



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts



# ➤ Guide to non-RAV entry import approvals

December 2023

© Commonwealth of Australia 2023  
December 2023 / INFRASTRUCTURE 2023

### **Ownership of intellectual property rights in this publication**

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights, if any) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia (referred to below as the Commonwealth).

### **Disclaimer**

The material contained in this publication is made available on the understanding that the Commonwealth is not providing professional advice, and that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use, and seek independent advice if necessary.

The Commonwealth makes no representations or warranties as to the contents or accuracy of the information contained in this publication. To the extent permitted by law, the Commonwealth disclaims liability to any person or organisation in respect of anything done, or omitted to be done, in reliance upon information contained in this publication.

### **Use of the Coat of Arms**

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet sets the terms under which the Coat of Arms is used. Please refer to the Commonwealth Coat of Arms - Information and Guidelines publication available at <http://www.pmc.gov.au>.

### **Contact us**

This publication is available in PDF format. All other rights are reserved, including in relation to any departmental logos or trademarks which may exist. For enquiries regarding the licence and any use of this publication, please contact:

Director – RVS Legislation, Policy and Partnerships  
Vehicle Safety Policy & Partnerships Branch  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
GPO Box 594  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Australia

Email: [RVSAimplementation@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:RVSAimplementation@infrastructure.gov.au)

Website: [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)

First published July 2021

Updated January 2022 – Information on testing and market evaluation vehicles.

Updated July 2022 – Information on withdraw, amend and resubmit an application and Quick links section added.

Updated October 2022 – Definition of a new vehicle added to Appendix 1.

Updated January 2023 – URL links updated.

Updated April 2023 – Added information about submitting multiple identical vehicles on an application.

Updated December 2023 – Language simplified, checklist and appendix removed and published as separate documents.

# Contents

<b>Non-RAV entry import approval</b>	<b>4</b>
Why do I need an approval to import my vehicle?	4
What are the eligibility requirements of a non-RAV entry import approval?	4
What are exceptional circumstances?	5
What does generally available in Australia mean?	5
<b>Applying for a non-RAV entry import approval</b>	<b>6</b>
What information do I need to provide?	6
Can I make changes to my application?	8
What if I need to supply more information?	8
<b>Deciding your application</b>	<b>9</b>
When will I find out the result of my application?	9
What are the possible outcomes of my application?	9
<b>Conditions of an approval</b>	<b>10</b>
Complying with your responsibilities	10
How do I make changes to my approval?	10
Vary an approval	10
Suspend or revoke an approval	11
<b>Further information</b>	<b>12</b>
Quick links	12

# Non-RAV entry import approval

A non-RAV entry import approval allows you to import a vehicle that is not eligible to be on the Register of Approved Vehicles for a specific purpose or temporary period.

If you plan to import a vehicle into Australia, you need to apply to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the department) for an approval.

Road vehicles being imported for specific purposes or for a limited period of time that are not intended to be used on public roads, or only used on public roads in exceptional circumstances, may be eligible for a non-RAV entry import approval.

You may, in some case, be able to include a single vehicle or up to 30 identical vehicles (except for trailers which are limited to 4) in one application. You should be aware that you may be liable for import duties.<sup>1</sup>

Vehicles intended for regular use on public roads must be entered on the [Register of Approved Vehicles](#) (RAV), a publicly searchable online database of vehicles approved to be provided to the Australian market. They are not eligible for a non-RAV entry import approval.

## Why do I need an approval to import my vehicle?

It is an offence to import a road vehicle into Australia without an approval. The department manages the approval process through [ROVER](#), its online application and approval portal.

You must apply to the department and obtain an approval to import a road vehicle **before** importing it.

If your vehicle is not designed solely or principally for use in transport on a public road, you should consider applying for an advisory notice that a vehicle is not a road vehicle.

**Note:** When determining whether a vehicle is designed solely or principally for use in transport on public roads, the physical and operational features of the vehicle must be taken into account.

## What are the eligibility requirements of a non-RAV entry import approval?

You will need to show you meet the following eligibility requirements when applying for a non-RAV entry import approval.

