



5.3.3

Annual Inspection of Unregistered Rural Fire Service Vehicles, Trailers and Plant

1 Rationale

- 1.1 The Rural Fires Act, 1997 defines the need to annually inspect all firefighting apparatus in the Rural Fire District, except for that equipment managed by land management authorities. In conjunction with the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority ("RTA"), the NSW Rural Fire Service ("the Service") has developed an annual inspection and registration system to meet the requirements of both the Rural Fires Act, 1997 and the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 1998 Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 1998 as amended.

2 Standard

Councils are required to maintain the annual inspection of their unregistered Rural Fire Service Vehicles, Trailers and Plant in accordance with the following Standard:

2.1 Inspection of dedicated Rural Fire vehicles

- 2.1.1 All dedicated vehicles ie. Service supplied, Council supplied or brigade supplied and used for rural firefighting in NSW will be required to:
- (a) be weighed with all equipment, water and crew to ensure that the vehicle Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) and individual axle loadings do not exceed the manufacturers rating by more than 10% (as applicable) for vehicles constructed before 1 January 1995; and



- (b) do not exceed the manufacturers rating if constructed on or after 1 January 1995.

2.1.2 Weighbridge dockets must show front and rear axle loadings and the overall GVM. These dockets are only required for the initial inspection or when the vehicle loading is altered.

2.1.3 These vehicles will be annually inspected to RTA standard in accordance to the following tare weight categories:

- (a) RTA Heavy Vehicle Inspection

- (i) All vehicles that have a tare weight 5,000kg or greater will be required to be inspected under the RTA Heavy Vehicle Inspection Scheme (HVIS) or Heavy Vehicle Authorised Inspection Station (HVAIS) scheme.

- (ii) This can occur at a Council workshop under the RTA Fleet Inspection Scheme or an RTA Heavy Vehicle Inspection Station as well as approved premises under the HVAIS scheme.

- (b) 2.1.2 AIS Light Vehicle Inspection

- (i) All vehicles that have a tare weight less than 5,000kg will be required to be inspected by an RTA Authorised Inspection Station (AIS) accredited examiner.

Note: This can occur at an AIS or through council using its own AIS accredited examiner.

- (ii) The tare weight determination has been altered as follows:-

The tare weight of a vehicle is the weight of the unit plus its equipment.

(The weight of crew and water are no longer used in determining tare weight. However, vehicles still need to be weighed with all equipment, water and crew to determine if the vehicle's GVM is exceeded.)



(iii) To assist councils the following information is supplied:

- Crew weight is calculated at 90kg per person.
- Water weight is calculated at 1L equals 1kg.
- Weighbridge docket must show front and rear axle loadings and the overall GVM.

Note: Prior to presenting a dedicated vehicle for an RTA HVIS or AIS inspection, council must determine whether the vehicle exceeds manufacturers ratings or allowances and where necessary, correct such overloads.

(iv) the vehicles must also be fitted with an approved operations plate issued by the Service. The operations plate and the name of the brigade it is attached to must be displayed externally on the vehicle.

2.2 Inspection of privately owned vehicles

2.2.1 Unregistered privately owned vehicles that are used for rural firefighting in NSW, ***on property other than that of the owner***, will be annually inspected by a Council Authorised Inspector to the following arrangements.

(a) Council Inspections of Private Vehicles

Local government councils will be required to implement and maintain a basic annual safety inspection programme for unregistered privately owned vehicles according to the following criteria:-

(b) Private rural fire vehicle inspection criteria

- (i) Frame and chassis being structurally sound and free from rust;
- (ii) Lighting system being effective and correctly aligned (applicable for night time use only);



- (iii) Braking system operating effectively; and
- (iv) Steering system operating effectively.

The vehicles must also be fitted with an approved operations plate issued by the Service. The operations plate and the name of the brigade it is attached to must be displayed externally on the vehicle.

