than creating gaps, duplication, or conflicting actions.

5.3. Integration with operations

Ensure that safety management system processes are used in day-to-day operational decision-making and activities, so that safety considerations are considered in the planning and conduct of transport operations.

Description

This requirement requires that the SMS is actively used in the day-to-day planning and conduct of transport operations. Its purpose is to ensure that safety considerations form part of routine operational decision-making, rather than being applied as a separate or retrospective check.

Integration with operations means that SMS processes inform how work is organised, tasks are planned, and activities are carried out at the point where public risks arise. This includes decisions made by frontline personnel, supervisors, and others who influence how transport activities are performed in practice.

The requirement does not prescribe how operational decisions are to be made or require specific procedures. Instead, it focuses on whether existing SMS processes are embedded in operational

activities in a way that influences behaviour and decisions before and during the conduct of transport operations.

The extent and form of integration are expected to be proportionate to the size, nature, and complexity of the operator's activities. The focus is on practical use and effectiveness, not on formal process design or documentation.

Criteria

1. SMS processes are used in routine operational decisions

The operator can demonstrate that relevant SMS processes are applied in routine operational decision-making, including decisions made during the planning and conduct of transport activities.

2. Safety considerations are addressed before and during operations

Safety considerations informed by the SMS are taken into account when transport activities are planned and while they are being carried out, rather than being considered only after activities are completed.

3. Frontline and supervisory decision-makers use the SMS in practice

Personnel who make or influence operational decisions are able to use the SMS to inform how work is organised, prioritised, or adjusted in response to public risks.

4. Operational practices reflect SMS intent

The operator can demonstrate that operational practices align with the intent of the SMS and do not routinely bypass or undermine SMS processes in favour of informal or ad-hoc decision-making.

Schedule 1 **Alternative Compliance Accreditation - Fatigue Requirements**

1. Application

These requirements apply to an application for fatigue alternative compliance accreditation (ACA) - Fatigue. They supplement the general safety accreditation SMS requirements.

Construction Clause

These requirements apply to an application for fatigue alternative compliance accreditation (ACA - Fatigue) in relation to the prescribed operations requirements for fatigue management in Section 4A of the *Heavy Vehicle (Fatigue Management) National Regulation* for the purposes of section 457 of the HVNL. The Regulator may only grant fatigue alternative compliance accreditation if satisfied the operator's safety management system complies with:

- the general safety accreditation SMS requirements under Part 2;
- the fatigue alternative compliance accreditation requirements in this Schedule; and
- the standard for alternative compliance hours.

2. Responsibility and accountability

Description

Clear definition of leadership and operational roles is essential to effective fatigue management. Operators must ensure that authorities, responsibilities, and duties relating to fatigue are documented and integrated into the broader governance arrangements described in Part 2. Senior management must maintain a shared understanding of how fatigue risks manifest in their specific operating context. Management practices must support a "just culture" where accountability for safety outcomes is balanced with the protection of personnel who report fatigue-related hazards or incidents.

Criteria

- authorities and responsibilities for fatigue management are clearly defined and assigned to personnel with appropriate authority;
- senior management exercises informed judgment regarding the effectiveness of fatigue controls; supported by visibility of fatigue-related safety intelligence (e.g., breach rates, roster variances);
- arrangements exist to enable personnel to report fatigue and incidents without fear of reprisal; and
- mechanisms support the exchange of information between drivers and leadership regarding factors affecting fatigue.

3. Scheduling and rostering controls

Description

Scheduling and rostering practices under ACA - Fatigue are a central control for managing fatigue risk. Operators operating under ACA - Fatigue are expected to plan and manage work in a manner that supports safe performance across both individual trips and longer work sequences.

Under the ACA - Fatigue framework:

- schedules and rosters are documented, monitored and subject to regular review;
- changes to schedules are managed in a way that minimises fatigue risk, including consideration of the impacts of altered start times, extended shifts or additional work;
- drivers are provided with input into schedules where practicable, to ensure that trip plans are realistic and achievable; and
- additional fatigue risks, such as those associated with drivers returning from leave or undertaking unfamiliar tasks, are explicitly considered in scheduling decisions.

