



ESCORTING GUIDELINES

for oversize and overmass
vehicles and loads



**Government
of South Australia**

Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure

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Introduction

This document specifies the requirements for pilot vehicles and provides a guide to the role and responsibilities of pilots and police escorts accompanying oversize and/or overmass vehicles and loads travelling on the roads under an exemption (by Gazette Notice or Permit) issued by Transport Safety Regulation.

You must comply with the requirements of this document unless the exemption specifies otherwise.

While it is not possible to provide instructions to cover every type of escorting situation, compliance with the intent of the requirements contained in this document should ensure the safe movement of vehicles operating under an exemption in any situation.

For further information relating to oversize/overmass vehicle exemptions contact:

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1. Pilot Vehicle Requirements

1.1. Vehicle Size

- 1.1. The pilot vehicle must have 4 or more wheels and a Gross Vehicle Mass of:
 - (a) 6.5 tonnes or less in the case of a rear pilot vehicle if two pilot vehicles are required; or
 - (b) 4.5 tonnes or less in any other case.

1.2. Warning Signs

- 1.2.1. The warning sign on the pilot vehicle must have the words “OVERSIZE” and “LOAD AHEAD” on both sides of the sign.
- 1.2.2. The warning sign on a pilot vehicle may have bottom corner cut-outs not more than 150 mm wide and not more than 100 mm high if cut-outs are needed to allow for the mounting of warning lights.
- 1.2.3. The warning sign must be positioned so it is visible to the drivers of vehicles approaching from in front and behind the pilot vehicle.
- 1.2.4. The warning sign must be displayed on the roof of the pilot vehicle with the sign visible to approaching traffic as shown in Figure 1 and must be kept clean so that the signs can be easily read by other road users.
- 1.2.5. The warning sign may be attached to the hurdle behind the pilot vehicle cab at the same height as if the sign was mounted on the roof of the cab.
- 1.2.6. The oversize warning sign on a pilot vehicle must not lean back so that there is more than 200 mm measured horizontally from the top of the sign to a vertical line running through the bottom of the sign as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Illustration of a pilot vehicle warning sign and warning lights

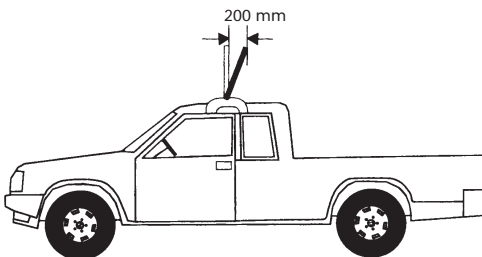


Figure 2: Illustration of maximum slant of warning sign

1. Pilot Vehicle Requirements

1.3. Warning Sign Specifications

- 1.3.1. Both faces of the warning sign must have a yellow surface which complies with the Class 1 or 2 of Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1906.1, 'Retro-reflective Materials and Devices for Road Traffic Control Purposes' Part 1: Retro-reflective Materials.
- 1.3.2. Both faces of the warning sign must have a black border at least 20 mm wide. The outermost edge of the border must be set at least 10 mm in from the edge of the sign unless the sign has been made with a box edge.
- 1.3.3. Both faces of the warning sign must show the words "OVERSIZE" in black upper-case lettering at least 200 mm high, conforming with Australian Standard AS 1744, 'Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs', in type face Series C(N).
- 1.3.4. Both faces of the warning sign must show the words "LOAD AHEAD" in black upper-case lettering at least 100 mm high, conforming with Australian Standard AS 1744, 'Forms of Letters and Numerals for Road Signs', in type face Series D(N).
- 1.3.5. The warning sign must have the manufacturer's name or trademark permanently marked in letters at least 3 mm but not more than 10 mm high, to appear in any visible location on the sign, except in the bottom corner of a sign.
- 1.3.6. The warning sign must be made of stiff, flat weatherproof material. Zinalume at least 0.8 mm thick and aluminium at least 1.6 mm thick are examples of material which would comply.
- 1.3.7. The warning sign must comply with the following dimensions and specifications.



Figure 3: Pilot Vehicle Warning Sign

1. Pilot Vehicle Requirements

1.4. Warning Lights (Rotating Flashing Yellow Lights)

- 1.4.1. One or two warning lights must be mounted at the highest point of the vehicle so that at least one light is visible from all directions. As an alternative, the warning light(s) may be mounted at the base of the sign, one on either side to meet the performance specifications. Refer to Figure 1.
- 1.4.2. In spite of subclause 1.4.3. (d), a pilot vehicle travelling in front of an oversize vehicle may have a filter placed behind the warning light(s) to reduce the intensity of the light directed rearwards from the warning light(s) to the driver of the oversize vehicle.
- 1.4.3. The warning light(s) must meet the following performance specifications:
 - (a) emit a rotating, flashing, yellow coloured light;
 - (b) flash at a rate between 120 and 200 times per minute;
 - (c) have a power of at least 55 watts;
 - (d) be clearly visible at a distance of 500 metres in all directions;
 - (e) not be a strobe light.

