

**ROAD TRANSPORT DIVISION**

# **Northern Territory Minibus Requirements and In-Service Maintenance Standards**

Endorsed by the  
Commercial Passenger Vehicle Board

## Introduction

The principle purpose of this document is to provide the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry with a set of guidelines for determining the minimum acceptable standards for minibuses. These guidelines include, but are not limited to vehicle type, comfort requirements, aesthetic standards and vehicle technical standards. These guidelines are applicable to minibuses when being assessed for first registration as a minibus and to minibuses that are already in-service.

The information contained in this document comprises minimum maintenance standards for the purposes of Section 38D(6) of the *Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport Act* and Section 6(2) of the *Northern Territory Minibus Regulations*.

Owners and Operators of Minibuses, Transport Inspectors, Commercial Passenger Vehicle Inspectors, and approved Authorised Inspectors are all intended users of this document.

Operators of minibuses in the NT must ensure their minibus vehicle complies at all times with the requirements contained in this document. In addition, minibuses must also be serviced and maintained according to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended periodic maintenance schedule, and comply with all applicable Australian Design Rules (ADR's) and roadworthy standards.

Many of the comfort and aesthetic standards contained in this document require subjective assessment when assessing a vehicle. Precedents have been established over many years and should be used as a guide when an item on an existing Minibus does not apparently meet the criteria contained in this document. Comparison should be made with other previously accepted minibuses of similar age and condition and the item only deemed not to comply if clearly different. Refer to definitions for an example.

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## 1 Definitions

**ADR** – means the Australian Design Rules for road vehicles.

**Advertising** – means any third party advertisements (excluding network decals and regulatory signs), statements or representations of any kind displayed in or on a Minibus, such as lettering, maps, plans, drawings or pictorial images and includes bumper stickers.

**Approved** – means approved by the Director.

**Decal** - means a decorative sticker, which can be attached to a vehicle:

- (a) directly; or
- (b) via a magnetic backing.

**Director** – means the Director of Commercial Passenger (Road) Transport .

**GVM** – means the manufacturer's Gross Vehicle Mass. The value is usually located on the vehicle's compliance plate and/or in the operator's manual.

**Luggage** – means any container for a person's belongings or any individual item.

**Minibus** – means a vehicle which:

- 1) is designed or constructed to carry no less than 8 passengers and no more than 15 passengers;
- 2) is used with the services of a driver, to carry passengers for hire or reward;
- 3) is NOT fitted with a taximeter; and
- 4) does not park or stand and ply for hire in a road or public place other than a Minibus rank or an approved place.

**MVR** – means the Northern Territory Motor Vehicle Registry.

**Operate** – in relation to a commercial passenger vehicle, means

- (a) to drive or use: or
- (b) to cause or employ another person to drive or use,

that vehicle to carry passengers for hire or reward, otherwise than only in the capacity of an employee or volunteer.

**Regulations** – means the NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA MINIBUS REGULATIONS

**Subjective Assessment** for the purpose of Comfort & Aesthetic Standards – means there is some discretion given to a person who is inspecting the vehicle, to make allowances for the area of operation and / or the remaining life of the vehicle for example, during the preceding 6 months a number of small scratches & chips have appeared on a door of a Minibus that is 5 ½ years old. Given that the Minibus only has 6 months left to run the inspector may allow the operator to touch up the chips (eg paint stick) and polish the door instead of having the door resprayed;

**Wheel Trim** – means any item that covers part of or the entire wheel and includes hub caps.

▲ Denotes items that are enforceable by Infringement Notice.

## **2 Vehicle Type and Colour**

### **2.1) Vehicle Type**

The vehicle must be of a type that has been approved by the Director; with a bus or coach type body; which complies with the requirements of all relevant ADR's. When a factory new vehicle is registered for the first time to be used for Hire or Reward, it must be identified (via compliance plate) as meeting all applicable ADR requirements.

### **2.2) Vehicle Colour Requirements**

There is no specific colour a Minibus must be other than it must be all one colour with the following exception.

Networks may apply to the Director for approval of a specific network colour / scheme. If approved, all vehicles operating within the network may be painted the approved colour / scheme or be all one colour.