The vehicle to be imported:

- does not involve use on a public road, or
- involves use on a public road only in [exceptional circumstances](#), and
- any of the following applies to the vehicle to be imported:
  - to be used only in a race or rally, or in providing support to a vehicle used in a race or rally
  - to be used only in a public exhibition and is not [generally available](#) in Australia

<sup>1</sup> Further details are available on the Australian Border Force [website](#).

- to be used only in the production of a film, video, television program or advertisement
- to be used only for testing or market evaluation
- a significantly modified vehicle (including a hot rod)
- the vehicle is suitable to be granted a non-RAV entry import approval, and granting an approval would not be inconsistent with the intent of the RVS legislation.

Another eligibility criterion a vehicle may meet is that the import is ‘temporary’. This means the vehicle will be in Australia for 12 months or less. During that period, it will either not be used on a public road or will only be used on a public road in exceptional circumstances.

## What are exceptional circumstances?

Using a vehicle on a public road in exceptional circumstances does not have a specific legal definition under the RVS legislation. Each application must be decided on its merits.

Some examples of exceptional circumstances may include:

- one-off functions, a visit by a head-of-state or church leader, for example, a G20 broadcast van or the ‘Pope-mobile’
- a short-trip to reach the site of the activity (a race or rally for example,) that the vehicle’s use was approved for
- support for a charity function
- situations where road use occurs regularly but is controlled or limited by the conditions of the approval and/or registration authorities.

When applying for a non-RAV entry import approval, you must specify the planned use of the vehicle, including any public road use.

If you are planning to use the vehicle on a public road in exceptional circumstances, you may also be asked to provide documentation showing you are permitted to do so from the relevant state or territory authority where the vehicle will be used.

Alternatively, a condition may be imposed on the non-RAV entry import approval that you will seek permission before using the vehicle on a public road.

## What does generally available in Australia mean?

If you are planning to use the vehicle only in a public exhibition, the vehicle must not be generally available in Australia.

The term not ‘generally available’ means that, either:

- the vehicle is not available for purchase in Australia, or
- the vehicle may be difficult to acquire due to rarity, condition of locally available vehicles, remote location and difficulty of transport within Australia or if there is a long waiting time for the vehicle to be available.

If you are applying for the ‘public exhibition’ option, you should have information relating to the non-availability of the vehicle you are applying to import, for example, the results of a records search for the vehicle.

# Applying for a non-RAV entry import approval

Any person can apply for a non-RAV entry import approval. An agent or someone else can also apply on your behalf but they will need to have an [authority to act](#) to do so.

To apply, you must first [create an account in ROVER](#) and supply identification details which need to be checked by the department before you start your application.

When you are ready to begin your application, click on the 'Single road vehicle approvals' icon in ROVER.



You will need to complete a series of questions and upload documents to support your application.

You must pay the [application fee](#) when you submit your application. It cannot be assessed and decided until the fee is paid.

**Important:** Allow enough time for your application to be assessed before your planned importation date. It may take up to 30 business days for an import approval application to be assessed and decided.<sup>2</sup>

## What information do I need to provide?

Before you apply for a non-RAV entry import approval, you should have the information you need to provide ready.

The [Checklist for a non-RAV entry import approval application](#) will assist you to make sure you have all the information you need to include. Some of the required information will depend on which option you are applying for under the non-RAV entry import approval pathway. The information may include:

- Details of the vehicle you are applying to import, including the type of vehicle, (car, motorbike, truck, trailer, etc.) make, model and year of manufacture
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or chassis number. If the vehicle does not have a 17-character VIN and you require one (for example, because you are registering a test vehicle for limited use on a public road), then you should provide any VIN or chassis number that the vehicle has been issued with and indicate on your application that you require a 17-character VIN. If your application is approved, the department will then issue your vehicle a 17-character VIN.
- Clear photos of the vehicle you are applying to import. Photos that identify the vehicle taken in a clear and well-lit area. Photos taken from the front, rear and side of the vehicle
- Evidence that the vehicle will not be used on a public road or used only in exceptional circumstances, such as:
  - an approval by the relevant state or territory authority to use the vehicle on a public road (in exceptional circumstances), or

<sup>2</sup> The definition of a business day under section 5 of the Rules means a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday in the Australian Capital Territory.