1.5. Operation of Warning Lights

- 1.5.1. Warning light(s) must only be switched on when the oversize vehicle is travelling, or stationary in a position that is likely to cause danger to other road users.
- 1.5.2. Warning light(s) which a pilot vehicle or police escort vehicle is required to have must be switched on when the vehicle is travelling and accompanying an oversize vehicle.

1. Pilot Vehicle Requirements

1.6. Wiring of Warning Lights

- 1.6.1. Warning light(s) must be either permanently connected into the electrical system of the vehicle or must use standard automotive connectors to allow easy electrical disconnection and removal of the light(s) when not required. Connecting the light(s) using alligator clips attached to the battery or to cigarette lighter sockets is not acceptable.
- 1.6.2. Warning light(s) must have incorporated into their electrical system an on/off switch control located within easy reach of the driver.

1.7. Radio Communication

- 1.7.1. The oversize vehicle and any accompanying pilot vehicles or police escort vehicles must have an electronic device that allow the drivers of all vehicles to communicate effectively with each other.
- 1.7.2. Communications between all escorts and the oversize vehicle must be on the same channel or frequency and must be switched on when escorting an oversize vehicle.

2. Pilot Vehicle Operating Guidelines

2.1. Role

- 2.1.1. Provide a visual advance warning by means of signs and warning lights, to other road users of the approach of an oversize vehicle using the road.
- 2.1.2. Inform oncoming or overtaking vehicles, by radio, where possible of load dimensions and special problems.
- 2.1.3. Inform the oversize vehicle driver, by radio, of oncoming traffic, road conditions, bridge and traffic light status, clearance of load from trees and obstacles etc.
- 2.1.4. Assess and inform oversize vehicle driver of potential hazards.
- 2.1.5. Provide “rear vision” when required due to load width.

2.2. Travelling Position of Pilot Vehicle

- 2.2.1. When one pilot vehicle accompanies an oversize vehicle or combination, the pilot vehicle must travel:
 - (a) behind the oversize vehicle or combination if they are on a divided road; or
 - (b) in front of the oversize vehicle or combination if they are on a road that is not divided.
- 2.2.2. When two pilot vehicles accompany an oversize vehicle or combination, one pilot vehicle must travel in front of the oversize vehicle or combination and the other behind it.

2.3. Traffic Control

- 2.3.1. Pilot vehicle operators do not have the power or authority to direct traffic. However, they may position their pilot vehicle in such a manner within the appropriate traffic lane to prevent other traffic conflicting with the turning manoeuvre of the oversize vehicle.
- 2.3.2. The above duties must be performed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Road Traffic Act and Rule 311 of the Australian Road Rules.

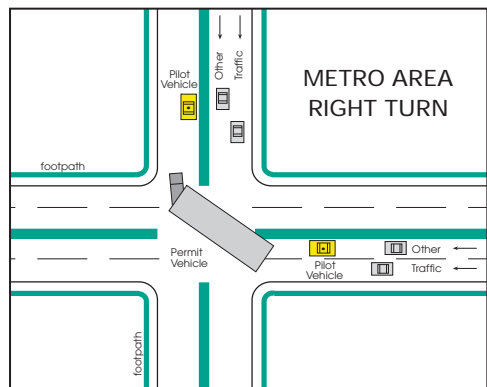
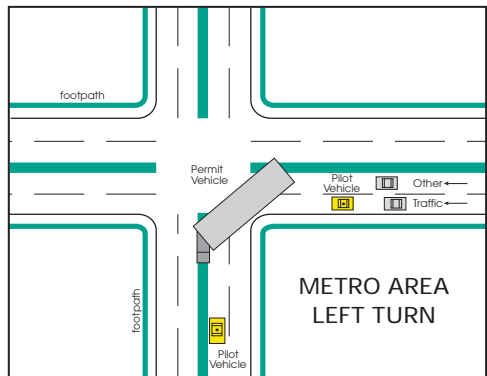
2. Pilot Vehicle Operating Guidelines

2.4. Restrictions

- 2.4.1. A pilot vehicle must accompany the oversize vehicle while it is on the road.
- 2.4.2. The pilot vehicle operator may engage in other duties away from their vehicle. However the oversize vehicle must stop until the pilot vehicle is ready to proceed.
- 2.4.3. The pilot vehicle operator must at all times maintain the pilot vehicle in an appropriate position in relation to the oversize vehicle to provide adequate warning to other road users of the presence of the oversize vehicle, taking into account traffic speed, weather, visibility and other driving conditions.
- 2.4.4. The exemption or permit is issued to the driver of the oversize vehicle and not the pilot vehicle.
- 2.4.5. The driver of the oversize vehicle therefore has the overall responsibility for the movement of the oversize load, including complying with all conditions of the exemption.