If a network has a colour / scheme approved, no other network in that region may use that colour / scheme.

Any colour / scheme, excluding a total vehicle colour of white, may be applied for as a network colour. The purpose of this is to allow a default colour to be available to all operators.

- ▲ If an operator decides to change networks from one network with an approved colour scheme to any other network, the Minibus will not be allowed to operate in the second network with the previous network's approved colour / scheme.
- ▲ Any resprayed vehicle (to change vehicle colour) must have the colour applied to all exterior painted surfaces of the body commonly visible to the customer.

## **3 Vehicle Age Requirements**

### **3.1) Entry Maximum Age**

A vehicle registered for the first time as a Minibus must not be older than 4 years of age from the date of manufacture as indicated on the vehicle's Compliance Plate.

### **3.2) In service Maximum Age**

Any in service Minibus must not be older than 6 years of age from the date of manufacture as indicated on the vehicle's Compliance Plate.

## **▲ 4 Inspection Requirements**

All in service Minibuses must be inspected at an interval, not exceeding 6 months, by a person authorised to perform such inspections. *Note: Refer to MVR for details of current inspection arrangements.*

### **NOTE**

It is the responsibility of the Operator to ensure the vehicle is serviced and maintained to the vehicle manufacturer's requirements and this standard AT ALL TIMES.

Where a vehicle is inspected (roadside or in an approved inspection station) and found with a serious road safety related fault(s), the appropriate action will be taken against the operator in conjunction with the issue of a defect notice.

If the inspection was performed on the road side, a full inspection will be carried out when the vehicle is presented to the authorised inspection station and any other road safety related faults found will entail the issue of a subsequent defect notice including subsequent appropriate action against the operator.

If a vehicle has been issued a defect notice, it will NOT be permitted to operate for hire or reward until the defect(s) has (have) been cleared by a Transport Inspector or a member of the NT Police force.

NT Legislation must be adhered to whilst operating a vehicle under defect notice.

## **5 Communications**

Minibuses may have one or more of the following communication devices.

### **▲ 5.1) Mobile/car phone.**

If the mobile phone is fitted to the vehicle, it must be securely attached, in such a manner as to maintain the aesthetics of the vehicle and must not be located in a position that is in the drivers field of view or is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident.

### **▲ 5.2) Two-way radio.**

Two-way radio systems must NOT be mounted in a position that permits the case to be visible from any passenger seating position, is in the drivers field of view or is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident ie a radio that is installed in the dash would be acceptable.

### **▲ 5.3) Dispatcher system.**

Dispatchers should be mounted as high as is reasonably possible to minimise eye diversion when driving and should be mounted ahead of and to the right of the left side of the steering wheel rim, provided the unit does NOT protrude into the drivers field of view or is likely to cause an injury as a result of an accident.

#### **NOTE**

Northern Territory and Commonwealth Legislation regarding the usage of communication equipment must be complied with at all times.

## **6 Equipment**

All Minibuses must comply with the following equipment requirements. The equipment detailed must be fitted to all Minibuses and be maintained in a serviceable condition at all times:

- ▲ 6.1)** A plate or decal indicating the Minibus's registration number must be affixed in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle. The plate or decal is to have white lettering on a black background with lettering at least 15mm high\*, it must also be clearly visible from all passenger-seating positions.

#### **NOTE**

In some instances a second plate or decal may be required to meet visibility requirement.

- ▲ 6.2) A fixture designed to clearly display the driver's identification card must be fitted in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle, which is clearly visible from all passenger-seating positions.
- ▲ 6.3) Signage indicating the vehicle's licensed passenger carrying capacity affixed in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle. The sign is to have white lettering on a black background with lettering at least 15mm high\* and is to display the following information;

**Licensed to carry ..... Passengers.**

**NOTE**

In some instances a second plate or decal may be required to meet visibility requirement.

- ▲ 6.4) Signage indicating the fare charged by the operator of the Minibus, calculated by distance or sector, must be affixed in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle, which is clearly visible from all passenger-seating positions. A second sign must be carried in the vehicle which must be produced on demand by anyone.