ACA - Fatigue also supports controlled flexibility. Drivers may be given scope to adjust trip schedules within approved operating limits to maximise rest opportunities and manage fatigue as conditions change, provided this occurs within the boundaries of the approved ACA - Fatigue.

Where operating limits are exceeded in defined circumstances, this is treated as an exception requiring appropriate fatigue countermeasures, rather than as routine practice.

Criteria

- rostering and scheduling policies comply with approved alternative compliance hours;
- scheduling and rostering arrangements are documented, monitored, and subject to regular review;
- schedules are planned so that work can be performed safely within approved operating limits under reasonably foreseeable conditions;
- processes exist to manage fatigue risks arising from schedule changes, extended work, or unplanned events;
- drivers are provided with appropriate scope to manage fatigue within approved limits, including the ability to adjust schedules to maximise rest where necessary; and
- exceedances of operating limits occur only in defined circumstances, are within the limits approved for the ACA - Fatigue, and are supported by appropriate fatigue countermeasures.

4. Operating limits controls

Description

Operating limits are a defining feature of ACA - Fatigue. Rather than relying solely on prescriptive hours, ACA operating limits are designed to reflect the specific fatigue risks associated with an operator's activities.

Operating limits take into account:

- the nature and duration of work tasks;
- required recovery periods;
- cumulative fatigue across work sequences; and
- the influence of time of day on fatigue and sleep quality.

Approved operating limits are monitored and reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate as operations change. Where operating limits are exceeded in defined circumstances, this occurs within a controlled framework supported by fatigue countermeasures and oversight.

Criteria

- operating limits are designed to reflect the applicant's specific fatigue risk profile and operational context;
- operating limits account for task demands, recovery needs, cumulative fatigue, and time-of-day effects;
- operating limits are monitored and reviewed to ensure continued suitability;
- exceedances of operating limits are controlled, justified, and supported by appropriate countermeasures; and
- work and rest records are reviewed to verify compliance with approved operating limits.

5. Technology-enabled controls

Description

ACA recognises the role of technology as a potential control or countermeasure in managing fatigue risk.

Technologies may assist in:

- detecting fatigue-related impairment;
- supporting safer driving outcomes; and
- reducing the consequences of fatigue-related incidents.

The use of technology is not prescribed but may form part of an operator's broader fatigue risk management approach where appropriate.

Criteria

- where technology is used as part of fatigue risk management, it is integrated into the broader fatigue management system;

- technology supports, rather than replaces, effective fatigue management practices and oversight; and
- reliance on technology does not diminish operator accountability for managing fatigue risks.

6. Fitness for duty, health and wellbeing controls

Description

Ensuring that drivers are fit for duty is a foundational requirement of ACA - Fatigue. Fitness for duty encompasses physical health, mental wellbeing, alertness, and freedom from impairment due to fatigue, illness, drugs or alcohol. Under ACA - Fatigue, operators maintain systems that ensure:

- drivers are certified as fit to drive a heavy vehicle by a medical practitioner in accordance with Austroads' Assessing Fitness to Drive (or an equivalent document approved by the NHVR), including assessment for sleep disorders and other fatigue-related health risks, with examinations conducted at least once every three (3) years for drivers aged 49 years or under and annually for drivers aged 50 years or over.
- drivers are subject to additional in-service assessment, review or referral as necessary where health status, fatigue risk indicators, or safety performance may affect fitness to drive;
- drivers are to assess their own fitness for duty prior to and during work, and to notify the operator if they are unfit to continue; and
- lifestyle, health and medical factors that may affect fatigue risk are addressed; and
- medical advice is taken into account when assigning work.

Health and wellbeing are treated not as isolated compliance requirements, but as ongoing risk factors to be systematically managed. Operators provide information and support to promote healthy sleep practices and overall wellbeing, recognising their contribution to fatigue prevention.

Where operations involve two-up driving or overnight vehicle rest, specific arrangements are in place to ensure that rest opportunities are meaningful and conducive to recovery.