2.2.2 Weighbridge docket will not be required for private vehicles. However, owners shall ensure that the vehicle Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) and individual axle loadings do not exceed the manufacturer's rating by more than 10% (as applicable) for vehicles constructed before 1 January 1995 and do not exceed the manufacturer's rating if constructed on or after 1 January 1995.

To assist councils with the inspection program the Service has produced the following documents:

- (c) Private Vehicle Inspection Form
 - (i) A one (1) page inspection form that council's authorised inspecting officer will use to inspect a private vehicle and confirm its roadworthiness.
 - (ii) The form also has a section for the owner of the vehicle to sign a self declaration that the vehicle will be maintained in a roadworthy standard for the ensuing twelve (12) months. This declaration is similar to that currently used by persons obtaining an Unregistered Vehicle Permit (UVP) from the RTA.
- (d) Private Vehicle Inspection Guidelines for Council
 - (i) A guideline for council authorised inspecting officers to use to assist them to determine the basic safety standards of the four (4) areas that require inspecting.

2.2.3 The Private Vehicle Inspection Guidelines for Council is a condensed version of the normal RTA inspection standard and concentrates solely on matters concerned with essential safety standards.



2.2.4 Council's authorised inspecting officer should in the first instance hold a Motor Mechanic Tradesman's Certificate plus an Authorised Inspection Station (AIS) accreditation.

2.2.5 If councils do not have an AIS authorised examiner, then a suitably qualified trades person who is deemed to be competent, can undertake the inspections or council may engage an outside AIS authorised examiner.

2.3 Private Farm / Road Plant

2.3.1 The current arrangements on farm or road plant (ie: tractor, grader or dozer) used for rural firefighting activities remain. They are as follows:

- (a) Option 1 - RTA Unregistered Vehicle Permit (Plant)
 - (i) The owner has a valid RTA Unregistered Plant Permit for which a fee is paid to the RTA.
 - (ii) The name of the brigade is displayed externally on the plant.
- (b) Option 2 - Declaration to Council
 - (i) The owner has duly completed and forwarded on an annual basis to council, a valid Plant Declaration.
 - (ii) An approved operations plate is issued with a Rural Fire Service Number (RFS);
 - (iii) The name of the brigade is displayed externally on the plant.
 - (iv) There is no fee charged for this service.
- (c) Councils are encouraged to consider adapting either option 1 or option 2.

2.4 Trailers

- (a) Inspections



- (i) Trailers less than 2,500kg tare must be inspected annually at an appropriate RTA Authorised Inspection Station (AIS).
- (ii) Trailers 2,500kg tare or greater must be inspected annually at an RTA Heavy Vehicle Inspection Station (HVIS).
- (iii) The tare weight is calculated as the weight of the trailer and its equipment but NOT the weight of the water.
- (iv) The (Gross Trailer Mass) GTM of a trailer includes all equipment and water.
- (v) Trailers not exceeding 750kg GTM are exempt brakes.
- (vi) An approved operations plate is attached to the trailer and a Rural Fire Service Number and the name of the brigade are marked on it.

2.5 Trailers used behind vehicles

2.5.1 Trailers towed by a motor vehicle other than an agricultural tractor, grader or dozer must comply with the following standards.

- (a) Towing Mass Limits
 - (i) The mass of any laden trailer towed by a vehicle must not be greater than the unladen mass of such vehicle.
 - (ii) The mass of any laden trailer towed by a vehicle with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) or Gross Combination Mass (GCM) of 4.5 tonnes or less must not exceed 67% of the mass limit of the towing vehicle.
 - (iii) The manufacturer's vehicle ratings of GVM, GCM, tyres, suspension, coupling, towing rating must not be exceeded.
- (b) 650 Litre Tanker Trailers – Braking Systems
 - (i) For these trailers with a GTM of up to 2 tonnes a braking system being either an overrun braking



- 2.7.1 All dedicated trailers are to be marked in accordance with the NSW Rural Fire Service vehicle marking Standard.