**NOTE**

It is acceptable to install a third sign externally to advertise the fares should an operator choose to do so.

- ▲ 6.5) A current vehicle inspection record label that has been supplied by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, which must be affixed to the left side of the windscreen (outside of the field of view of the driver) or a window, that does not hide from view, on the left hand side of the vehicle.
- ▲ 6.6) A fire extinguisher must be fitted: which has been certified within the past 12 months; is fully charged and meets the requirements of Australian Standard AS2444. For a Toyota Commuter sized vehicle, the minimum requirement is a 2A:20B (fitted with a hose). Other vehicle types may require a higher rated extinguisher. It shall be securely mounted and not be a hazard or cause annoyance to the vehicle occupants. It must be easily accessible and must not be obscured.
- ▲ 6.7) A roadworthy spare tyre/wheel assembly and a minimum of the tyre changing equipment and tools supplied by the vehicle manufacturer must be fitted and secured to the vehicle.
- ▲ 6.8) Company decals or signage indicating the name or trademark of the network or operator must be fitted to both sides of the vehicle exterior. It is acceptable to install more decals / signs on the front and rear should an operator choose to do so.
- ▲ 6.9) Use of company / network decals is only permitted for the purpose of advertising hence only one sticker will be allowed within the close proximity of another one eg multiple use for the purpose of covering cosmetic deficiencies will NOT be allowed.

\* **Existing sign dimensions will be acceptable, however the new dimensions will apply when a sign is replaced or a vehicle is presented for initial inspection. In all cases the new sign dimensions will be mandatory from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009.**

## **7 Exterior**

- ▲ 7.1) All vehicle exterior body panels must be in a sound condition correctly aligned, free of dents, scratches, accident damage, corrosion and dirt.
- ▲ 7.2) All exterior paintwork must be of a similar colour and lustre, and must also be free of scratches, chips, blemishes and dirt.
- ▲ 7.3) All exterior signage, network identification decals and any advertising decals must not be damaged or deteriorated.
- ▲ 7.4) All advertising displayed on a Minibus must meet the requirements as specified in Attachment A.
- ▲ 7.5) All exterior fittings and accessories must be in an undamaged, sound condition and correctly secured. Body mouldings and mud flaps must be correctly aligned and secured.
- ▲ 7.6) All vehicle glazing must comply to the relevant ADR's, be free of excessive chips, scratches, cracks or other blemishes. Any window tint film fitted must comply with the NT standard (refer to MVR Information Bulletin V51) and must not be scratched, bubbled or deteriorated in any way. All glazing must be free of dirt and where applicable must operate as originally designed.
- ▲ 7.7) All doors are to be correctly aligned, are to open and close without undue effort or noise. Hinges, catches and check links must not be excessively worn. All door seals must be correctly secured and undamaged.
- ▲ 7.8) Bumper bars are to be securely attached, correctly aligned and free of dents, scratches, accident damage and dirt.
- ▲ 7.9) Wheels and wheel trims must be of a type that are fitted as standard equipment, or a manufactures option for the make / model of the vehicle. All wheels (other than alloy wheels) must be fitted with matching wheel trims. Wheel rims and trims must be maintained in an undamaged and clean condition.
- ▲ 7.10) Tyres must conform to the placarded tyre list affixed to the vehicle and be maintained in a roadworthy condition. Retread Tyres are acceptable for use on a Minibus, including the spare wheel. However the speed rating of the remanufacturer or of MVR information bulletin V44 (which ever is the lower) must be adhered to and the vehicle placarded as stated in bulletin V44.
- ▲ 7.11) All mechanical components that contain fluids must be maintained to prevent oil (engine, transmission, differential, steering etc), brake fluid and greases from leaking on to the road surface.

## **8 Interior**

- ▲ 8.1) All vehicle interior surfaces including seats, head rests, floor coverings, trims and seatbelts are to be in a sound condition, free of dirt, stains and damage. Original seat and head rest coverings (if not fitted with removable covers) and any removable seat and head rest covers fitted, are to be non-absorbent.
- ▲ 8.2) All interior lighting (dome and courtesy lights) must be operational as originally designed. The fitment of interior novelty lighting or the carriage of ornaments on the dash or interior mirror is prohibited.

