

HVAIS Identity Check Rules

Section 6 of the AIS Rules

Version 1.0



For use by AIS examiners when performing identity checks on vehicles over 4.5 tonnes GVM or ATM

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	4
Vehicle identification – why is it important?	4
Meaning and use of the work ‘you’ in this document.....	4
Meaning of ‘motor vehicle’ and ‘trailer’	5
What is a vehicle identifier?	5
Chassis numbers.....	5
Vehicle identification numbers (VIN)	5
Engine numbers	6
Compliance plates.....	6
Secure vehicle identification markings (SVIM)	6
How do I use the RAV?	7
Rule 601 Identity Check Procedure	8
1 st tier identify check procedure.....	8
2 nd tier identity check procedure	8
Inspecting vehicles with concealed identifiers	9
Light vehicle inspections at HVAIS	9
Inspection of light motor vehicles at HVAIS	9
Inspection of low-ATM trailers at HVAIS	9
Rule 602 VIN or Chassis Number.....	10
Vehicles built before 1 January 1989 (chassis number).....	11
602.01 Reasons for rejection.....	11
Vehicles built from 1 January 1989 (VIN)	11
602.01 Reasons for rejection.....	11
Rule 603 Engine Number.....	13
Brand new vehicles with concealed engine numbers.....	13
603.01 Reasons for rejection.....	13

Rule 604 Compliance Plate	14
Motor vehicles	14
Trailers	14
604.01 Reasons for rejection.....	14
Rule 605 RVSA Vehicles – RAV and SVIM.....	15
Meaning of ‘provided for the first time’	15
Transitional period.....	15
RAV entries.....	16
605.01 Reasons for rejection.....	16
Secure vehicle identification markings (SVIM)	16
605.02 Reasons for rejection.....	16
Rule 606 Second Stage of Manufacturing Vehicles.....	17
What is a second stage of manufacturing (SSM) vehicle?	17
Identifying SSM vehicles	17
606.01 Reasons for rejection	18

Purpose

This document is section 6 of the AIS Rules, the Heavy Vehicle Authorised Inspection Scheme (HVAIS) Identity Check Rules.

Authorised Inspection Scheme (AIS) examiners must use these rules when performing design checks on vehicles over 4.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass (GVM) or aggregate trailer mass (ATM) (heavy vehicles).

This document creates rules for the purposes of clause 70 of the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2017. It is a condition of an authority that an examiner or proprietor must comply with the rules.

Vehicle identification – why is it important?

Heavy vehicles are often high value machines. This makes them a target for criminal activity such as theft or re-birthing. This makes it important to be able to identify and track a vehicle throughout its life.

As an examiner, you play an important role in helping to prevent and detect this kind of activity. By inspecting vehicles and checking their identifiers, you help reduce the impact of crime on the people of NSW.

Additionally, practices used in re-birthing a heavy vehicle can have a significant impact on a vehicle's safety!

Transport for NSW employs a specialist team of authorised officers, known as the Vehicle Identification and Inspections Unit (VIU). These officers are experts in vehicle identification and detecting re-birthered vehicles. They perform comprehensive inspections of vehicles with identification irregularities.

However, you are the first line of defence. As an examiner, it is your role to detect the first signs of this activity and refer vehicles with these signs to the VIU. In doing so, you help keep these potentially dangerous vehicles off Australia's roads.

The key outcomes of the HVAIS Identity Check Rules are:

1. Detect and refer potentially unsafe vehicles.
2. Prevent fraudulent and criminal vehicle activity.
3. Maintain registration integrity by recording correct identifiers and vehicle details

Meaning and use of the word 'you' in this document

Any time this document uses the word 'you' it is providing instruction to an examiner performing a design check on a heavy vehicle. 'You' is taken to be the examiner performing the inspection.

For example, 'You must use rules 601-606 when performing identity checks on a heavy vehicle' means 'an examiner inspecting a heavy vehicle must use rules 601-606 when performing identity checks on a heavy vehicle.'

Meaning of 'motor vehicle' and 'trailer'

Some rules and instructions in this document will be specific to either motor vehicles or trailers.

The term 'motor vehicle' means: a vehicle built to be propelled by a motor that forms part of the vehicle.

The term 'trailer' means: a vehicle that is built to be towed by a motor vehicle.

What is a vehicle identifier?

A vehicle identifier is simply a thing that helps to identify an individual vehicle and its origins.

