

## Wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs)

### Purpose

To advise vehicle examiners, modifiers, engineering signatories and taxi operators of the compliance and inspection requirements applicable to wheelchair accessible taxis (WATs), which are taxis modified to accommodate wheelchairs and their occupants.

### Introduction

Passengers in WATs must be afforded the same level of safety that is provided to occupants of conventional vehicles. A vehicle modified as a WAT must retain the same degree of safety as the original vehicle; enable wheelchair bound passengers safe and easy access and egress; provide sufficient room and unimpeded space for them to travel in comfort; and allow for their proper restraint during travel.

WATs must comply with the vehicle standards prescribed in the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2007 (the Regulation) including complying with the relevant Australian Design Rules (ADRs).

Specialised equipment, such as wheelchair ramps, lift/hoist mechanisms, wheelchair restraint systems, wheelchair tracking mechanisms and fold-away seats, that are installed for this purpose are considered to be modifications.

This Vehicle Inspectors Bulletin (VIB) 36 is issued under the provisions of Clause 9 of Schedule 2 of the Regulation.

### General information

WATs are standard vehicles that have been modified either prior to entering service or at some point subsequent to their first registration. In either case, evidence must be provided that they continue to comply with the appropriate ADRs and that other items not covered by the ADRs have been designed and installed in accordance with the applicable standards. The evidence must take the form described on the following page.

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<b>For: AIS Proprietors and Examiners Engineering Signatories</b>	<b>AUVIS Proprietors and Examiners RTA Inspectors Vehicle Regulation</b>	<b>HVAIS Proprietors and Examiners RTA Registry Service Managers</b>
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#### For further enquiries

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## **Vehicles modified prior to first registration:**

Vehicles modified as a WAT prior to first registration must have Second Stage of Manufacture (SSM) compliance plates, coloured green, which indicate that the modified vehicle meets the applicable ADRs. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (DITRDLG) Circular 0-4-6 *Certification of Vehicles Which Have Undergone A Second Stage of Manufacture* outlines the requirements for SSM plates. Circular 0-4-6 can be viewed at <http://rvcs.dotars.gov.au>

A certificate must also be provided by an engineering signatory, ie a person registered on the RTA's Engineering Certificate System (ECS) indicating that those items not covered by the SSM compliance plate, including those referenced under 'Specific compliance requirements' below, meet the applicable standards. See Vehicle standards information (VSI) No 15 *Engineering signatories* for a list of signatories.

## **Vehicles modified after first registration:**

Vehicles modified as a WAT after first registration must have a certificate from an engineering signatory that states the vehicle's compliance with the applicable ADRs and that other items that formed part of the modification, including those referenced under 'Specific compliance requirements' below, meet the applicable standards. Where the modification results in a change of vehicle category, the vehicle must comply with the ADRs applicable to that category.

# Specific compliance requirements

## **SEATS & SEAT BELTS**

Wheelchair positions are regarded as seating positions when determining seating capacity and vehicle category.

For vehicles modified after first registration, all additional or modified seats and/or seat belts must comply with either:

- The applicable ADRs ie ADR 3/-- Seats & Seat Anchorages, ADR 4/-- Seatbelts and ADR 5/-- Anchorages for Seatbelts, or
- Vehicle Standards Bulletin (VSB) 5A Commercial Manufacture and Installation of Additional Seats issued by DITRDLG.

## **WHEELCHAIR RESTRAINT SYSTEMS**

Wheelchair restraint systems and wheelchair occupant restraints must comply with the requirements of Australian Standard AS 2942-1994 *Wheelchair occupant restraint assemblies for motor vehicles*. They must be installed in accordance with specifications and guidelines issued by the restraint manufacturer.

## **WHEELCHAIR LIFT MECHANISMS**

Wheelchair hoist or lift mechanisms must comply with Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 3856.2:1998 *Hoists and ramps for people with disabilities - Vehicle-mounted - Installation requirements*. Furthermore these systems must not obstruct any passenger access or egress.