Criteria

- systems are in place to ensure drivers are fit for duty prior to and during work, including consideration of health, fatigue, illness, and impairment;
- medical fitness requirements are met and managed in accordance with specified standards, including periodic assessment and consideration of sleep-related risks;
- drivers are required and supported to self-assess fitness for duty and to notify the operator when unfit;
- medical advice and health-related information are appropriately considered in work allocation decisions; and

- arrangements are in place to promote driver health and wellbeing as part of fatigue risk management.

7. Workplace and vehicle conditions

Description

Workplace and vehicle conditions play a supporting role in fatigue prevention. Under ACA - Fatigue, operators ensure that workplaces, including vehicles, support safe performance and adequate rest. This includes:

- vehicle cabins and sleeper berths designed or configured to support driver comfort and restorative rest;
- facilities that support recovery where drivers are required to rest away from home; and
- compliance with relevant safety and vehicle standards that affect fatigue risk.
- where drivers are required to sleep in vehicles, arrangements are in place to ensure those vehicles are suitable for that purpose.

Criteria

- workplace and vehicle conditions support the prevention and management of fatigue; and
- vehicles and facilities used for rest or sleep provide meaningful opportunities for recovery; and
- arrangements comply with relevant safety and vehicle standards where these affect fatigue risk; and
- additional controls are applied where drivers are required to rest in vehicles away from home

8. Training and competency

Description

Safe operations under ACA-Fatigue rely on specialized, informed decision-making. Operators must ensure that all personnel involved in managing fatigue—particularly those in scheduling and management—possess the specific knowledge and skills required to manage complex fatigue variables.

Criteria

- personnel involved in the operation or administration of the fatigue system have fatigue knowledge relevant to their role, including awareness of the operator's specific policies and the physiological signs of fatigue;
- personnel can demonstrate the ability to apply fatigue risk management in practice by meeting the following or an alternative equivalent:

- Drivers: If the person drives a heavy vehicle under ACA-Fatigue, they are able to demonstrate competence with TLIF0030 - *Apply a fatigue risk management system*, or any previously recognised fatigue management qualification completed prior to 1 July 2018.
- Schedulers/Managers: If the person is a scheduler or supervises drivers and scheduling staff, they are able to demonstrate competence with TLIF0031 - *Administer a fatigue risk management system*, or any previously recognised fatigue management qualification completed prior to 1 July 2018;
- fatigue-related responsibilities are clearly included in inductions for new roles or when changing to new operating environments, enabling personnel to apply their skills in the operator's specific context;
- knowledge is kept current through refreshers or reactive training when fatigue-related incidents or near-misses occur, ensuring that training remains responsive to actual experience; and
- the operator ensures that beyond holding a qualification, personnel can effectively apply these fatigue management standards in the actual operating environment.

9. Review and continuous improvement

Description

ACA - Fatigue is supported by structured internal review processes that allow operators to verify the effectiveness of their fatigue management system and identify areas for improvement. Internal review arrangements include:

- periodic reviews of fatigue management practices against documented policies and operating limits;
- mechanisms to identify, report, investigate and record non-conformances;
- investigation of incidents to determine whether fatigue was a contributing factor; and
- implementation of corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

Review is not limited to annual checks. Ongoing monitoring, including review of work and rest records, supports continuous oversight of fatigue risk and system performance.

Criteria

- the operator monitors fatigue-related data, including work/rest records, roster variances, and driver feedback, to verify that fatigue controls are operating as intended in day-to-day operations;
- review processes are capable of identifying not only clear non-conformances but also patterns of increasing fatigue risk before they result in an incident;

- incidents and near-misses are investigated to determine the extent to which fatigue was a contributing factor;
- where issues are identified, corrective actions are directed at the underlying causes (e.g., unreasonable scheduling or inadequate training) rather than just the immediate symptom;
- outcomes from monitoring and investigations are used to update fatigue policies, rosters, or training programs, ensuring the system is continuously refined to manage risk; and
- periodic reviews of the fatigue system are conducted at intervals commensurate with the risk level of the operator's work/rest arrangements

10. Evidence

Maintaining reliable documentation and records is essential to effective fatigue management . Operators maintain documented policies, procedures and instructions that describe how fatigue risks are managed across their operations. Records are maintained to demonstrate:

- compliance with approved operating limits;
- implementation of fatigue management controls;
- training and competence of relevant personnel; and
- outcomes of internal reviews and corrective actions.
- document control processes that ensure that fatigue management documentation remains current, authorised and accessible, and that changes are tracked over time.

