

Vehicle Standards Information 3

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Conditions for Registration of Imported Vehicles in Victoria

This Vehicle Standards Information (VSI) sheet provides guidance to assist people who are considering importing a motor vehicle and wish to register it in Victoria.

This information sheet applies to vehicles with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) of 4.5 tonne or less. For heavy vehicle requirements please refer to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator website at nhvr.gov.au.

Introduction

There are several regulations controlling the importation of vehicles into Australia. Before importing a vehicle, you should check with the Administrator Vehicle Standards, Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), that the vehicle is of a type that can be imported and registered in Australia.

Complete vehicles cannot be imported for wrecking or parts. Vehicles that are dismantled prior to importation for parts cannot be reassembled and registered.

Requirements

Regulations introduced in August 1989 by the Australian Government under the Motor Vehicle Standards Act and regulations introduced in 2018 under the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018 (RVSA) require certain procedures and conditions to be satisfied before a motor vehicle can be imported. A brief summary of these requirements is contained in this Vehicle Information Sheet. You should also refer to information published on the DITRDC website on importing vehicles into Australia. This website also contains the forms to submit an online application to obtain a Vehicle Import Approval.

The Vehicle Import Approval will allow you to clear your vehicle at its point of entry to Australia and will be required for compliance and registration purposes. It is essential that the Vehicle Import Approval is obtained before the vehicle is imported.

In addition, the Australian Border Force should be contacted for information on taxes, duties and quarantine requirements. Addresses for the Australian Border Force and the Administrator, DITRDC are provided in the Further Information section of this VSI sheet.

Note

The issue of a Vehicle Import Approval by DITRDC does not guarantee registration approval will be granted in Victoria.

Vehicle Import Categories

For the purposes of this VSI sheet, imported vehicles that are eligible for consideration for registration are classified as follows:

Vehicles Imported for Evaluation

Vehicles imported as evaluation vehicles may only be registered in the name of the person or company to whom the import approval has been granted. This is the name shown on the import approval documents. The registration will be conditional, for a specified period and cannot be transferred. In addition to any conditions for registration applied by VicRoads for evaluation vehicles, the registration will also be subject to any conditions specified in the import approval and in the guidelines issued by the Administrator Vehicle Standards, DITRDC.

New Low Volume Vehicle Import

The low volume importation of new vehicles is limited to vehicle make and models that are on the register of Specialist and Enthusiast Vehicles specified by the Low Volume Scheme for new vehicles. Contact the DITRDC website for more information on new low volume vehicle imports.

Personal Import

A Personal Import is a vehicle imported by a person that:

- Is an Australian citizen or a person who has applied to become an Australian citizen or has been granted permanent resident status in Australia; and
- Has owned and used the vehicle overseas for a continuous period of at least 12 months before importing it to Australia; and
- Has not imported another vehicle under the personal import scheme in the previous 5 years.

Used Low Volume Vehicle Import

A Used Low Volume Vehicle Import is a vehicle which:

- Does not qualify as a Personal Import, and
- Was imported by a company operating under the Registered Automotive Workshop Scheme (RAWS).

The RAWS allows for the importation and supply of used specialist or enthusiast vehicles to the market in Australia. Contact the DITRDC website for more information on used low volume vehicle imports under RAWS.

Imported Vehicles with a Date of Manufacture 25 Years or Older (other than a Personal Import)

Vehicles with a date of manufacture 25 years or older can be imported provided a Vehicle Import Approval has been issued for the vehicle by DITRDC.

Certification and Registration Requirements for Used Imported Vehicles

The certification, construction and registration requirements for each used vehicle import category are outlined in this section. A summary of these requirements is shown in the table at the end of this information sheet.

Personal Import

Import approval

A Vehicle Import Approval issued by the Administrator, Vehicle Standards, DITRDC is required. This approval is utilised for the following purposes:

- To clear customs and quarantine requirements administered at the point of entry to Australia,
- To obtain a Personal Import Plate,
- To register the vehicle.

Personal Import Plate and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

A Personal Import Plate must be attached to the vehicle before it is presented for registration. The Personal Import Plate is in the form of a yellow coloured self-voiding label.