- ▲ 8.3) All Minibuses must have a factory fitted air conditioning system installed in the vehicle. The air conditioning, heating and ventilation system must operate as originally designed and deliver sufficient quantities of cool or hot air to maintain acceptable cabin temperatures for passenger comfort. In most cases, a second unit fitted in the rear passenger compartment will be required to fulfil these requirements.
- ▲ 8.4) All interior fittings and accessories must be in an undamaged sound condition and match the colour and shade of the existing trim / upholstery. All seats (including the drivers seat), with particular reference to seat cushions (the part a person sits on), must provide adequate support as originally designed.
- ▲ 8.5) The interior cabin space of the vehicle must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition, free of rubbish, loose objects and odours.
- ▲ 8.6) Any interior advertising or stickers displayed must not be offensive or otherwise inappropriate ie have a racial, religious or ethnic overtone.
- ▲ 8.7) Luggage must NOT be carried in a location or manner that may cause an injury in the event of an accident or emergency braking manoeuvre eg luggage carried in the aisle of a vehicle is NOT acceptable due to it potentially becoming a missile. Luggage must NOT be placed in any location that blocks the use of or operation of any emergency exit. One way to minimise the potential problems is to utilise a trailer to carry the luggage.

## **9 Accessories and Modifications**

- ▲ 9.1) Illuminated roof signs of any size, type or description are NOT permitted on a Minibus.
- ▲ 9.2) Tow bars may be fitted, however all relevant NT legislation, including the ADR's, regarding the fitment and use of tow bars must be adhered to. They must be of the type that allows removal of the tow tongue (that part of the tow bar that the tow ball is attached to), which must be removed when not in use ie no trailer attached.
- ▲ 9.3) Bull bars, driving lights, cargo barriers and any non-safety related vehicle accessory / option must not be fitted unless approved by the Director in writing.
- ▲ 9.4) Any approved accessory fitted must be maintained in a sound condition, at all times meeting the manufactures or approved installation requirements.

### **NOTE:**

**The Director may instruct the operator to remove the accessory / option if any accessory / option has been fitted without prior written approval.**

## **▲ 10 Ride Quality and Comfort**

The vehicle's ride quality and comfort must be maintained to an acceptable standard without excessive vibrations, squeaks, rattles and noises from the vehicle's steering, suspension, drive line or body.

## **11 Additional Requirements for Wheelchair Accessible Minibuses (WAM)**

### **11.1) Background**

Wheelchair Accessible Minibuses (WAM) are vehicles that have been modified for the purpose of the carriage of persons in wheelchairs. The specialised equipment installed for this purpose such as, lift or hoist mechanisms, wheel chair restraint systems and foldaway seats, require certification to relevant Australian Standards and Australian Design Rules. In addition to complying with the requirements and standards as detailed above, WAMs must also meet the following requirements.

### **11.2) Equipment**

All WAMs must be fitted with the following additional equipment, which must be maintained in a serviceable condition and at all times comply with the manufacturers or approved installation requirements.

11.2.1) A wheelchair and occupant restraint system that complies with the requirements of Australian Standard AS.2942 (Wheelchair occupant restraint assemblies for motor vehicles), which has been installed in accordance with specifications and guidelines issued by the restraint manufacturer.

▲ 11.2.2) Signage indicating the correct method of use for the wheelchair restraint system fitted (as outlined in Australian Standard AS.2942) must be displayed in a conspicuous position inside the vehicle, clearly visible to passengers using wheelchairs.

11.2.3) A wheelchair hoist or lift mechanism that does not obstruct any passenger access and has been manufactured and installed to comply with the requirements of Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS.3856.2 (Hoist and ramps for people with disabilities - vehicle mounted).

### **11.3) Modified Components**

The installation of the equipment as described in 11.2 and any vehicle modifications require individual approval. Modifications that effect the vehicle's compliance to ADR's will require:

11.3.1) Factory new vehicles:

Second stage manufacturer's approval and the fitting of a second compliance plate to the vehicle.

