

Questions to ask?

Ask the salesperson, dealer, manufacturer or importer the following questions:

1. Does the vehicle/caravan/trailer meet all the requirements for registration and operation in Australian states and territories?
2. Can evidence be provided that the vehicle/caravan/trailer meets question 1?
3. Does the vehicle/caravan/trailer meet the relevant requirements for dimension – width, length, height, ground clearance and rear overhang?
4. Is the caravan/trailer within the towing capacity of my vehicle?
5. Is there sufficient carrying capacity for my needs? Compare tare mass with ATM or GVM of vehicle.
6. What warranties apply?

If in doubt, do not complete the purchase until you are satisfied about the requirements. For registration advice contact VicRoads on 13 11 71 or visit vicroads.vic.gov.au.

Things to check before purchase

- Registration requirements
- Dimensions & weight of vehicle/caravan/trailer
- Number plate/s
- All electrical equipment including compliance paperwork/plate
- Entrance/exits doors
- Safety chains
- Tyres & wheels – load and speed ratings
- Braking system
- Mudguards
- For any signs of rust
- Stop, tail & marker lamps, turn signals
- Trailer/VIN plate
- Plumbing equipment & fittings including Compliance Certificate

- Front, side and rear reflectors
- Wipers
- Exhaust system outlet position
- Fire extinguisher
- Turntable (5th wheelers).

For further information

Visit infrastructure.gov.au and download:

- Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1, Building Small Trailers
- Vehicle Standards Bulletin 10, Importing Vehicles to Australia

Visit vicroads.vic.gov.au and download:

- Vehicle Standards Information 5 – Conversion of Vehicles to Motor Homes
- Vehicle Standards Information 9 – Registration Requirements for Light Trailers manufactured before July 1991
- General Vehicle Mass and Dimension Limits Information Bulletin.

For further information please visit vicroads.vic.gov.au or call 13 11 71

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Buying a safe and compliant motorhome, caravan, campervan or camper trailer



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Each year in Australia, people purchase new or used (locally made or imported) motorhomes, caravans, 5th wheelers, campervans or camper trailers (4.5 tonnes Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) or less) that **may not** meet:

- The Australian Design Rules (ADRs)
- Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1, Building Small Trailers (for trailers manufactured after June 1991)
- Registration requirements or other standards relating to things such as electrical, plumbing work or gas appliances and installations.

Failure to meet the above requirements may cause the vehicle/caravan/trailer to be:

- Ineligible for registration
- Unsaleable because you cannot get a roadworthiness certificate (for the vehicle)
- Be unsafe for normal operation
- Subject to recall by manufacturer/importer.

Most vehicles/caravans/trailers sold in Australia are produced by manufacturers that know and meet the Australian compliance requirements. Unfortunately, a small number of manufacturers or importers of vehicles/trailers do not supply vehicles/trailers that meet the standards for operating on Australian roads.

The manufacturer or importer has a responsibility to ensure that a vehicle, caravan or trailer meets the appropriate standards for registration and is fit for its purpose.

What to watch for?

Before a new or used motorhome, caravan or camper trailer can be used on the road, it must comply with the requirements of the standards for registration. Common compliance problems include:

- Incorrect lighting and location of lights
- Vehicle/caravan/trailer exceeding allowable dimension limits (length, width, height and rear overhang)
- Turntables (5th wheels)/couplings not meeting ADRs
- Missing safety chains on trailers and caravans

- Inadequate braking performance and/or braking equipment not meeting standards
- Electrical and gas appliances installation and plumbing work not meeting Australian Standards*
- Motorhome or caravan not having at least one entrance/exit door on the left hand side or rear of vehicle (requirement from July 1988)
- Exhaust systems incorrectly located on motorhomes.

** Check for a Compliance Certificate for the plumbing work including the gas installations. This ensures the work has been certified by a licensed plumbing practitioner.*

Common dimension limits

- Maximum length: 12.5 metres*
- Maximum width: 2.5 metres (including awnings but excluding rear vision mirrors)
- Maximum height: 4.3 metres
- Rear overhang: the lesser of 60% of the wheel base or 3.7 metres**
- Vehicle and caravan overall length 19 metres

** Overall length for pig type trailers is 12.2 metres (a caravan is typically a pig trailer).*

***Rear overhang for a pig type trailer is the lesser of the length of the load carrying area ahead of the rear overhang line or 3.7 metres.*

Items or equipment mounted on the rear of the vehicle – for example toolboxes or a rack to carry a motorcycle are included in the measurement of rear overhang and overall length.

Vehicle plate for trailers and caravans

Before registration, the manufacturer or importer must affix a vehicle plate that has the following information:

- Manufacturer or importer's name
- Date of Manufacture (month/year)
- Trailer/caravan model
- Aggregate Trailer Mass (ATM) (Kg)
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)
- The Certification Statement.

The certification statement for new trailers (caravans, etc) is:

This trailer was manufactured to comply with the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989.

The certification statement for used imported trailers imported from June 2009 is:

This trailer is an imported used trailer. It has been modified and assessed as complying with the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989.

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)

All vehicles and trailers manufactured after 1988 must be identified by means of a 17 character Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). Vehicles and trailers must be marked with the VIN in accordance with the Australian Design Rules and Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1. Victoria and some other state and territory registering authorities require a VIN to be stamped onto a substantial part of the trailer, frame or chassis, e.g. the drawbar for registration purposes.