Criteria

- records, such as work and rest diaries or electronic logs, provide a credible reflection of actual operations and demonstrate compliance with ACA - Fatigue operating limits;
- accessible Instructions: Documented policies and instructions describing fatigue management are current and accessible to the personnel who need them to perform their roles safely;
- the operator maintains records that demonstrate the implementation of fatigue controls, such as roster audits or fatigue-related training outcomes, rather than relying on a documented framework alone;
- where fatigue risks or non-conformances are identified, evidence shows that appropriate actions were taken and tracked to completion; and
- records are retained in a form and for a duration that supports oversight and review, without imposing administrative requirements that exceed the risk profile of the business

Schedule 2 Maintenance Accreditation Requirements

1. Application

This Schedule applies in relation to an application for, and the holding of, general safety accreditation where the operator seeks accreditation for the purpose of demonstrating an appropriate means of alternative compliance with identified heavy vehicle maintenance, inspection or roadworthiness requirements imposed under an Australian road law.

2. Responsibility and Accountability

Description

The effective operation of the vehicle maintenance system relies on the clear allocation of responsibility for managing, operating, and verifying vehicle condition controls. Responsibility for vehicle maintenance must rest with appropriate personnel as nominated by the operator, ensuring that those with safety-related duties have the competence and resources necessary to discharge them. Accountability is explicit and integrated into the operator's overarching governance systems.

Criteria

- responsibilities for the lifecycle of vehicle maintenance (administration, operation, and verification) are clearly allocated to identified roles;
- persons holding maintenance-related responsibilities are competent to discharge those roles;
- responsibility allocations reflect actual operational arrangements and are actively exercised through regular reviews of vehicle condition and maintenance outcomes; and
- senior management ensures that resources necessary to maintain vehicle maintenance standards are available.

3. Daily check controls

Description

The Daily Check is a foundational control within the vehicle maintenance framework, intended to confirm that a vehicle is safe to operate before it is used on the road. It provides a structured opportunity to identify obvious defects, deterioration, or public risks that may arise through normal operation and wear.

The vehicle maintenance system must define when the Daily Check is performed, who is responsible for carrying it out, and how the results are recorded. The person completing the check plays a critical role in frontline risk identification and is required to acknowledge that, to the limits of the inspection, the vehicle is safe for use, or that faults have been identified and reported.

The Daily Check focuses on readily observable safety-critical components and indicators, rather than detailed mechanical inspection. Its purpose is early detection and escalation of issues so that defects can be addressed before they contribute to unsafe operation or regulatory non-conformance.

Criteria

- the operator can demonstrate that a Daily Check is conducted for each vehicle when it is in use;
- the timing, responsibility, and method of recording the Daily Check are clearly defined and consistently applied;
- the scope of the Daily Check addresses safety-critical components (e.g. brakes, couplings, and tyre pressure/ integrity) to a degree sufficient to identify obvious defects before use;
- there is evidence that faults identified during the Daily Check are recorded and escalated through the fault reporting system; and
- individuals performing the Daily Check understand they are confirming vehicle safety to the limits of the inspection prior to road use.

4. Fault Recording and Reporting Controls

Description

Fault recording and reporting ensures that defects identified during vehicle operation are captured, communicated, and assessed in a timely manner. The vehicle maintenance system must enable drivers to record faults as they occur, including faults affecting both hauling and trailing equipment.

This requirement recognises that faults may arise during a journey and that effective maintenance control depends on prompt reporting to those responsible for assessment and repair. The system must support reporting as soon as reasonably practicable, while distinguishing between faults that require urgent action and those that may be addressed through normal maintenance processes.

The intent of fault recording and reporting is to ensure continuity of defect management from the point of detection through to assessment and rectification, regardless of where or when the fault arises.