2.8 Trailers used behind farm or road plant

- 2.8.1 Brakes will not be required provided the item of farm or road plant has the mass and braking capacity to stop the combination from a speed of 30kph within a distance of 14 metres
- 2.8.2 Lighting will not be required when the trailer is used during daylight hours only
- 2.8.3 Lighting will be required for trailers intended for 24-hour use
- 2.8.4 Trailers supplied by the Service, Council or Brigade must be:
- (a) Inspected by council and a Private Vehicle Inspection Form completed
 - (b) Identified by the fitting of an approved Rural Fire Service operations plate
 - (c) Identified with the name of the brigade
 - (d) Marked in accordance with the NSW Rural Fire Service vehicle marking Standard
- 2.8.5 In the case of privately owned trailers:
- (a) The owner must have completed and forwarded on an annual basis to council, a valid Private Plant Declaration
 - (b) The name of the brigade must be marked on the trailer

2.9 Roadworthiness inspection labels for unregistered vehicles, trailers and plant

- 2.9.1 Councils will supply special "INSPECTED" labels to identify unregistered vehicles, trailers and plant that have successfully passed the following inspection levels:



- (a) Dedicated light vehicles and trailers.
- (b) Private vehicles and trailers inspected by council.
- (c) Private farm and road plant where a council declaration is provided.

2.9.2 These labels are **NOT** to be fitted to dedicated vehicles inspected by the Heavy Vehicle Inspection Scheme (HVIS), as the RTA provides and affixes appropriate labels to these vehicles.

2.9.3 The "INSPECTED" labels will be supplied on an annual basis by the Service to councils upon request.

2.9.4 The labels must be affixed on a clean area on the outside of the lower passenger side corner of the windscreen or on a fixed passenger side window (or in the case of plant or trailers, to a portion of the frame adjacent to the normal positioning of a rear number plate).

2.9.5 Each label is numbered, and this number is recorded on council's copy of the individual inspection or declaration forms. Labels are not transferable.

2.9.6 The "INSPECTED" label should be aligned on the vehicle so that the month of inspection shown on the label is in a vertical position.

2.9.7 The additional serial number slip supplied with the label should be attached to the inspection form.

2.10 Prior to inspection

2.10.1 Presentation of Vehicles for Inspection

- (a) All vehicles should be checked before first being presented to avoid both the inconvenience and cost of re-inspection. The following checklist is a guide for preparation of a vehicle for inspection, but is not necessarily exhaustive:
 - (i) All brakes must operate correctly and brake lines must be free from leaks.



- (ii) Tyres must have at least 1.5 mm of tread and must be free of deep cuts, bulges, exposed cords or other signs of carcass failure.
- (iii) Steering and suspension components must be in good condition with no worn bushes, bearings and joints.
- (iv) All wheel studs must be fitted with appropriate wheel nuts.
- (v) All lights must operate and be correctly aligned.
- (vi) All instrument controls/gauges must be operational.
- (vii) The portion of the windscreen directly in front of the driver must be free from cracks and scratches. Windscreen wipers, washers and windscreen demister must operate.
- (viii) All seat belts fitted must operate effectively and be free of damage.
- (ix) The body and cab must be securely mounted and the structure of the vehicle must be sound.
- (x) The exhaust pipe must be secure and free from leaks. There should be no flow of exhaust fumes into the passenger compartment.
- (xi) For inspection, the vehicle must be loaded with all equipment necessary for the vehicle's normal operation, including water in water tank, if fitted. All equipment must be securely fitted.
- (xii) Vehicles must be cleaned (especially underneath) prior to inspection.
- (xiii) With tilt-cab vehicles, ensure that the cab can be readily tilted for inspection of the engine bay.



Note: Drivers must remain with the vehicle during the inspection and assist by operating the driving controls as instructed by the Inspector, Vehicle Regulation.

