

Pilot and escort recognition and training – Information sheet

This information sheet provides a brief overview of the current pilot and escort certification requirements in all jurisdictions in Australia.

This information has been sourced from jurisdictional road authorities and was correct at the time of publication.

For up-to-date information or details on roles and responsibilities, please contact the relevant state or territory road authority (Table 5).

Background

State and territory road authorities administrate the requirements for becoming a pilot or escort.

The Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) does not regulate pilot and escort requirements. The HVNL provides definitions for 'pilot vehicle' and 'escort vehicle' (Table 1) and, in some circumstances, when a pilot is required.

The *Heavy Vehicle (Mass, Dimension and Loading) National Regulation* (MDL Regulation) has requirements for pilot and escort vehicles, such as warning lights, warning signs, headlights, positioning of vehicles and communication technology.

Table 1 HVNL definitions

Term	Definition	Source
Pilot vehicle	A motor vehicle that accompanies an oversize vehicle to warn other road users of the oversize vehicle's presence.	HVNL
Escort vehicle	An escort vehicle that is driven by a Police officer or another person authorised to direct traffic under an Australian road law.	HVNL

Pilots

A pilot vehicle assists with the safe movement of an oversize vehicle or combination on the road. A pilot vehicle provides visual advice of an oncoming heavy vehicle to other road users.

In some jurisdictions, the role of a heavy vehicle pilot can include an authority to direct traffic. However, the roles are regulated by the state and territory road authorities. Pilots must refer to each jurisdiction for more details.

Escorts

An escort is authorised to direct traffic under Australian road law.

Escort roles are performed by different authorised entities, depending on which jurisdiction they are operating. Table 2 identifies the responsible entity who can perform the role of an escort in each of the jurisdiction.

Accreditation/Licence

Pilot accreditation is not a requirement in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales or South Australia, or for a pilot of an agricultural vehicle in Queensland.

Pilots in Western Australia must complete the Western Australian Heavy Vehicle Pilot Licence course.

The Northern Territory, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria have adopted a two-tier system. The system provides two levels of pilots with different levels of requirements and qualifications.

Queensland is the only state to implement a two-tier system for both pilots and escorts.

Table 2 details pilot accreditation and identifies the responsible entity who can perform the role of an escort in each of the jurisdiction.

Table 2 Accreditation pilot and escort overview

State/ territory	Pilot		Escort
	Level 1	Level 2	
ACT	Nil accreditation		Police
NSW	Nil accreditation		Police
NT	No	Yes	NT Accredited Oversize Escort Operator or Police
QLD	Yes*	Yes	Level 2 Escort Vehicle Driver or Police
SA	Nil accreditation		Police
TAS	No	Yes	Transport Safety Services or Police
VIC	No	Yes	Safety Compliance Officer (SCO)
WA	Yes		Traffic Escort Warden

* In Queensland a pilot of an agricultural vehicle doesn't need accreditation unless a condition of the notice or permit requires a Level 1 or Level 2 pilot. For more information, refer to the [National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Mass and Dimension Exemption Notice Operator's Guide](#) or the permit. The pilot of an agricultural vehicle must hold a provisional or open licence.

Units of competency

Where a state or territory requires accreditation or licencing to operate as a pilot or Level 2 pilot (or certified pilot or escort), the training varies depending on the state or territory and level. These requirements are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 Units of competency for pilots (L1 and L2) and escorts (E)

Code	Course name/training required	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
TLIB2004	Carry out vehicle inspection	–	–	L2	–	–	L2	L2	P
TLIF3060	Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator ¹	–	–	L2	–	–	L2 ¹	L2 ¹	P
TLIF3013	Coordinate breakdown and emergencies	–	–	L2	–	–	L2	L2	P
TLIF0075	Demonstrate awareness of interacting with other road users	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
TLIC3010	Pilot or escort oversized and/or overmass loads	–	–	L2	*L1 ² L2 E	–	L2	L2	P
TLIH3002	Plan and navigate routes	–	–	E	–	–	–	–	–
TLIE3009	Use pilot and escort communication	–	–	L2	–	–	L2	L2	P
Bridge supervision		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	P
Knowledge test undertaken at issuing authority		–	–	–	L1 ²	–	–	–	–
Level 2 Load experience required – number of trips		–	–	10 loads greater than 4.5m wide	Minimum of 12 trips	–	Minimum of 40 oversize load movements during the 3 years	Minimum of 40 oversize load movements during the 3 years	–
Escort		–	–	10 loads piloted in a 2-pilot situation and 5 loads involving an NT Accredited Oversize Escort Operator or Authorised Officer (Police)	Minimum of 12 trips	–	–	–	–
Driver's licence: – Provisional or above (PR) – Full licence (F)		PR	PR	F	F	PR	F	F	F

¹ Refresher course every three years.

* In Queensland a pilot of an agricultural vehicle does not need accreditation unless a condition of the notice or permit requires a Level 1 or Level 2 pilot. For more information, refer to the permit or the [National Class 1 Agricultural Vehicle and Combination Mass and Dimension Exemption Notice Operator's Guide](#). The pilot of an agricultural vehicle must hold a provisional or open licence.

² In Queensland, a Level 1 pilot must complete either the knowledge test or the TLIC3010. TLIC3010 must be completed before obtaining Level 2 escort accreditation.