Criteria

- drivers are able to record recognisable faults occurring during a journey for both hauling and trailing equipment;
- faults are reported to the maintenance function as soon as reasonably practicable after detection;
- the system distinguishes between faults requiring urgent rectification and those that may be addressed through standard maintenance processes;
- there is evidence that reported faults are communicated in a manner that enables timely assessment and action; and

- Fault recording arrangements support continuity of defect management from detection through to repair decision-making.

5. Fault Repair Controls

Description

Fault repair provides the decision-making and governance framework through which reported faults are assessed, prioritised, and addressed. The vehicle maintenance system must support consistent identification of fault severity and clear determination of the action required.

Where immediate repair is not undertaken, the system must provide clear processes for the deferral or monitoring of faults. This includes setting clear boundaries around how long a fault may be monitored, under what conditions it may continue to operate, and when repair must occur. Accountability for these decisions must be clear.

The repair process must also provide assurance that faults are properly rectified and, where appropriate, tested before the vehicle returns to service. The intent is to prevent unmanaged degradation of vehicle condition and ensure that repair decisions are transparent, justified, and reviewable.

Criteria

- reported faults are systematically identified, assessed, and prioritised for repair;
- decisions to defer repair are controlled, documented, and attributable to an identified decision-maker;
- where faults are monitored rather than immediately repaired, monitoring timeframes and upper repair limits are defined and recorded;
- accountability for decisions to monitor or defer faults is clearly established; and
- there is evidence that repairs are completed and, where appropriate, that rectification has been tested before the vehicle returns to service.

6. Maintenance Schedules and Methods Controls

Description

Maintenance schedules and methods establish the planned, systematic approach to maintaining vehicle condition over time. This requirement ensures that maintenance is not limited to reactive repair, but is supported by defined service intervals and documented inspection and servicing tasks.

The vehicle maintenance system must demonstrate that vehicles are maintained in accordance with recognised technical standards, including roadworthiness requirements at scheme entry and ongoing periodic maintenance. Maintenance schedules should reflect time, distance, or usage-based servicing and include sufficient detail to show what tasks are undertaken at each service point.

Annual mechanical inspections provide an additional assurance checkpoint, confirming that vehicles continue to meet required standards through objective inspection. Together, these controls support long-term vehicle integrity, safety, and regulatory compliance.

Criteria

- vehicles entering the accreditation are demonstrably roadworthy;
- maintenance schedules exist that define service intervals and describe the tasks to be undertaken;
- maintenance schedules support systematic servicing based on time, distance, or usage rather than ad hoc repair alone;
- tolerances and wear limits for major components are defined and aligned with applicable vehicle standards; and
- vehicles are subject to a regular mechanical inspection conducted by or under a suitably qualified person sufficient to provide ongoing assurance of vehicle condition (including an annual inspection to a standard aligned with the national Heavy Vehicle Inspection Manual).

7. Training and Competence

Description

Safe vehicle condition is maintained through the practical skills of those who inspect, service, and manage the fleet. Personnel holding positions of responsibility within the Maintenance Management System must be competent to apply the operator's maintenance schedules and instructions.

Criteria

- persons holding a position of responsibility for verifying vehicle maintenance standards or performing maintenance are trained in, and familiar with, the specific policies and procedures they are to carry out;
- where roles involve complex mechanical assessment, personnel are able to demonstrate competence through relevant trade qualifications or documented equivalent experience; and
- personnel who operate the vehicles have sufficient functional awareness to identify and report defects.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

Description

Internal review provides assurance that the vehicle maintenance system continues to operate as intended and remains aligned with current business activities. Through regular review, the operator assesses

whether controls are being applied consistently and whether deficiencies or non-conformances are emerging.

Reviews occur on both a scheduled and periodic basis and must be sufficiently independent to provide objective insight. The review process should identify non-conformances, ensure corrective action is taken, and verify that issues are not repeated.

Internal review also supports structured reporting of vehicle maintenance outcomes and ensures that changes to procedures and documents are controlled and retained for audit. The purpose is continual verification and improvement of the system's effectiveness.