2.5. Adelaide Area (Metropolitan)

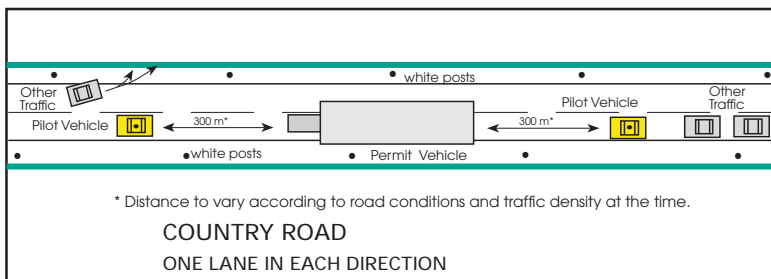
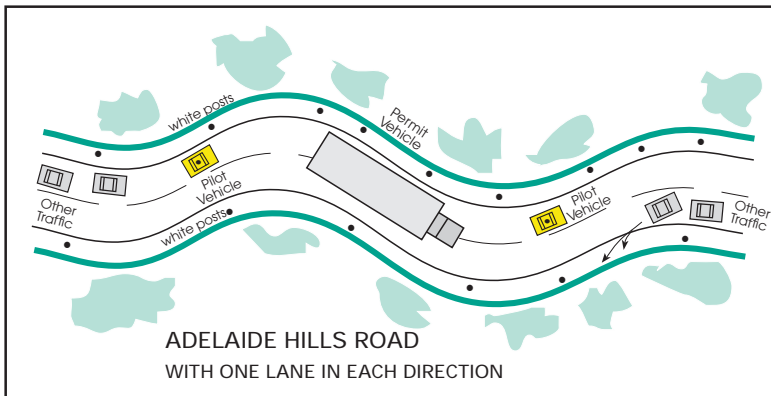
- 2.5.1. For metropolitan escorting, the pilot vehicle operator is required to remain close to the oversize vehicle, especially at the rear to 'block' lanes (within the requirements of Section 2.3) as required when the oversize vehicle is turning so that normal traffic is not exposed to danger.



2. Pilot Vehicle Operating Guidelines

2.6. Adelaide Hills and Country Area

- 2.6.1. The pilot vehicle operator is positioned either well ahead and/or behind the oversize vehicle depending on conditions in order to warn approaching traffic of a slow moving oversize vehicle.
- 2.6.2. The distance between the pilot vehicle and the oversize vehicle must be adjusted to suit prevailing traffic and road conditions.
- 2.6.3. Factors which affect the distance between vehicles are:
 - (a) Traffic volumes.
 - (b) Approaching vehicle speed.
 - (c) Proportion of commercial vehicle traffic.
 - (d) Road alignment and sight distance.



Note: The distance of 300 metres is a nominal figure only. It is the responsibility of the drivers of the oversize vehicle and pilot vehicle(s) to establish an appropriate distance between the vehicles to provide the necessary warning

3. Role of Police Escorts

3.1. Role

- 3.1.1. The role of a police escort is to preserve road safety and to direct traffic around the oversize load in order to minimise inconvenience to other motorists and to ensure that no damage is caused to property.
- 3.1.2. The police escorts may direct the oversize vehicle and other traffic in order that the oversize vehicle and other road users can pass each other safely.
- 3.1.3. The police escorts also control the flow of the traffic around other vehicles and authorised personnel associated with the movement of the oversize vehicle such as those lifting wires or removing and replacing roadside signs and lights etc.