- you may make a declaration on your application form that an approval will be sought (depending on the application type we may still require a letter from the state or territory regulator or the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) indicating in-principle support that the vehicle will be permitted to be used on a public road, or
- you may make a declaration on your application that the vehicle will not be used on a public road
- details of any contraventions of road vehicle legislation (or contraventions which *may* have been made) by the applicant or, if the applicant is a body corporate, by the key management personnel
- if applicable, indicate how long the vehicle will be required for
- application specific information as set out in Table 1.

**Note:** Draft applications older than 12-months that have never been submitted will be automatically deleted regularly.

**Table 1. Application specific information.**

Non-RAV entry import approval option	Examples of required information
Race or rally (or support vehicle for race/rally)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the event or series name, including organiser and location.</li> <li>• Whether the vehicle is a race/rally vehicle or a support vehicle, including vehicle features to show suitability as race/rally or support vehicle.</li> <li>• Competitor information, including club membership.</li> </ul>
Public exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the public exhibition, including documentation authorising the vehicle's use in the exhibition (for example, a letter from the museum indicating the vehicle will be used in an exhibition).</li> <li>• Documentation demonstrating the vehicle is not generally available in Australia (for example, results of a records search under the make/model).</li> </ul>
Film, video television program or advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the type of production the vehicle will be used in.</li> <li>• Details of the vehicle's use and written agreement from a production company or film body (for example, Film Victoria) setting out the intended use of the vehicle.</li> </ul>
Testing or market evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of testing (for example, vehicle type approval or Model Report).</li> <li>• How the vehicle will be used during the testing/evaluation period.</li> <li>• Details of the applicant's approval to carry out testing or market evaluation (for example, vehicle type approval or testing facility approval).</li> <li>• Details of the number of vehicles required for testing.</li> <li>• Period of time the vehicle will be in Australia.</li> <li>• The vehicle's intended use after testing/evaluation is complete.</li> <li>• Further information about testing or market evaluation is available in <a href="#">Appendix 1</a>.</li> </ul>
Significantly modified (including hot rod)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the type of vehicle being imported (significantly modified or a custom-built hot rod).</li> <li>• Original specifications of the vehicle.</li> <li>• Details of modifications to the vehicle, including dates of modifications.</li> <li>• If the vehicle is a hot rod – details of the special features that relate to the hot rod.</li> </ul>

Other – vehicle is suitable to be granted a non-RAV entry import approval	<p>Information about why the vehicle should be considered for an import approval, noting that decisions must be consistent with the objectives of the RVSA.</p> <p>The objective of this type of application is to provide consumers in Australia with a choice of vehicles that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the safety and environmental expectations of the community</li> <li>• use energy conservation technology and anti-theft technology</li> <li>• are able to make use of technological advances.</li> </ul> <p>Note – changes are being considered for special purpose vehicles that don't require use on public roads. Until any changes are confirmed, special purpose vehicles, such as mining vehicles, will be considered under this criterion.</p>
Temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of how the vehicle will be used during the temporary period it will be in Australia.</li> <li>• Date range of the temporary period (projected arrival and export dates).</li> <li>• Where the vehicle will be exported to.</li> </ul>

**Important:** All vehicles applied for under a non-RAV entry import approval are **not** to be used on public roads. If the application includes use on a public road, the use must be only in exceptional circumstances.

## Can I make changes to my application?

When you start an application, ROVER allows you to save it, exit and return to your saved work in ROVER at any time before you submit it. If you need to amend your application after it has been submitted, but before you have paid the fee, you can withdraw, amend and resubmit it, or delete it.

You can also [withdraw an application](#) and then amend and resubmit or delete it after you have submitted it and paid the fee if its status in ROVER is 'Paid—Awaiting Assessment' or 'Assessment in progress'.

The process for withdrawing, amending and resubmitting, or deleting an application after the fee has been paid is explained in the [ROVER guide: How to withdraw, amend and resubmit or delete an application](#).