Vehicle identifiers can be:

- a chassis number
- a vehicle identification number (VIN)
- an engine number
- a compliance or identification plate
- a vehicle plate
- a secure vehicle identification marking (SVIM).

A vehicle will not have all identifiers as there are different types of identifiers for different vehicles.

Chassis numbers

A chassis number is applied to a vehicle by the vehicles manufacturer. A chassis number can be any combination or length of alphanumeric characters (letters or numbers). A chassis number may not be unique to a specific individual vehicle as they were applied without a standard structure.

In Australia, a vehicle may only have a chassis number if it was built or imported before 1 January 1989.

Note that some overseas manufacturers continued using chassis numbers after 1 January 1989. Japanese vehicles are notable for this. These vehicles are often imported into Australia. When they are imported, they are provided with a surrogate VIN that must be applied to the vehicle. This surrogate VIN often contains the original chassis number, but not always.

Vehicle identification numbers (VIN)

A vehicle identification number (VIN) is a 17-character alphanumeric number applied to a vehicle. VINs are unique to an individual vehicle. A VIN typically complies with an international standard and contains coded information about the vehicles build and origin.

In Australia, it has been mandatory for vehicles to have a VIN from 1 July 1989. Some vehicles built before this date may also have a VIN.

Engine numbers

Engines are usually a high-value component of a vehicle that can be a target of theft. To help prevent this, engine numbers are recorded on a vehicle's registration to help track the engine if it is stolen.

Compliance plates

A compliance plate or identification plate is a durable plate or label that is permanently fitted to a vehicle under a federal 'type approval'. These were fitted to vehicles to indicate that the vehicle was a type approved for sale in Australia by the Federal Government. Manufacturers had to be given approval to fit these plates.

The terms 'compliance plate' and 'identification plate' are often used interchangeably to refer to the same thing. These rules use the term 'compliance plate' to refer to these plates from here on.

A compliance plate holds different information depending on when the vehicle was plated. However, all compliance plates have these things in common:

- the number of the type approval the plate was placed under (CPA or IPA) referred to as the 'approval number'
- the vehicle's chassis number or VIN.

Compliance plates must be attached using a permanent method. Compliance plates that are not attached using a permanent method or compliance plates that show signs of being moved are causes for concern.

Administrative Circular 0-3-2 issued by the Federal Government provides some extra insight into compliance plate type and fitment.

[You can find all Administrative Circulars here.](#)

It is important not to confuse compliance plates with other plates fitted by a manufacturer. Some vehicle manufacturers attach plates that contain other information about the vehicle, such as engine and transmission options and colour. These are not compliance plates.

The Federal Government began to phase out compliance plates on 1 July 2021, and they were completely phased out on 1 July 2023.

Secure vehicle identification markings (SVIM)

In the *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018* (RVSA), compliance plates were replaced by entries on the Register of Approved Vehicles. An RAV entry performs a similar function to a compliance plate. It can be thought of as a 'digital compliance plate'.

An secure vehicle identification marking (SVIM) is a durable label or plate attached to a vehicle with a RAV entry. At a minimum, it must state the vehicle's VIN and manufacturer or make. It may contain more information, but does not have to.

How do I use the RAV?

The Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) is a public database that contains RAV entries.

If you are inspecting a vehicle built or imported after 1 July 2021 you must search the RAV. You must make sure that all vehicles built after 1 July 2023 have a RAV entry.

[To go to the RAV click here.](#)

To search the RAV, type the vehicles VIN into the RAV search bar, then click 'search'. If the vehicle has an RAV entry, the website will then display it.

The website will inform you if the vehicle does not have an RAV entry.

VIN:

VIN12345678901010

Search

The Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) does not contain a record for this search. Possible reasons include:

- The Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) is not correct. VINs are 17 digit alphanumeric characters. They must not include the letters I, O or Q; or
- The vehicle is not on the RAV. Some reasons for this include:
 - Entry onto the RAV for a concessional RAV entry approval inspected by an Authorised Vehicle Verifier may take up to 48 hours;
 - the vehicle's approval predates 10 December 2019 (the commencement of provisions of the Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018). Prior to this date, vehicles were required to be fitted with physical 'identification plates' under the Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989; or
 - the vehicle's approval is a non-RAV entry import approval and is not added to the RAV; or
 - There is no approval for the vehicle.

How the RAV search will appear if there is no RAV entry connected to the vehicle's VIN.