2.10.2 Identification of the Vehicle

- (a) Prior to presenting any Rural Fire Services vehicle for inspection, either at a Heavy Vehicle Inspection Station or an Authorised Inspection Station, an approved operations plate must be fitted to the vehicle.
- (b) A unique approval number will be created for each Rural Fire Service Vehicle comprising 2 alpha and 5 digits, e.g.RF12345.
- (c) The vehicle identification details should be advised to the RTA when inspection appointments are being made.
- (d) If a vehicle is modified after the fitting of the approved operations plate, a modification plate must also be fitted.
- (e) A weighbridge ticket must be obtained for the vehicle. The vehicle should be weighed fully loaded including water in water tanks if fitted.

2.10.3 Location of Plate

- (a) The approved operations plate should be fitted to the front "A" pillar on the passenger side of the vehicle adjacent to any other plates where fitted, making sure it does not obscure any other vehicle information plate.
- (b) If it is not practical to place the plate in this position, the next preferred location is the adjacent pillar towards the rear of the vehicle on the passenger side, either on the front side or inside face of the pillar.

2.10.4 Payment of Inspection Fee

- (a) Heavy Vehicle Inspections



- (i) An RTA scheduled fee will be charged to cover the cost of the inspection. If a vehicle does not pass inspection, a defect notice will be issued and an additional inspection fee may be charged for the re-inspection.
- (ii) This inspection fee must be prepaid at an RTA Motor Registry or if more convenient at a Council agency.
- (b) Light Vehicle Inspections
 - (i) Light vehicles must be presented at an Authorised Inspection Station (AIS) for a safety check inspection. The applicable fee is paid direct to the proprietor of the Station.
- (c) Timing of Inspections
 - (i) Responsibility for booking vehicles for inspection will rest with Councils through nominated representatives. Light vehicle inspections can be arranged with the Authorised Inspection Station proprietor at a mutually convenient time.

2.11 Vehicle inspection

2.11.1 Payment of Inspection Fee

- (a) When a vehicle is presented at a Heavy Vehicle Inspection site, the Inspector will request the person in charge of the vehicle to sign a receipt as proof that the inspection fee has been pre-paid. Receipts issued at Motor Registries can be issued for up to 5 vehicles per receipt.
- (b) Vehicles will not be inspected unless the inspection fee has been paid.
- (c) If for some reason a booked vehicle cannot attend, a substitute vehicle may be inspected provided the inspection fee for the vehicle is pre-paid and the vehicle has been fitted with an approved operations plate. This will ensure all available spaces in the inspection program are used and is in line with current practice.



2.11.2 Proof of Identification

- (a) Identification of the vehicle will be matched with appointment details. The identification check will take place and proof of the vehicle's ID will be established. The unique RFS approval number for the vehicle will be entered on the inspection report in the space where registration number is normally entered.
- (b) Under no other circumstances should an approved operations plate be transferred to another vehicle without authority.

2.11.3 Roadworthy Vehicles

- (a) When a vehicle is inspected and is found to be roadworthy, an inspection label will be affixed to the windscreen. This label will indicate the month and year that the vehicle passed inspection. The driver will also be given a Pass Card which should be retained by the council as proof of inspection.
- (b) A **light** vehicle will be issued an Inspection Report (Pink Slip) which council will retain as proof of inspection

Note: The Inspection Report is not to be used for the purpose of effecting registration of a vehicle.

2.11.4 Defective Heavy Vehicles

- (a) If a heavy vehicle is found to be unroadworthy a Vehicle Defect Notice will be issued and a label indicating the vehicle has been inspected and in some cases a label indicating a defective vehicle will be placed on the vehicle.
- (b) Defect Notices are supplied in quadruplicate:
 - (i) The **original** (blue) copy will be handed to the person in charge of the vehicle.
 - (ii) The **second** (yellow) copy to be either handed to or posted to the respective council. This copy will **not**



be handed to the person in charge of the vehicle if that person is not from the council.

