

Chain of Responsibility

Consignors

About the chain of responsibility (CoR)

Our road laws generally address the actions of drivers and operators, but breaches of these laws are often caused by other parties in the transport supply chain.

The aim of CoR for a heavy vehicle is to make sure everyone in the supply chain actively prevents breaches of the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL). The CoR law also extends to preventing or reducing potential harm or loss (risks) to yourself and others. Managing (controlling) these risks ensures that you always recognise and carefully consider all potential dangers and satisfactorily reduce or avoid them before they occur.

Who has a responsibility?

Under CoR laws, if you undertake specified functions that exercise, or have the capability of exercising, control or influence over *any* transport task, you are part of the chain of responsibility and have an obligation to ensure compliance with the HVNL.

What if I have multiple transport tasks?

Everyone in the supply chain has a responsibility to ensure the safety of their transport tasks related to the vehicle. If you carry out *more than one task* in the supply chain, this responsibility will extend to *all* of the tasks that you carry out. You may therefore be classified by *multiple roles* in the transport supply chain under the HVNL.

Your responsibility as a consignor

As a 'party' in the supply chain, with influence over how and when goods are dispatched and delivered, a consignor has an ongoing responsibility to prevent breaches of mass, dimension, loading, speed and fatigue laws under the HVNL.

As a consignor, you also have an ongoing responsibility to prevent or reduce potential harm or loss (risks) to yourself and others, and to ensure that you don't ask, require or direct activities you know will breach the law.

Am I carrying out a consignor's transport tasks?

Under the HVNL, you are generally classified as a consignor of goods when you engage a heavy vehicle operator (through an agent or other party) to transport your goods (consignment) to a consignee (such as a buyer receiving your goods) by road for commercial purposes. You will usually be named and identified as the consignor in the formal documentation for the road transport of the goods. You can use the *CoR checklist* to confirm whether you are classified as a consignor for road transport using a heavy vehicle under the HVNL.

Your key responsibilities as a consignor

Some key responsibilities may include ensuring that:

- loads do not exceed vehicle mass or dimension limits
- goods carried on your behalf are appropriately secured
- operators carrying freight containers have a verified Container Weight Declaration
- your delivery requirements do not require or encourage drivers to
 - exceed the speed limits
 - exceed regulated driving hours
 - fail to meet the minimum rest requirements
 - drive while impaired by fatigue.

What are the possible penalties for a breach?

As a consignor, you could be held legally liable for breaches of the HVNL even though you have no direct role in driving or operating a heavy vehicle. If your actions, inactions or demands cause or contribute to an offence, you can be held legally accountable.

Penalties and sanctions can range from formal warnings to court imposed fines and penalties relating to the commercial benefit derived from offences.

Safety systems and controls

All parties in the supply chain have a responsibility to prevent or reduce potential harm or loss (risks) by ensuring transport-related activities are safe. Under the HVNL, safety systems and controls (such as safe work practices, training and procedures) should be in place to prevent breaches of the HVNL, manage risk and maintain a safe road environment.

This means, as a 'party' in the supply chain, that you can proactively reduce risks related to your transport tasks, rather than only reacting when there is a possible breach of the law.

The following table lists some examples of the effective safety systems and controls you can implement as a consignor to ensure breaches of the HVNL do not occur and that every road user is safe.

Safety systems and controls – Examples

Governance (administration) and review systems

- System of engagement and consultation with all other parties
- System to remedy breaches and take corrective action
- System to review packing and loading practices for safe transport
- System to review contracts and agreements addresses improper requests, incentives or benefits for non-conformance with the law

Fatigue

Managing the fatigue of the driver:

- System to ensure the terms of the consignment, contracts and agreements will not result in, encourage, or provide an incentive to a relevant party to cause the driver to drive whilst fatigued

Fatigue management process:

- System to assess the fatigue of the driver
- System to review loading arrangements that may cause delays
- System to report incidents of driver fatigue to the driver's operator/employer

Fatigue assurance procedures:

- System to ensure business practices will not cause the driver to drive whilst fatigued or breach their work/rest hours

Speed

Speeding assurance procedures:

- System to ensure terms of consignment, contracts and agreements will not cause or encourage the driver to exceed the speed limit
- System to ensure demands are not made of the driver that may result in the driver exceeding the speed limit
- System to ensure driver's schedule will not cause the driver to exceed the speed limit

Mass, dimension, loading, speed and fatigue

Mass, dimension and loading process:

- System to train all parties in the chain regarding their responsibilities to the safety of the transport activity

Mass, dimension, loading assurance procedures:

- System to ensure accuracy of the load weights
- System to ensure compliance with applicable gross and axle weights
- System to ensure the accuracy of load positioning
- System to ensure loads are properly restrained

The examples in the Safety systems and controls table represent *only a selection* of the possible safety systems and controls you can implement as a consignor to ensure breaches of the HVNL do not occur and that every road user is safe.



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