11.3.2) In service vehicles:

Engineering certification describing all the vehicle modifications and effected ADR's, and contain detail of how continued compliance with ADR's is maintained.

#### **NOTE**

**Any vehicle components modified, as a result of the vehicle's conversion to a WAM or modified components in any minibus must still comply with the intent of all relevant ADR's.**

- 11.3.3) Doors and emergency exits (if applicable) must not be obstructed and must be capable of being opened or operated from both the inside and outside of the vehicle.
- 11.3.4) Any additional or modified seats and/or seat belts must be fitted and certified as complying with applicable ADR's and National Codes of Practice. Any folding seats must continue to operate as originally designed.

## **12 Trailers**

Trailers are allowed 'as of right', however a Minibus towing a trailer may only rank on a Minibus rank that is approved for use with a trailer.

A trailer approved for use in a Minibus operation:

- 12.1) must be NT Registered and in a roadworthy condition;
- 12.2) will be fully enclosed to prevent dust ingress;
- 12.3) will have the interior lined throughout to prevent any damage to luggage carried;
- 12.4) will have the exterior finished and maintained to a similar level as the vehicle; and
- 12.5) must not exceed the towing capacities (with /without brakes) of the vehicle and tow bar as determined by the manufacturers and must comply with all relevant NT legislation including the ADRs.

## ATTACHMENT A

### Advertising

The Regulations require all advertisements displayed in or on a Minibus to be approved by the Director. The requirements as listed in this attachment have been approved as the Minibus advertising standards in the NT. Advertisements that meet all the requirements as listed below shall be deemed to be approved by the Director. Any advertising outside these requirements requires individual approval.

A.1) A Minibus may only display advertisements for a maximum of two separate organisations.

A.2) A maximum of any two of the five areas of a vehicle as detailed below in *figure 2*, may display advertisements.

Area 1 - Drivers and Front Passenger Doors only.

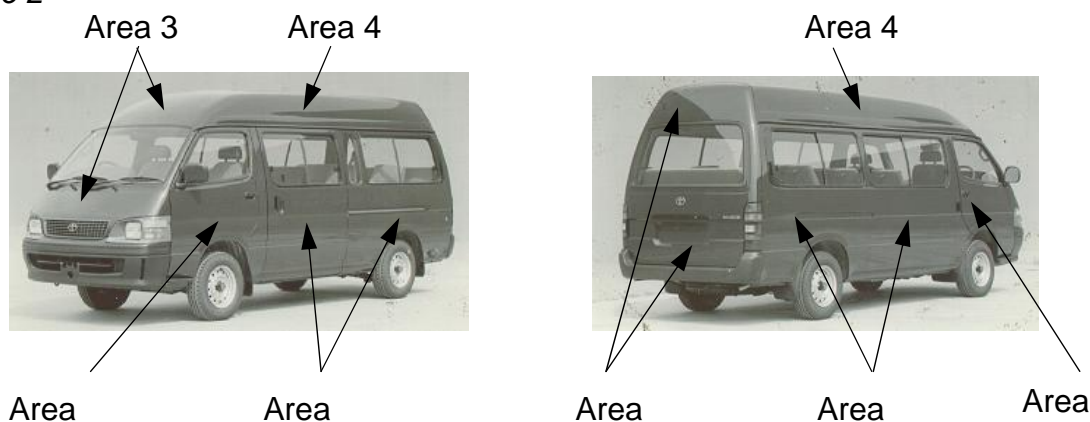
Area 2 - The body panels on both sides below the windows.

Area 3 - Above and below the front windscreen including the front bumper.

Area 4 - The body panels on both sides above the windows

Area 5 – Above and below the rear windscreen including the rear bumper

Figure 2



A.3) Advertisements displayed must be static and non-reflective.

A.4) The wording and any pictorial images represented must not be offensive, ambiguous or otherwise inappropriate ie have a racial, religious or ethnic overtone.

**Note:**

The Director may instruct the operator to remove any advertising that does not comply with the above.