To have a Personal Import Plate fitted to your vehicle you will need to contact a Vehicle Assessment Signatory Scheme (VASS) signatory who will inspect your vehicle and make arrangements for a plate to be supplied. This plate certifies that the vehicle complies with the applicable Standards for Registration.

The VIN/Chassis Number on the plate must match the VIN/Chassis Number stamped on a substantial part of the chassis or body such as the chassis rail, firewall or the suspension tower before the vehicle can be registered.

A list of VASS signatories is available on the VicRoads website or from any VicRoads Customer Service Centre.

Construction and Safety Requirements

The Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 grant a personally imported vehicle partial exemption from compliance with the Australian Design Rules (ADRs). However, the vehicle must at least comply with the standards set out in Schedule 2 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 and the ADRs specified in part 23 of Schedule 2.

A personally imported vehicle may comply with a later standard or ADR to that specified in Schedule 2.

Left hand drive Personal Import vehicles with a date of manufacture less than 30 years old can not be registered.

Left hand drive Personal Import vehicles with a date of manufacture 25 years or older but less than 30 years may be eligible to be used under the club permit scheme. Refer to VSI 18 - *Left hand drive vehicles and vehicles converted to right hand drive* for further details.

Emissions

It is an offence under the Environment Protection Act 1970 to drive a vehicle on a public highway in Victoria, which has had the emission controls tampered with or removed.

If the vehicle is powered by a petrol engine the idle carbon monoxide level must not exceed 4.5% (v/v).

The exhaust emission, except for water vapour, is not to be visible to the naked eye for a continuous period exceeding ten seconds when the vehicle is driven in any manner likely to occur in normal vehicle use.

Documentation

The following documentation must accompany the application for registration of the vehicle:

- Endorsement of Compliance Certificate signed by a VASS signatory. The Endorsement of Compliance Certificate is included with the Vehicle Import Approval issued by DITRDC;
- A Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness issued not more than 30 days before the date of application for registration; and
- Where a right hand drive conversion or any other modifications have been carried out, an Approval Certificate from a VASS signatory certifying the compliance and safety of the conversion and / or modification.

Used Low Volume Vehicle Import Compliance Plate and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

All used vehicle imports must be fitted with a Used Import Plate as evidence that the vehicle complies with all the applicable Australian Design Rules. The Used Import Plate is in the form of a magenta coloured self-voiding label and specifies details identifying the vehicle and the Registered Automotive Workshop that fitted the plate.

The VIN on the plate must match the VIN stamped on a substantial part of the chassis or body such as the chassis rail, firewall or the suspension tower before the vehicle can be registered.

Documentation

The following documentation must accompany the application for registration of a used vehicle import.

- A Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness issued not more than 30 days before the date of application for registration;
- A fully completed Consumer Information Notice signed by a Vehicle Inspection Signatory for the RAW (Photocopies are not acceptable);

Imported Vehicles with a Date of Manufacture 25 Years or Older (other than a Personal Import)

Import approval

A Vehicle Import Approval issued by the Administrator, Vehicle Standards, DITRDC is required. This approval is utilised for the following purposes:

- To clear customs and quarantine requirements administered at the point of entry to Australia,
- To register the vehicle.

Compliance Plate and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

These vehicles do not require a Personal Import Plate or a Used Import Plate, however they must still comply with applicable Standards for Registration.

The VIN/Chassis Number on the Vehicle Import Approval must match the VIN/Chassis Number stamped on a substantial part of the chassis or body such as the chassis rail, firewall or the suspension tower before the vehicle can be registered.

Construction and Safety Requirements

Vehicles subject to Australian Design Rules (i.e. Vehicles manufactured after 1968 or June 1975 for motorcycles) must be certified by a VASS Signatory.

Left hand drive used imported vehicles with a date of manufacture 25 years or older but less than 30 years, that are not converted to right hand drive cannot be registered. However, these vehicles may be eligible to be used under the club permit scheme. Refer to VSI 18 - ***Left hand drive vehicles and vehicles converted to right hand drive*** for further details.

The requirement for the vehicle to be in the right hand drive configuration does not apply if the vehicle has a date of manufacture 30 years or older. However, in addition to all other applicable standards, a vehicle that remains in left hand drive configuration must be fitted with headlights which are suitable for a right hand drive vehicle (i.e. dipped beam cut-off to the left).