Criteria

- the operator monitors maintenance outcomes—such as defect reports, repair frequencies, and inspection results—to verify that the maintenance schedule is effective in practice;
- review processes are capable of identifying patterns (e.g., repeated failures of a specific component) that suggest a need to adjust service intervals or parts selection;
- when vehicle maintenance standards are not met, corrective actions target the underlying cause (e.g., poor quality parts or inadequate technician training) rather than just repairing the immediate fault;
- reviews are conducted with a level of objectivity and frequency appropriate to the size of the fleet (for example, small operators may use third-party inspection results or peer-reviews to provide this assurance);
- the operator can demonstrate that changes made following a review (such as a revised service task) have been effective in improving vehicle reliability and safety; and
- significant changes to maintenance practices or schedules arising from reviews are documented and communicated to relevant personnel to ensure consistent application.

9. Evidence

Description

The operator maintains evidence to demonstrate that vehicles are systematically maintained and meet required standards. This evidence provides the foundation for reconstructing maintenance activities and verifying that defects are managed appropriately. The emphasis should be on practical evidence that the maintenance system is operating effectively, not on documenting every single administrative step comprehensively.

Criteria

- records are sufficient to demonstrate that Daily Checks, fault reporting, and maintenance activities are occurring as intended in day-to-day operations;

- documentary evidence—such as work orders or invoices—clearly demonstrates that identified faults and regulatory notices have been addressed and resolved;
- the operator ensures that maintenance records are current, reliable, and accessible to relevant personnel, supporting oversight and accountability without requiring separate "document control" systems for smaller fleets;
- evidence is maintained in a form that allows maintenance history to be reconstructed for the purposes of audit and review, focusing on material public risks and vehicle condition outcomes;
- proportional documentation: The scope and depth of records maintained are appropriate to the size and risk profile of the fleet, avoiding the need for parallel record-keeping where existing business documents (e.g., invoices) provide sufficient assurance;
- the operator maintains documented details for all vehicles operating under the accreditation, including subcontractor vehicles, that are current and sufficiently detailed to support audit, review, and regulatory assurance; and
- information maintained for vehicles operating under the accreditation is sufficient to demonstrate vehicle identity, configuration, and applicability to maintenance concessions.

Schedule 3 Alternative Compliance Accreditation - Mass Requirements

1. Application

These requirements apply to an application for mass alternative compliance accreditation (ACA - Mass). They supplement the general safety accreditation SMS requirements.

Construction Clause

These requirements apply to an application for mass alternative compliance accreditation (ACA - Mass) in relation to the prescribed operations requirements for mass management in section 5H of the *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* for the purposes of section 457 of the HVNL. The Regulator may only grant mass alternative compliance accreditation if satisfied the operator's safety management system complies with:

- the general safety accreditation SMS requirements under Part 2; and
- the mass alternative compliance accreditation requirements in this Schedule.

2. Responsibility and Accountability

Description

Effective mass management depends on clear allocation of authority across all functions that influence vehicle loading and operation. The operator must identify the positions involved in managing and verifying mass-related activities. Responsibility must be deliberately assigned and grounded in an informed appreciation of how loading activities are performed in practice.

Criteria

- responsibilities for mass management are clearly allocated across management, operation, and verification functions;
- leadership maintains visibility of mass-related risks (e.g., overload incidents or equipment failure) sufficient to exercise effective oversight of the system's effectiveness;
- there is evidence that allocated responsibilities are actively discharged in practice, supported by governance-level visibility of compliance outcomes; and
- leadership has oversight of workforce capability to ensure that personnel responsible for mass-related tasks understand and apply systems of work correctly.

3. Vehicle Identification and Capability Controls

Description

ACA - Mass applies only to vehicles that are within the scope of the accreditation. The operator must establish and maintain effective control over all nominated vehicles and any trailers used in combination with them, including vehicles supplied by subcontractors where applicable.

Vehicle control requires the operator to be able to reliably identify which vehicles are operating under the ACA - Mass and to demonstrate that those vehicles are technically capable of operating within the applicable mass limits. This includes maintaining accurate and current information about vehicle identity, configuration, specifications, and applicable mass concessions or authorisations.

Where subcontracted vehicles are used, the system must demonstrate that those vehicles are sufficiently secured to the operator's ACA - Mass so that mass controls are applied consistently and effectively. The purpose of vehicle control is to ensure that mass-related risks are managed across the entire operating fleet, rather than only within the operator's directly owned vehicles.

