Queensland Government
Queensland Transport
Main Roads

Information Bulletin
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Increased Front Steer Axle Mass

Background

This policy seeks to encourage the uptake of the national reform for increases to the front steer axle weights for heavy vehicles that are all equipped with cleaner engines, front underrun protection and stronger, safer cabins. The initiative provides significant improvements for the environment and reduction in the severity of accidents involving heavy vehicles. The additional equipment is expected to add weight to the front steer axle, therefore the mass on steer axles has been increased to accommodate the extra weight.

Mass limits

Vehicles that are fitted with lower emission engines, front underrun protection systems and stronger, safer cabins are now permitted to have an additional 0.5 tonne on the front steer axle to a maximum limit of 6.5 tonnes. Additionally, the 0.5 increase also applies to the GVM/GCM of the vehicle.

The increased weight limits are available to operators provided they are operating the vehicle in accordance with the *Guideline for Increased Front Steer Axle Mass in Queensland Form Number 20.* (Form 20 Guideline).

The Form 20 Guideline allows all vehicles with a GVM greater that 15 tonnes, except twin steer vehicles and buses, to exceed the current axle mass limit provided the:

(a) the vehicle is fitted with an engine complying with the emission control requirements of Australian Design Rule 80/01 or a later version; and

(b) the vehicle is fitted with front underrun protection system (FUPS) that complies with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) Regulation No 93; and

(c) the vehicle is fitted with a cabin that complies with UN ECE Regulation No. 29.

The new mass limits apply to vehicles that are operating at the mass limits as per:

- the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Mass, Dimensions and Loading) Regulation 2005*
- Concessional Mass Limits
- Guideline for Higher Mass Limits for Vehicles with Road Friendly Suspension Form 10
- A guideline or permit issued in accordance with *Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Mass, Dimensions and Loading) Regulation 2005.*

If a vehicle is currently entitled to operate with a steer axle mass of more than 6.0 tonnes, but not more than 6.5 tonnes, the vehicle is only permitted to operate to a maximum of 6.5 tonnes. If a vehicle is currently entitled to operate with a steer axle mass of more than 6.5 tonnes, additional mass is not permitted under the guideline.

The GVM and GCM of the vehicle may only increase by the additional mass applied to the front steer axle. For example, if the front steer axle has increased by 0.25 tonne due to being equipped with front underrun protection, cabin strength and ADR 80/01 engines, the GVM and GCM can only be increased by 0.25 tonne. The remaining 0.25 tonne is not permitted to be utilised on any other axle group.

Vehicles operating in accordance with Form 20 Guideline are still subject to the conditions, routes, and standards that would normally apply to the vehicle, except for the increased steer axle and GCM/GVM weights permitted under Form 20 Guideline. Vehicles that have general access to the road network continue to have general access. B-doubles, road trains and higher mass limits vehicles must only still travel on applicable approved routes.

Conditions of operation

Vehicles seeking eligibility to operate in accordance with Form 20 Guideline must be identified with the fitment of approval plates indicating the vehicle meets ADR 80/01, FUPS and cabin strength. New vehicles supplied to the market that are compliant with ADR80/01 (or a later version), the UN ECE 29 cab strength and the UN ECE 93 FUPS will have an approval plate/s fitted by the manufacturer to indicate compliance to these standards.

Any vehicle modified by the fitting of an additional device, that is not an approved FUP device, must be approved by a Competent Entity. In the case where a bull bar is fitted to a vehicle with a FUP system that is integral to the vehicle, then the bull bar must be plated to identify that it is compatible with the vehicle's compliance to UN ECE 93.

If a vehicle is plated by the manufacturer as complying with ADR80/01 (or a later version) and UN ECE 29 (cab strength), but not with UN ECE 93 (FUPS), it is not entitled to exceed 6.0 tonnes on the steer axle under Form 20 Guideline. If an approved FUPS is subsequently fitted and approved it would then be entitled to carry up to 6.5 tonnes on the steer axle.

A Competent Entity is a Compliance Plate Approval (CPA) holder of heavy vehicle manufacturing or a person or organisation appointed by an Australian Road Authority, and issued with a unique identification number, to certify that the requirements for front underrun protection and cabin strength have been met, and continue to be met, and who may authorise the fixing of approval plates to a FUP device and a vehicle. In the case of a CPA holder the unique identification number may be the Department of Transport and Regional Services road certification license number.

Useful information

Item	**Source**
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Standards	www.unece.org
Vehicle Standards – FUPS, ADR 80/01,Cabin Strength	(07) 3253 4851
Dimensions and mass limits	(07) 3253 4452
Copies of the Guideline for Increased Front Steer Axle Mass Form 20	www.transport.qld.gov.au (follow links to Heavy Vehicles and then Guidelines & Regulations) or contact Goprint on (07) 3118 6900