Rule 601 Identity Check Procedure

You must always take identifiers from the primary location given on a vehicles road vehicle descriptor (RVD) if available.

Unless they are the primary location given on the vehicle's RVD, do not take identifiers from:

- compliance plates
- secure vehicle identification markings (SVIM).

1st tier identify check procedure

- Step 1.** Locate the vehicles primary VIN or chassis number. Where available, you must access and use RVDs for motor vehicles when performing identity checks. If a vehicle has an RVD, you must use the location of the primary VIN shown on the RVD.
- Step 2.** Examine the vehicles primary VIN or chassis number for any irregularities using rule 602.
- Step 3.** Record the vehicles primary VIN or chassis number on the inspection report.
- Step 4.** Perform a 2nd tier identity check if you find irregularities in the 1st tier identity check.

2nd tier identity check procedure

- Step 1.** If irregularities are found during a 1st tier identity check, determine what other identifiers may be on the vehicle. For example, a compliance plate, SVI, RAV entry or engine number. Check these identifiers using the relevant inspection rules.
- Step 2.** When you are inspecting a vehicle built after 1 July 2021 you must search for the vehicles VIN on the Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV).
- Step 3.** If you find any irregularities with the vehicle's identifiers, reject the vehicle using any relevant reasons for rejection from rules 602-606.
- Step 4.** You must refer the vehicle to the Vehicle Identification and Inspections Unit (VIU) if you use a reason for rejection under the heading:

‘For the following reasons you must refer the vehicle to the VIU.’

Refer the vehicle by completing an AIS/VSCCS Vehicle Identification Referral (form 1625) and following the instructions on that form.

Inspecting vehicles with concealed identifiers

You may view an identifier by indirect means such as using a mirror or camera, but you must be able to clearly see all the characters of the identifier.

If an identifier is hidden by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools, reject the vehicle at its first inspection. You must then provide the customer an opportunity to make the identifier visible.

You may negotiate payment of a separate fee (not the inspection fee) to perform this work. However, you must not lead the customer to believe that only you can do this work. The customer must agree to the negotiated fee before you perform the work.

The customer may choose to engage the services of another mechanic to reveal the number, or they may choose to do it themselves.

You may pass the vehicle for the second inspection once you have sighted the identifier.

Light vehicle inspections at HVAIS

HVAIS examiners are authorised to inspect some light vehicle types. Refer to the AIS Business Rules for more information on what light vehicles HVAIS examiners may inspect and for what purposes.

Inspection of light motor vehicles at HVAIS

If you are inspecting a light motor vehicle (GVM of 4.5 tonnes or less) do not use the rules given in this section. Instead use the relevant rules in Section 3 (Light Vehicle Identity Check Standards) of the AIS Rules.

Inspection of low-ATM trailers at HVAIS

If you are inspecting a trailer with an ATM of 4.5 tonnes or less, do not use the rules given in this section. Instead use the relevant rules in Section 3 (Light Vehicle Identity Check Standards) of the AIS Rules.

Rule 602 VIN or Chassis Number

All vehicles must have either a vehicle identification number (VIN) or a chassis number. A vehicle without an identification number cannot be registered in NSW. These identifiers must not be altered unless otherwise approved by Transport for NSW.

A vehicle may have either a VIN or a chassis number depending on the vehicle’s compliance date.

A vehicle’s primary VIN or chassis number may be present on a durable plate or label if this is the manufacturer’s chosen way to attach it. The label must be permanently fitted to the vehicles chassis in a way that is tamper proof.

Table 602.T1 Australian delivered motor vehicles		
Compliance date	VIN or chassis number?	Approved fitment type
Before 1 January 1989	Chassis number	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis, it can also be on the body on monocoque construction.
From 1 January 1989	VIN	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis or on a VIN plate.

Table 602.T2 Imported motor vehicles		
Compliance Date	VIN or chassis number?	Approved fitment type
Before 1 January 1989	Chassis Number	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis.
From 1 January 1989	VIN	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis or on a VIN plate.

Table 602.T3 Trailers over 4.5 tonnes ATM		
Compliance Date	VIN or chassis number?	Approved fitment type
Before 1 January 1989	Chassis number	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis.
From 1 January 1989	VIN	Impressed on the vehicle’s chassis or on a VIN plate.

Vehicles built before 1 January 1989 (chassis number)

A chassis number can be any number or sequence of characters that is used to identify a vehicle.

602.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. Any characters of a chassis number are concealed by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools.
- b. There is no chassis number present on the vehicle.