Documentation

The following documentation must accompany the application for registration of an imported vehicle with a date of manufacture 25 Years or older (other than a Personal Import):

- The Vehicle Import Approval;
- A Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness not more than 30 days before the date of application for registration;
- A VASS Approval Certificate if:
 - the vehicle has been converted from left hand to right hand drive
 - the vehicle was manufactured after 1968 (June 1975 for motorcycles)
 - the vehicle has unapproved modifications.

Driving Vehicles Before Registration

In Victoria, vehicles may only be driven on roads if they are registered or covered by an unregistered vehicle permit. Unregistered vehicle permits are usually valid for not more than 28 days and are issued subject to the following conditions:

- The vehicle is driven on a highway only for the purposes of:
 - moving the vehicle to a place where it will be garaged or stored;
 - obtaining registration e.g. converting the vehicle to right hand drive, obtaining a roadworthiness certificate etc.;
 - or
 - driving the vehicle out of the State.

Requirements for left hand drive vehicles operated under an unregistered vehicle permit are specified in VSI 18.

Unregistered vehicle permits may be obtained by phone on 13 11 71 or from any VicRoads Customer Service Centre.

Summary of Used Imported Vehicle Requirements

Classification of Imported Vehicle	Import Approval Documentation	Vehicle Compliance Plate & VIN Requirements	VASS Certification Requirements	Construction Requirements
Personal Import.	Vehicle Import Approval issued by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC).	The Personal Import plate (self-voiding label yellow in colour) must be fitted to the vehicle. The VIN/Chassis Number must be stamped on a substantial part of the body/chassis.	Endorsement of Compliance Certificate signed by a VASS signatory. A VASS Approval Certificate is only required if the vehicle has had a left to right hand drive conversion or has undergone other modifications requiring an Approval Certificate. (See VSI 8 and VSI 18)	The vehicle must comply with the Standards for Registration and the ADRs applicable to a Personal Import as set out in Schedule 2 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009. Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness required.
Used Import. Imported by a company operating under the RAWS.	Not required by VicRoads.	The RAWS Used Import plate (self-voiding label magenta in colour) must be fitted to the vehicle. The VIN must be stamped on a substantial part of the body/chassis.	A VASS Approval Certificate is not required. The RAWS Consumer Information Notice signed by a Vehicle Inspection Signatory for the RAW is required.	The vehicle must comply with the Standards for Registration applicable at its date of manufacture. Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness required.
Imported Vehicles (other than Personal Imports) manufactured after 1968 (June 1975 for motorcycles) and not less than 25 years.	Vehicle Import Approval issued by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC).	A compliance Plate is not required. The VIN/Chassis Number must be stamped on a substantial part of the body/chassis.	A VASS Approval Certificate is required showing compliance with the applicable Standards for Registration and covering any other modifications including left to right-hand drive conversion. For left hand drive vehicles with a date of manufacture 25 years or older but less than 30 years that are not converted to right hand drive, refer to requirements outlined in VSI 18.	The vehicle must comply with the Standards for Registration applicable at its date of manufacture. Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness required.
Imported vehicles (other than Personal Imports) manufactured before 1969 (July 1975 for motor cycles).	Vehicle Import Approval issued by the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC).	A compliance Plate is not required. The VIN/Chassis Number must be stamped on a substantial part of the body/chassis.	A VASS Approval Certificate is only required if the vehicle has had a left to right-hand drive conversion or has other modifications requiring an Approval Certificate.	The vehicle must comply with the Standards for Registration applicable at its date of manufacture. Victorian Certificate of Roadworthiness required.

Further Information

Information on Australian Customs and Quarantine requirements may be obtained from:

Australian Border Force

Melbourne Customs House
1010 Latrobe Street
Docklands
Melbourne
VICTORIA VIC 3008
Call: 1300 558 287
Website: abf.gov.au

Information on importing a motor vehicle and obtaining a Compliance Plate, where applicable, may be obtained from:

Administrator of Vehicle Standards Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Call: 1800 075 001 or +61 2 6274 7111
Website: infrastructure.gov.au