Criteria

- the operator can clearly identify all vehicles and trailers operating under the ACA - Mass at any given time;
- the operator maintains documented details for all vehicles operating under the accreditation, including subcontractor vehicles, that are current and sufficiently detailed to support audit, review, and regulatory assurance;
- information maintained for vehicles operating under the accreditation is sufficient to demonstrate vehicle identity, configuration, and applicability to mass concessions or authorisations;
- vehicles operating under the accreditation are demonstrably capable, by design and specification, of operating within the applicable axle and gross mass limits;
- where mass authorisations are required to access the road network, those authorisations are current and applicable to the vehicles operating under the accreditation; and
- vehicles supplied by subcontractors or third parties are subject to controls that ensure they are effectively managed under the operator's ACA - Mass and are not operating independently of those controls.

4. Vehicle Use controls

Description

The operator must ensure that vehicle mass is determined before each departure in a way that reliably confirms compliance with applicable axle and gross mass limits. This requires an objective approach to loading decisions, rather than reliance on estimates, assumptions, or informal practices.

Before a loaded vehicle or combination commences a trip, its mass must either be measured directly or assessed using a method that provides an equivalent level of assurance. The system must account for foreseeable variations in load characteristics, such as changes in density, volume, quantity, or distribution, and ensure that those variations do not result in exceedances.

The intent of this requirement is to ensure that mass compliance is controlled at the point where risk is created—prior to departure—rather than detected after the fact. Loading practices must therefore be structured, repeatable, and capable of demonstrating that mass limits are not exceeded under normal operating conditions.

Criteria

- the operator can demonstrate that vehicle mass is determined before departure using a method that provides objective assurance of compliance with applicable axle and gross mass limits;
- loading decisions are based on defined and repeatable methods rather than estimates or informal judgement;
- the method used to determine mass accounts for foreseeable variations in load characteristics, including density, volume, quantity, or distribution;
- there is evidence that vehicles do not commence trips unless mass compliance has been confirmed; and
- the operator maintains sufficient records of regulatory non-conformance relating to vehicle suspension to enable identification, review, and management of suspension-related mass risks.

5. Suspension Maintenance Controls

Description

Vehicle suspension systems play a critical role in maintaining mass compliance and protecting road infrastructure. The operator must therefore ensure that suspension systems on all relevant vehicles, including trailers and third-party vehicles, are properly maintained and repaired in accordance with appropriate technical standards.

Suspension maintenance arrangements must reflect manufacturer specifications or the advice of suitably qualified professionals and, where applicable, recognised industry codes or inspection manuals. The system must support timely identification, reporting, and repair of suspension faults, including prioritisation of serious defects that may affect performance or compliance.

Clear decision-making and sign-off arrangements are required to ensure that suspension repairs are completed appropriately and verified before vehicles continue operating under accreditation. Where vehicles are supplied by other parties, the operator must still have confidence—supported by evidence—that suspension maintenance meets the required standard.

Criteria

- suspension systems on vehicles operating under the accreditation are maintained in accordance with appropriate technical standards and specifications;
- the operator can demonstrate that suspension faults are identified, reported, prioritised, and repaired in a manner that manages mass-related risk;
- repairs and maintenance are carried out by suitably qualified or supervised persons;
- decisions relating to suspension maintenance and repair are subject to appropriate oversight and sign-off; and
- where vehicles are supplied by other parties, the operator has evidence sufficient to demonstrate that suspension maintenance meets the required standard before those vehicles operate under the accreditation.

6. Verification Controls

Description

Verification provides assurance that the methods used to assess vehicle mass are accurate and reliable. The operator must develop and implement processes that confirm the validity of mass determinations made before departure.

Verification typically involves confirming assessed weights against certified or calibrated weighing devices at defined intervals. This process supports confidence in the loading controls applied under the system and provides an auditable record of accuracy over time.

Where the operator's loading controls are sufficiently robust to demonstrate that axle and gross mass limits are consistently met for every load and trip, verification requirements may be satisfied through those controls alone. In such cases, the system must still be capable of demonstrating that mass compliance is reliably achieved without reliance on periodic re-weighing.