For the following reasons, you must refer the vehicle to the VIU

- c. The chassis number has been replaced.
- d. The chassis number is not in the correct location.
- e. There is evidence of grinding or filing marks in the chassis number location.
- f. The chassis number has localised or inappropriate welding, body filler or fresh paintwork.
- g. Any replacement chassis number is not located as near as possible to the original number, is not in a straight line or has more than one character space between characters.
- h. One or more characters of the chassis number are illegible or have been interfered with, altered, defaced, removed, concealed or is non-original in any way.

Vehicles built from 1 January 1989 (VIN)

A VIN must be 17 characters long and is a unique number that identifies a single vehicle.

A vehicle must not have multiple VINs applied to it.

602.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. Any characters of a VIN are concealed by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools.
- b. There is no VIN present on the vehicle.

For the following reasons, you must refer the vehicle to the VIU.

- c. The VIN is not in the correct location.
- d. The VIN does not have the correct number of characters (17).
- e. There is evidence of grinding or filing marks in the VIN location.
- f. The VIN has localised or inappropriate welding, body filler or fresh paintwork.
- g. Any replacement VIN is not located as near as possible to the original number, is not in a straight line or has more than one character space between characters.
- h. One or more characters in the VIN are illegible or have been interfered with, altered, defaced, removed, concealed or is non-original in any way.

If the VIN is on a VIN plate:

- i. The plate has been defaced or damaged.
- j. The plate is not affixed by permanent, tamper-proof means.

A VIN is normally stamped into a production vehicles chassis. If you find a VIN stamped on a plate, this is not an automatic reason for rejection. But you must pay particular attention to any vehicle found without a VIN stamped into the chassis location indicated by the vehicle's RVD.

Rule 603 Engine Number

All engines fitted to motor vehicles must have an engine number permanently marked on the main component of the vehicle's engine by casting, stamping, laser engraving or any combination of these methods.

The examiner is only required to check the engine number as part of a 2nd tier identity inspection.

Brand new vehicles with concealed engine numbers

If you are performing a check using this rule, you must directly sight the engine number marked into the main component of the engine, except if:

- the vehicle is brand new and has never been registered in a state or territory of Australia, and
- the engine number cannot be viewed without the removal of vehicle components using tools, and
- the engine number is repeated on a supplementary label that is placed in a conspicuous position in the vehicle's engine compartment, is durable, and cannot be removed without destroying the label.

In these circumstances you can take the engine number from the supplementary label instead.

If these circumstances do not apply then you must record the inspection as a fail using reason for rejection as below and follow the procedure in Rule 601 for vehicles with concealed identifiers.

603.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. Any characters of an engine number are concealed by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools.
- b. There is no engine number present on the main component of the engine.

For the following reasons, you must refer the vehicle to the VIU

- c. The engine number is not in the correct location.
- d. There is evidence of grinding or filing marks in the engine number location.
- e. The engine number has localised or inappropriate welding, body filler or fresh paintwork.
- f. One or more characters in the engine number are illegible or have been interfered with, altered, defaced, removed, concealed or is non-original in any way.

Where a replacement engine number has been allocated by Transport for NSW

- g. Any replacement engine number is not located as near as possible to the original number, is not in a straight line or has more than one character space between characters.

Rule 604 Compliance Plate

Motor vehicles

All heavy motor vehicles complied from 1 August 1972 to 30 June 2021 must be fitted with a compliance plate.

Trailers

All trailers over 4.5 tonnes ATM manufactured after 1 August 1984 are required to be fitted with a compliance plate.

604.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. The compliance plate is concealed by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools.
- b. The compliance plate is missing.

For the following reasons, you must refer the vehicle to the VIU

- c. The compliance plate is not in the correct location.
- d. The compliance plate is not permanently attached to the vehicle using a tamper-proof method.
- e. The compliance plate bears a different chassis number or VIN to the one on the vehicle's chassis.
- f. There are grinding or filing marks on the compliance plate or around the compliance plate location.
- g. The compliance plate is illegible or has been interfered with, altered, defaced, removed, concealed or is non-original in any way.

Rule 605 RVSA Vehicles – RAV and SVIM

On 1 July 2021, the *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018* (RVSA) replaced the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (MVSA). These federal Acts regulate how vehicles are ‘provided for the first time’.

The RVSA introduced new requirements for vehicle identification and compliance.