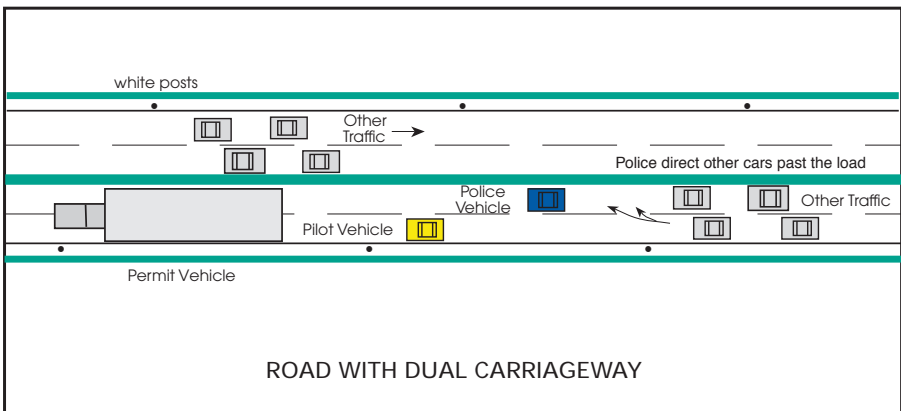
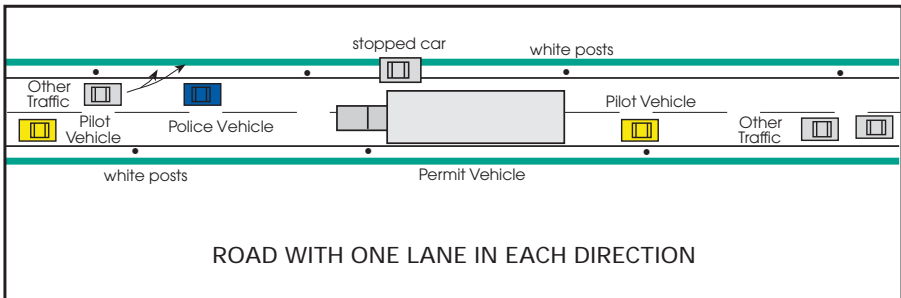
3.2. Checks Undertaken by Police

- 3.2.1. The police officer in charge of escorting the oversize vehicle/load must check the following points prior to the move proceeding:
 - (a) Exemption (Permit)
 - Dates are correct.
 - Dimensions of oversize vehicle are correct.
 - Route to be taken and that all parties know the route including any special requirements or conditions, e.g. wrong side of the road, travel down the centreline of bridges, diagonally through traffic lights etc. at certain points.
 - Conditions specified in the exemption so that the exemption is complied with fully.
 - Starting time of move.
 - (b) Oversize Vehicle and Pilot Vehicle
 - Condition of vehicles, whether roadworthy, correctly registered etc. Signs and warning lights on pilot vehicles are in accordance with the exemption.
 - (c) Drivers Licences
 - Check the licences of the drivers of the oversize vehicle and pilot vehicle/s.
 - (d) Radio Communication
 - Confirm that the oversize vehicle, pilot vehicles and police escort vehicles all have operational radio communication so that all parties can communicate.

3. Role of Police Escorts

3.3. One Police Escort

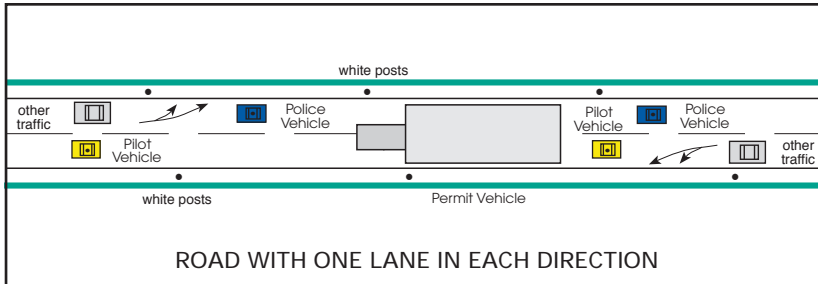
- 3.3.1. The pilot vehicle would normally be out in front, ahead of the police escort, on a road with a single lane in each direction.
- 3.3.2. On roads where opposing traffic is separated by a median strip, police may travel behind the escort vehicle, except at intersections where police will take up a position ahead of the oversize vehicle to stop traffic at traffic lights if necessary prior to the oversize vehicle proceeding through.



