

Vehicle Standards Instruction (General 13.1)

Changes to Vehicle Modification Regulations

Released October 2012

Updated December 2012

From 1 November 2012, a number of changes to the requirements for vehicle modifications came into force in Queensland. While the majority of these changes relate to modifications to light vehicles, there are also changes that affect modifications to heavy vehicles.

The changes are designed to clarify the types of modification that require approval for all vehicle types, to adopt a new national standard for light vehicle modifications that will provide more detailed information about a wider range of modifications, and allow for approval of these modifications by Approved Persons, rather than requiring an application to the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

General Changes (Both Heavy and Light Vehicles)

Under the previous rules, the owner of a vehicle was technically required to obtain an approval for any modification that was made to a vehicle, even when the modification was only installing an accessory such as a CB radio, alarms, roof racks etc.

From 1 November 2012, changes were made that exclude some types of minor modifications from the requirement for a formal approval.

For light vehicles, these include modifications that are classed as minor and basic modifications in the National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Construction and Modification (the NCOP).

For more information about minor and basic modifications for light vehicles, please refer to the NCOP, available online from www.infrastructure.gov.au.

For both heavy and light vehicles, any simple modification that does not affect the safety of a vehicle, no longer requires approval.

Adoption of the National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Construction and Modification

The NCOP is a new modification code of practice that has been developed by all Australian registration authorities, in consultation with key industry groups, to provide nationally consistent technical requirements for the modification of light vehicles.

The NCOP replaces the existing code of practice, the Code of Practice – Light Vehicles, and allows for a much larger range of modifications to be certified by Approved Persons and remove the need to apply to TMR for approval.

While most of the NCOP is able to be used in Queensland, a number of small variations have been made to account for specific state based issues. These variations include:

- The LS7 and LS8 sections of the NCOP that allow for vehicle lifts will not be adopted. Instead, alternate requirements have been included in the LS9 and LS10 sections of the Queensland Code of Practice – Vehicle Modifications; and
- The requirement for a gaseous emissions test (LT3 – IM240 Test) for engine modifications is not required due to the lack of testing facilities in Queensland.

- Certifications of street rods will be performed under the LH9 and LH10 sections of the Queensland Code of Practice – Vehicle Modifications. The LO6 section of the NCOP has not been adopted in Queensland.
- As Transport and Main Roads does not regulate the installation and modification of gas fuel systems in Queensland, the LM2 and LM3 sections of the NCOP will not be adopted in Queensland.

Transition from the Code of Practice – Light Vehicles

While the NCOP provides for a larger range of modifications that can be certified through the Approved Person Scheme, there are a small number of modifications that are currently allowed under the Code of Practice – Light Vehicles (COP-LV), that are not eligible for certification under the NCOP.

TMR is aware that some vehicle modifications are more of a project rather than a one off job, and to ensure vehicle owners have enough time to finish modifications that have been commenced, a 6 month transition has been provided, where both the COP-LV and the NCOP will operate.

This means that until 30 April 2013, the owner of a vehicle will be able to finish the modifications and present the vehicle to an Approved Person for certification under the COP-LV.

Modifications approved before 1 November 2012

The changes that have been made to the rules for modifications are not backdated. This means that if a vehicle has been modified and approved before 1 November 2012, that approval is still valid and you do not need to do anything else, provided the modification remains the same as it was when the original approval was given.

Example: A vehicle was fitted with a substitute engine and the modification approved prior to 1 November 2012. If in the future that engine needs to be replaced, provided the exact same specification engine is used to replace the engine, the original modification approval is still valid.

But if the engine requires replacing and a different specification engine is used to replace it, a new modification approval will be needed under the NCOP.

Replacement of the Code of Practice for Commercial Vehicle Modifications

As part of the changes to the vehicle modification rules, the previous Code of Practice for Commercial Vehicle Modifications and a number of state specific codes from the COP-LV have been combined to make the Queensland Code of Practice – Vehicle Modifications (QCOP).

The QCOP contains a mix of modification codes for both light and heavy vehicles, and provides special modification codes that are required only in Queensland. None of the codes in the QCOP are new codes, but have just been relocated from the previous codes of practice.

Please Note

Under the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management - Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010*, the owner of a modified vehicle must ensure that a modification that requires approval, has been approved, before the vehicle is used on a road.

Modifying a vehicle that adversely affects its safety, or driving or parking an unsafe vehicle on a road, are breaches of the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management - Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010*.

Further Information

For further information, please contact Vehicle Standards and Modification Advice on (07) 3114 5844.

Additional Information

National Code of Practice for Light Vehicle Construction and Modification (Vehicle Standards Bulletin 14)

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/index.aspx

National Code of Practice for Heavy Vehicle Modification (Vehicle Standards Bulletin 6)

http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/vehicle_regulation/bulletin/index.aspx

Queensland Code of Practice - Vehicle Modifications (QCOP)

<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Vehicle-standards-and-modifications/Vehicle-modifications/Heavy-vehicle-modifications.aspx>

Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Vehicle Standards and Safety) Regulation 2010

<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/T/TrantOpRUVSSR10.pdf>