



HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW

National Heavy Vehicle Standards (Seatbelt Buckle Cover) Exemption Notice 2025 (No.1)

1. Purpose

This notice exempts a heavy vehicle that is fitted with an approved seatbelt buckle cover(s) from the requirements of the *Heavy Vehicle (Vehicle Standards) National Regulation* (the National Regulation) specified in this notice. It is not intended to cover road rule exemptions, or other restraint type devices that do not affect seat or seatbelt compliance.

2. Authorising Provision

This notice is made under section 61 of the *Heavy Vehicle National Law* (HVNL) as in force in each participating jurisdiction.

3. Commencement

This notice commences on 17 June 2025.

4. Expiry

This notice expires on 16 June 2030.

5. Title

This notice may be cited as the *National Heavy Vehicle Standards (Seatbelt Buckle Cover) Exemption Notice 2025 (No.1)*.

6. Definitions

- (1) Unless otherwise stated, words and expressions used in this notice have the same meanings as those defined in the HVNL.
- (2) In this notice—

Approved Buckle Cover User List means a document that:

- (a) is available in the vehicle
- (b) lists people who can use a buckle cover
- (c) may be generated and amended by the vehicle operator, or users/carer/supervisor
- (d) may take the form of a letter or other document
- (e) may be for individuals or a group of people
- (f) lists the user's:
 - (i) full name
 - (ii) date of birth

- (iii) address
 - (iv) parent/guardian's full name
 - (v) parent/guardian's phone number
- (g) lists for each user, the Prescriber's:
 - (i) full name
 - (ii) organisation
 - (iii) address
 - (iv) email
 - (v) phone number

Responsible supervisor is a person who is responsible for the buckle user and may be the vehicle driver, the user's carer or user's supervisor.

Seatbelt buckle cover means a cover that:

- (a) interferes with the normal operation of an approved seatbelt
- (b) prevents passengers with disabilities and/or behaviours of concern from inappropriately releasing seatbelt buckles
- (c) has been certified for use by a Prescriber; and
- (d) is designed to meet an appropriate Australian Standard at time of purchase.

Prescriber is a person/s responsible for assessing an individual needs and prescribing the way in which a person with a disability or medical condition should be transported in a motor vehicle. This is an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, medical practitioner or rehabilitation engineer.

7. Application

This notice applies to a heavy vehicle fitted with seatbelt buckle cover(s) operating in all participating jurisdictions.

8. Exemption from Prescribed Vehicle Standards

A heavy vehicle with seatbelt buckle cover(s) is exempt from complying with Appendix A, clause 6.2.2.2 of Australian Design Rule 04/06 – Buckle operational requirements.

9. Conditions

- (1) The seatbelt buckle cover must only be fitted to a seating position occupied by a person on the Approved Buckle Cover User List.
- (2) The Approved Buckle Cover User List must be carried in the vehicle with this notice.
- (3) The seatbelt buckle cover must be used in accordance with instructions provided by the manufacturer/supplier.
- (4) A seatbelt cutter is to be kept within an area of the vehicle in a clearly visible or clearly labelled position. The responsible supervisor must be trained and competent with the operation of both the seatbelt buckle cover and the emergency seatbelt cutter.

- (5) The driver and any additional responsible supervisor/s must be made aware of the seatbelt cutters location before operating the vehicle.
- (6) A prescriber must specify the use of a seatbelt buckle cover in accordance with the requirements of *AS/NZS 4370:2013 Restraint of children with disabilities, or medical conditions, in motor vehicles*.
- (7) From 1 June 2027, a seatbelt buckle cover must meet *AS/NZS 5384:2023 Accessories for seat belts used in motor vehicles*.

Dated 17 June 2025

Kelli Walker
A/Chief, Safety and Productivity
National Heavy Vehicle Regulator