3. Role of Police Escorts

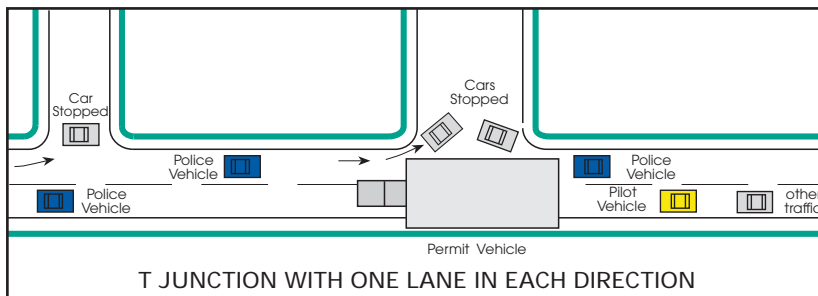
3.4. Two Police Escorts

3.4.1. Two police escorts generally operate with one escort at the front and one escort at the rear.



3.5. Three Police Escorts

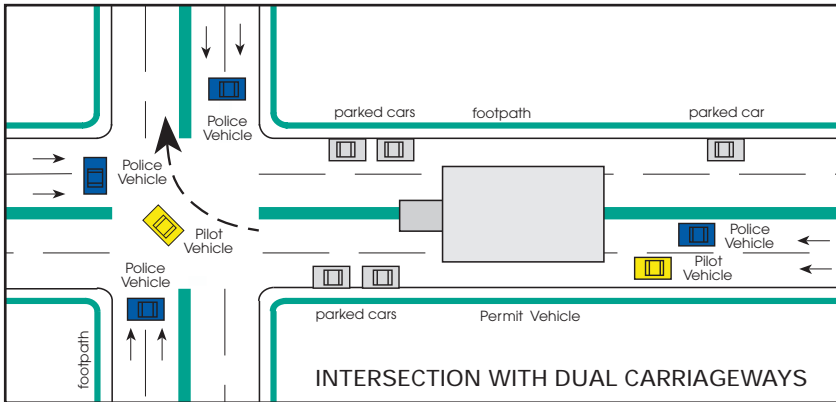
- 3.5.1. Three police escorts normally have two escorts in the front and one escort at the rear.
- 3.5.2. In this situation the load is generally greater than 8 metres wide which, on a road with a single lane in each direction, can take up both lanes restricting traffic flow.
- 3.5.3. Under these conditions, the first police escort travels well out in front of the oversize vehicle to direct traffic off the road at suitable locations to stop and wait until the load has passed.
- 3.5.4. The second forward police escort travels in front of the oversize vehicle to ensure that no vehicles travel down the road into the oncoming oversize vehicle and to check that stopped vehicles are sufficiently off the road to ensure passage of the oversize vehicle.
- 3.5.5. The rear police escort directs traffic at the rear of the load.



3. Role of Police Escorts

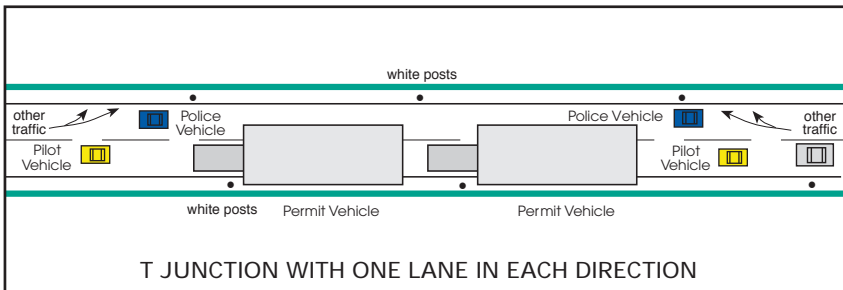
3.6. Four or more Police Escorts

- 3.6.1. Four police escorts are generally used for exceptionally large loads where slow or difficult manoeuvring may occur and during night travel.
- 3.6.2. Their role is to direct traffic at intersections and also past the load at various points to keep the traffic flowing, albeit at a reduced speed.



3.7. Convoy Travel Requirements

- 3.7.1. Convoy travel will only be permitted while police escorts are in attendance.
- 3.7.2. A minimum of two police escorts will accompany this type of operation; one at the front and one at the rear to control the traffic.
- 3.7.3. Additional police escorts may be necessary to cover situations described in 3.5 and 3.6.



4. General Requirements

4.1. Headlights on a Pilot Vehicle or Police Escort Vehicle

- 4.1.1. The low beam headlights on a pilot vehicle or police escort vehicle must be switched on when it is accompanying an oversize vehicle during daylight hours.
- 4.1.2. In the case of a police escort vehicle the headlights may flash while they are switched on when accompanying an oversize vehicle during daylight hours.

4.2. Restrictions on Towing and Loading

- 4.2.1. A pilot vehicle or police escort vehicle that is accompanying an oversize vehicle must not tow a trailer or carry a load, but may carry tools, equipment or substances for use in connection with the oversize vehicle or combination that it is accompanying or for restraining the load on that oversize vehicle or combination.

For further information relating to this booklet refer to:

**Vehicle Permits Team
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