Criteria

- the operator can demonstrate that the accuracy of mass assessment methods is periodically confirmed using reliable and appropriately certified or calibrated means;
- verification activities produce auditable evidence that mass determinations made before departure are accurate;
- where periodic re-weighing is not relied upon, the operator can demonstrate that loading controls consistently ensure axle and gross mass compliance for every load and trip; and
- verification arrangements are sufficient to support confidence in the ongoing reliability of the Mass Management System.

7. Training and Competence

Description

ACA - Mass relies on the competence and awareness of the people who perform or influence mass-related activities. The operator must ensure that persons with designated responsibilities are trained in, and familiar with, the specific policies, procedures, and instructions relevant to their roles.

Training arrangements should ensure that responsible persons understand not only what is required of them, but why those requirements exist and how their actions affect mass compliance outcomes.

Education and training support consistency, reduce reliance on informal knowledge, and help embed mass management expectations into day-to-day operations.

The system should also provide a basis for demonstrating that training has occurred and that responsible persons remain competent as roles, systems, or operating conditions change.

Criteria

- persons with mass management responsibilities can demonstrate an understanding of the policies, procedures, and instructions relevant to their roles;
- training provided is appropriate to the nature of the responsibilities held, and the mass-related risks managed by the operator;
- there is evidence that training has been delivered and that responsible persons remain competent as systems or operating conditions change; and
- training arrangements support consistent application of mass management controls across the organisation.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

Description

The controls on which the ACA - Mass is granted must be subject to regular internal review to ensure that they remain effective, current, and aligned with actual operating practices. Internal review provides the mechanism by which the operator verifies that policies, procedures, and instructions are being followed and continue to reflect the nature of the business.

Reviews must occur on both a periodic and ongoing basis, including quarterly oversight and more comprehensive annual assessment. The review process should identify non-conformances, weaknesses, or emerging risks, and ensure that corrective actions are taken promptly to prevent recurrence.

Internal review is also the means by which the operator consolidates mass management outcomes into formal reporting, including structured compliance statements. These reviews support continuous improvement and provide confidence that the system responds to changes in operations, vehicles, or regulatory expectations.

Criteria

- the operator monitors mass-related data—such as weighbridge records, onboard scale data, or loading plan variances—to confirm that mass controls are implemented consistently in daily operations;
- review processes are capable of detecting patterns (e.g., a specific vehicle type consistently nearing its limit) that suggest a need to adjust loading instructions or equipment calibration;
- where mass limits are exceeded, corrective actions target the underlying cause (e.g., incorrect density assumptions or faulty weighing equipment) rather than simply blaming the loader;
- reviews are conducted at intervals appropriate to the risk and scale of the operation. Operators may use routine operational reconciliations to provide this oversight rather than separate formal assessments;
- the operator can demonstrate that changes made following a review (such as a revised loading plan) have been effective in maintaining mass compliance; and
- significant changes to mass procedures are documented and communicated to ensure the system stays relevant as vehicle configurations or freight types change.

9. Evidence

Description

The operator maintains evidence to substantiate that vehicles are loaded within prescribed limits and that mass-related controls are being applied effectively. This evidence allows mass compliance to be reconstructed and verified, particularly for activities exceeding general mass limits. Consistent with the requirements in Part 2, the focus is on maintaining credible evidence of safety outcomes that supports informed decision-making, rather than on the creation of parallel administrative systems.

Criteria

The Regulator may be satisfied that the operator meets this requirement where:

- records—such as trip logs, weighbridge docketts, or load plans—provide a credible reflection of actual mass determinations and demonstrate compliance for trips above general mass limits;
- evidence is sufficient to identify the vehicles involved and the specific methods used to determine mass (e.g., physical weighing or mass-certain loading) for each trip;
- the operator maintains current information regarding vehicles and personnel with mass responsibilities. This may be integrated into existing business records (e.g., fleet lists or HR records) rather than requiring separate mass registers;
- where mass-related defects or infringements are identified, evidence demonstrates that the operator took appropriate action to address the issue and prevent recurrence; and
- documentation is maintained in a form that is accessible and understandable to the personnel who require it to perform their roles safely, whether in physical or digital format.