## **DOORS AND EMERGENCY EXITS**

Doors and emergency exits must be capable of being opened from both the inside and outside of the vehicle.

If a door or an emergency exit is obstructed by the installation of a wheelchair hoist or lift mechanism, an alternative means of emergency exit must be provided and must comply with either ADR 44/-- *Specific Purpose Vehicle Requirements* or ADR 58/-- *Requirements for Omnibuses Designed for Hire and Reward*.

## EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL PROTRUSIONS

A vehicle must not have any internal or external protrusions likely to increase injury to a person, as specified in ADR 42/-- *General Safety Requirements*.

Means must be provided to securely stow ramps and other equipment intended for use by a wheelchair occupant so they do not impede access ways or the passengers' space.

### Inspection procedure

- Follow the applicable procedure in the tables on pages 3 and 4.
- Ensure that a WAT being registered for the first time is fitted with an SSM compliance plate.
- Ensure that a WAT being registered for the first time has been issued with an engineering certificate that covers the non-ADR modifications.
- Ensure that a WAT that has been registered previously has been issued with an engineering certificate that addresses all the relevant ADRs and other items specific to the modifications.
- Ensure that the vehicle's registration records reflect the modifications and engineering certification.
- Ensure that all seats intended for a seating position, including folding or removable seats are fitted or configured for the inspection together with all removable or detachable wheelchair restraints and wheelchair occupant restraints.

**If any of these requirements are not met, reject the vehicle.**

### A. Establish registration of a WAT

#### For vehicles modified prior to first registration

Item of non-compliance	Action: AUVIS/HVAIS/HVIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No SSM compliance plate fitted.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reject the vehicle.</li><li>• Refer customer to DITRD LG to obtain an SSM compliance plate.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No engineering certificate issued by an RTA recognised engineering signatory that covers the other modifications eg wheelchair lift mechanisms, emergency exit.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reject the vehicle.</li><li>• Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No emergency exit or alternative means of exit provided (if required).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reject the vehicle.</li><li>• Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li></ul>
<p><b>Pass the vehicle when items of non-compliance are rectified.</b></p> <p>Note: 28 days is allowed for the re-inspection of a WAT that has been rejected for not complying with the requirements specified in this bulletin – refer Rules 12.13 &amp; 12.16 of the Rules for AIS.</p>	

## For vehicles modified after first registration

Item of non-compliance	Action: AUVIS/HVAIS/HVIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No engineering certificate issued by an RTA recognised engineering signatory that covers the ADRs and the other modifications eg wheelchair lift mechanisms, emergency exit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No emergency exit or alternative means of exit provided (if required).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li> </ul>
<p>Pass the vehicle when items of non-compliance are rectified.</p> <p>Note: 28 days is allowed for the re-inspection of a WAT that has been rejected for not complying with the requirements specified in this bulletin – refer Rules 12.13 &amp; 12.16 of the Rules for AIS.</p>	

## B. Periodic inspection of registered vehicle

Item of non-compliance	Action	
	ATIS	HVIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SSM plate fitted but no engineering certificate issued by an RTA recognised engineering signatory that covers the other modifications eg wheelchair lift mechanisms, emergency exit; or</li> <li>No engineering certificate issued by an RTA recognised engineering signatory that covers the ADRs and the other modifications eg wheelchair lift mechanisms, emergency exit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Issue a <b>minor defect notice</b> for a 14 day period with the condition that no passengers are to be carried.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No emergency exit or alternative means of exit provided (if required).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate once the necessary modification has been completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reject the vehicle.</li> <li>Issue a <b>major defect notice</b>.</li> <li>Refer customer to an RTA recognised engineering signatory to obtain an engineering certificate.</li> </ul>
<p>Pass the vehicle when items of non-compliance are rectified.</p> <p>Note: 28 days is allowed for the re-inspection of a WAT that has been rejected for not complying with the requirements specified in this bulletin – refer Rules 12.13 &amp; 12.16 of the Rules for AIS.</p>		