Working interstate and mutual recognition of pilots and escorts

Different requirements exist for pilots and escorts operating interstate. Table 4 provides an overview of requirements for pilots and escorts when operating in a visiting state or territory. For additional information, please contact the relevant jurisdiction road authority (Table 5).

Pilots and escort drivers are required to maintain a valid licence or certification, as specified by their state or territory. If you are a pilot or escort driver working interstate, it's important you understand how your licence or certification is mutually recognised too. While the HVNL doesn't regulate pilot and escort certification, the NHVR can issue an infringement notice to the driver of an oversize vehicle for not complying with the conditions on the permit, such requiring a certified pilot or escort.

Table 4 Mutual recognition conditions

State/territory	Recognition
ACT, NSW, SA	Must hold the appropriate level licence.
NT	<p>Level 1 Any person with an appropriate driver's licence from another state or territory may carry out the duties of a Level 1 pilot in the NT, provided their vehicle complies with the requirements in the NT Permit Guidelines for Oversize and Overmass Vehicles</p> <p>Level 2 A level 2 pilot must hold NT accreditation and authorisation to display a traffic control device. Applications must be made to DIPL via the Application/Renewal – Oversize Load Pilot/Escort Vehicle Operator Appointment (VS9) The NT will recognise a pilot from a state or territory is accredited and trained to the same level as an accredited NT level 2 pilot.</p> <p>NT Escort No recognition – Escorts must hold NT accreditation. Applications must be made to DIPL via the Application/Renewal – Oversize Load Pilot/Escort Vehicle Operator Appointment (VS9). Note: An interstate accredited pilot cannot display a traffic control device in the NT. The person must be an NT accredited pilot/escort.</p>
QLD	<p>Pilot/escort vehicle driver from a state that has formal accreditation Level 1 pilot vehicle drivers and Level 2 escort vehicle drivers who are registered or licenced or certified or accredited in another state or territory (e.g. NT, VIC and WA) may operate under the Safe Movement Guideline Pilot and Escort Operations in Queensland provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the operation is restricted to the level of authority for which they are permitted to operate in their home state or territory; and they hold and have held for a total of at least three years during the five years before the day of entry into QLD, a provisional or open licence to drive the motor vehicle; and operations are conducted in accordance with the requirements contained in the Safe Movement Guideline Pilot and Escort Operations in Queensland; and Level 1 pilot vehicle drivers and Level 2 escort vehicle drivers provide evidence of achieved competency (including the ability to perform traffic control duties if a Level 2 escort vehicle driver) if requested to do so by an authorised officer. <p>Pilot/escort vehicle drivers with no formal accreditation Pilot vehicle drivers who reside in a jurisdiction that does not have a formal accreditation (such as the ACT, NSW, SA and TAS) are only permitted to carry out Level 1 pilot operations in Queensland provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the journey has commenced outside of QLD; and they hold and have held for a total of at least three years during the five years before the day of entry into QLD, a provisional or open licence to drive the motor vehicle; and they currently reside in the state or territory in which their driver licence was issued; and operations are conducted in accordance with the requirements contained in the Safe Movement Guideline Pilot and Escort Operations in Queensland; and they comply with the mass or dimension exemption (for oversize heavy vehicles movements) issued under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (Queensland) Act; and they can provide evidence that they normally carry out pilot or escort operations as a means of earning a livelihood in their home state or territory (e.g. a letter from their employer on business letterhead), if requested by a Transport and Main Roads transport inspector or Queensland Police officer; and they only pilot a load going out of QLD (a return journey) with the same transport company for which they piloted a load into QLD.

State/territory	Recognition
TAS, VIC	NT, QLD and WA Level 2 pilots have mutual recognition provided they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> hold a current qualification in their state of origin; and have successfully completed the traffic control competency within the past three years (TLIF3060 – Control traffic as a pilot vehicle operator) before they operate as a Certified Pilot in Victoria.
WA	No recognition – must hold WA accreditation.

Additional information

For more information on piloting and escorting, please contact your jurisdictional road authority (Table 5).

Table 5 State and territory road authority contact details

State/territory	Website
ACT	Phone: (02) 6207 6565 Email: nhvract@act.gov.au
NSW	Website: https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/
NT	Phone : 08 8999 3148 Fax: 08 8951 5181 Email: mvrpermits@nt.gov.au Website: https://nt.gov.au/
QLD	Website: https://www.qld.gov.au/
SA	Website: https://www.sa.gov.au/
TAS	Phone: (03) 6777 1936 Email: transport.safety@stategrowth.tas.gov.au
VIC	Website: https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/
VIC – NHVR Escorts	Phone: 0417 091 454 Email: HVescorts@nhvr.gov.au Website: See NHVR escort services on the Oversize overmass permit page on the NHVR website
WA	Phone: 138 486 Fax: (08) 9475 8455 Email: pilots@mainroads.wa.gov.au Website: https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au

For more information:

Visit: www.nhvr.gov.au
 Email: info@nhvr.gov.au
 Phone: 13 NHVR (13 64 87) *

* Standard 13 XX XX call charges apply. Please check with your phone provider.
 © Copyright National Heavy Vehicle Regulator 2023, creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/au
 Disclaimer: This information is only a guide and should not be relied upon as legal advice.