- (iii) The **third** (pink) copy will be forwarded to the RTA for recording purposes.
 - (iv) The **fourth** (white) copy will remain in the book kept by the Inspector.
- (c) Where the defect notice is issued by a mobile RTA Heavy Vehicle Inspection Station (HVIS) team and the team is no longer available to clear the notice, the council can arrange for the vehicle to be inspected and the defect notice to be cleared as indicated on the Defect Notice. After the defect has been rectified and the notice has been cleared, the blue original copy is to be returned to the RTA (address shown on the notice). The cleared yellow copy of the Defect Notice is then retained by the council as evidence the defect has been cleared.

Note: Depending on the seriousness of the defect, a label may be placed on the windscreen of the vehicle by the Inspector. Following clearance of the defect notice the label may only be removed by either an RTA Inspector or a Police Officer.

However, if the council is unable to arrange for clearance of the defect notice, the RTA will advise the Rural Fire Service of any outstanding uncleared defect notice.



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

PRIVATE VEHICLE INSPECTION FORM

For vehicles used for bush firefighting purposes

2. Equipment and fittings

Checked

Frame and chassis

Brakes

Steering

Lighting System

(see Item 6 if applicable)

3. Dimensions

Vehicle does not exceed the following maximum dimensions

Checked

Height 4.3m

Length 12.5m

Width 2.5m

1. Vehicle details

RFS Number Make/Model Year

VIN or chassis number Engine number

Inspection Label No

4. Owners Declaration

I declare that:

I will be responsible for the roadworthiness of the vehicle for the duration of the period of the permit being twelve (12) months from the date listed below.

The vehicle does not exceed its Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) or axle loadings. (or allowances as applicable)

Signature

Name

Address

Date

Brigade Name

5. Council Inspection Declaration

Council, declare that:

- The vehicle has been inspected in accordance with item 2;
- The vehicle is in a safe operating condition; and
- The vehicle does not exceed the dimensions in item 3. (See Item 6 if applicable)

Special Conditions apply YES / NO (see item 6).

Signature

Name

Date

Authorised Examiner/Tradesman Certificate

6. Special Conditions (completed by council authorised inspector)

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NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

PLANT DECLARATION

For plant used for bush firefighting purposes

2. Equipment and fittings

Checked

Frame and chassis

Brakes

Steering

Lighting System
(see Item 6 if applicable)

3. Dimensions

Vehicle does not exceed the following maximum dimensions

Checked

Height 4.3m

Length 12.5m

Width 2.5m

1. Plant details

RFS Number Make/Model Year

VIN or chassis number Engine number

Inspection Label No

4. Owners Declaration

I declare that:

- a) The plant has the equipment and fittings shown in Item 2.
- b) The plant is in a safe operating condition.
- c) I will be responsible for the roadworthiness of the plant for the duration of the period of the permit being twelve (12) months from the date listed below.
- d) The plant does not exceed the dimension shown in Item 3, or the plant exceeds the dimension shown in Item 3, and I have ___ dimension permit for its use.

e) Where lighting is not fitted or non operational, the plant will be used during daylight hrs only.

Signature

Name

Address

Date Brigade Name

5. Special Conditions (completed by council authorised inspector)

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3 Who is responsible for implementing this Standard?

The Fire Control Officer, the Local Authority

4 Issue

This Service Standard was considered by the Rural Fire Service Advisory Council on 4th August 1999 and issued by the Commissioner on 1st September 1999.

5 Legislation and references

- s38 2 (c) Rural Fires Act, 1997
- Motor Traffic Act and Regulations as amended

6 Amendments

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Clause 1.1 | 11 October 2004 |
| • Clause 2.1.3(a)(i) and (ii) | 11 October 2004 |

7 Document owner

The owner of this Service Standard is the Assistant Commissioner Operations Support.