Meaning of ‘provided for the first time’

The Australian Federal Government controls how vehicles are provided to the Australian market. Transport for NSW regulates the registration of these vehicles in NSW.

When a vehicle is sold to a consumer for the first time it is considered to have been ‘provided’.

Transitional period

A transitional period between the MVSA to the RVSA was in place between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023. Between these dates a vehicle could be provided to the consumer under either Act.

This means that you may encounter vehicles from this time that have either a compliance plate, or an RAV entry and a secure vehicle identification marking (SVIM).

Table 605.T1 Which vehicles need RAV entries and a SVIM			
Vehicle provided to the market	Compliance Plate	RAV entry	SVIM
Before 1 July 2021	✓	No	No
1 July 2021 – 30 June 2023	Compliance plate <i>or</i> RAV entry and SVIM		
From 1 July 2023	No	✓	✓

RAV entries

If you are inspecting a vehicle from the RVSA transition time and it does not have a compliance plate, you must search the RAV for the vehicle's VIN.

If you are inspecting a vehicle built or imported after 1 July 2023, you must also search the RAV for the vehicle's VIN.

All vehicles built or imported from 1 July 2023 must have an entry on the RAV. If they do not, they are not eligible for registration in NSW.

605.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. The vehicle does not have an entry on the RAV
- b. The information on the vehicle's RAV entry does not match or describe the vehicle.

Secure vehicle identification markings (SVIM)

If a vehicle has an RAV entry, it must have an SVIM. The SVIM must display at least the vehicle's VIN and its manufacturer or make. Manufacturers may put extra information on an SVIM.

If a vehicle has undergone a second stage of manufacturing, the second stage manufacturer may place another SVIM on the vehicle, but they do not have to. They may also rely on the base vehicle manufacturer's SVIM.

605.02 Reasons for rejection

- a. A SVIM is concealed by a vehicle part that cannot be removed without the use of tools.
- b. A SVIM does not bear the vehicle's VIN and manufacturer.

For the following reasons, you must refer the vehicle to the VIU.

- c. A SVIM is not in the correct location.
- d. A SVIM is not permanently attached to the vehicle using a tamper-proof method.
- e. A SVIM bears a different chassis number or VIN to the one on the vehicle's chassis.
- f. There are grinding or filing marks on a SVIM or around a SVIM location.
- g. The SVIM is illegible or has been interfered with, altered, defaced, removed, concealed or is non-original in any way.

Rule 606 Second Stage of Manufacturing Vehicles

What is a second stage of manufacturing (SSM) vehicle?

Second stage of manufacturing (SSM) is where a vehicle is re-manufactured by a second manufacturer before it is provided to a consumer. The original vehicle type is known as ‘the base vehicle’.

A second stage manufacturer holds a Type Approval (VTA or IPA) from The Federal Government that permits them to do this work. Their approval is based on the base vehicle manufacturers federal approval.

A base vehicle cannot be second stage manufactured if it has already been provided to a consumer - if it has already been sold or registered.

A vehicle may have multiple SSM approvals applied to it.

The resulting vehicle will be identified using the last SSM’s make, model and variant as given on the relevant RVD.

Most often, heavy vehicles undergo SSM for the fitment of a body to a cab and chassis base vehicle.

Identifying SSM vehicles

SSM vehicles will either have multiple compliance plates affixed to them, or multiple RAV entries.

If a vehicle was provided in the transitional period, it will have a mix of compliance plate and RAV entries. Refer to Table 606.T1 to see what combinations are allowed.

Table 606.T1 Transitional SSM RAV and Compliance Plate Arrangements			
Base vehicle on the RAV?	Fitted with SSM Compliance Plate?	Has SSM RAV entry?	Is the combination allowed?
No	✓		Yes
No		✓	Yes
Yes	✓		No

During the RVSA transitional period, an SSM could not apply a compliance plate to a vehicle that was on the RAV. However, an SSM could apply for a concessional RAV entry approval. These RAV entries appear as the type 'Concessional - RAWS - Second Stage Manufacture'.

Make sure that a vehicle with a RAV entry for the base vehicle is not fitted with an SSM compliance plate without this RAV entry type.

606.01 Reasons for rejection

- a. An SSM compliance plate has been fitted to a vehicle with an RAV entry.

For further information or assistance with performing design checks, please contact the Technical Enquiries team by:
emailing technical.enquiries@transport.nsw.gov.au
or calling 1300 137 302.

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