As you progress through the application creation, submission, payment and decision process in ROVER, you can view the [status of your application](#) at various stages.

## What if I need to supply more information?

Sometimes an assessor may require further information so that they can assess your application. For example, they may not be able to identify your vehicle if the photos supplied were taken in a poorly lit garage.

Alternatively, they may require relevant documents about why the vehicle is being imported. If this happens, the assessor will send a request further information (RFI) notice. You will be sent an email notifying you that an RFI is in your ROVER account.

To respond to the RFI, access your ROVER account and open the RFI notice. The additional information requested will be clearly outlined in the notice.

You will be given a period of time to respond to the RFI (usually 30 days). If you require more time, you should contact the department to request more time to respond.



# Deciding your application

This section covers the possible outcomes of your application for a non-RAV import approval.

## When will I find out the result of my application?

A decision will be made on your application within 30 business days of the application being submitted.<sup>3</sup> If further information is needed to support the application, the 30 business-day timeframe is paused until the required information is supplied.

## What are the possible outcomes of my application?

The 3 possible outcomes for your application are:

- Your application is granted and you receive an import approval notice through ROVER.
- Your application is refused. In this case, you will be notified before this decision is made and allowed to submit more information to support your application or address any deficiencies.
- Your application is refused to be considered. This will only happen if you:
  - did not submit the application fee. (You will receive warnings if the payment has not been made.)
  - did not apply using the approved form in ROVER. (If you are having trouble using the online form [contact us](#))
  - did not provide the required information in your application. (You will be contacted if you leave out information and given time to provide it.)

If your application is refused to be considered or refused, you may apply to the [Administrative Appeals Tribunal](#) (AAT) for a review of the decision.

---

<sup>3</sup> The definition of a business day under section 5 of the Rules means a day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday in the Australian Capital Territory.

## Conditions of an approval

All approvals include conditions. A non-RAV entry import approval will include conditions to:

- allow or arrange for the vehicle to be inspected if requested to do so. This inspection may be done online as an alternative to a physical inspection.
- provide any information or documents specified in a written request from the department that is reasonably required to assess whether the approval holder is complying with the Road Vehicle Standards legislation, including information about the vehicle covered by the approval.

Other conditions that may be applied to the approval, include requirements that:

- the approval holder exports or destroys the approved vehicle within a specified period and provides evidence that this has been done within the specified period
- the vehicle, or any modification, is verified by an [authorised vehicle verifier](#)
- the approval holder keeps specified records for a specified period and provides them when requested to do so by the department
- prohibit the approval holder from giving another person access to the approved vehicle
- specify how the approved vehicle may be used.

Information provided in the application will influence the types of conditions included in an approval. For example, if:

- your application includes information that your vehicle will not be used on a public road, then a condition may be included to prohibit use on a public road
- you tell us you will export or destroy the vehicle by a certain date, a condition may be included requiring you to export or destroy the vehicle and provide evidence when that has been done.

The conditions applied to your approval will be clearly set out in your approval notice. In certain circumstances, the department has the authority to change conditions of an approval, for example, if you breach a condition of your approval.

## Complying with your responsibilities

Offences and civil penalty provisions apply when a person (individual or company):

- breaches a condition of their approval.
- makes a false or misleading declaration.
- provides false or misleading information.

If [the department identifies non-compliance](#), its response will be proportionate to the risk being managed. This may include issuing infringement notices, applying for civil penalty orders or injunctions or entering into enforceable undertakings.

## How do I make changes to my approval?

After you have been granted a non-RAV entry import approval, you may wish to request changes due to your circumstances changing since the approval was granted. You can request 3 types of changes – to vary, suspend or revoke your approval.

### Vary an approval

You may want to make a change to your approval or choose to update information held by us regarding your approval. To do this, you must [request to vary](#) your approval through ROVER and provide any required information and documents.

A request for variation is assessed in a similar way to a new application. We may request further information and may refuse to consider the application if that information is not provided. In deciding, we must be satisfied that you will meet the conditions of the varied approval.

When deciding, we must be satisfied that you will meet the conditions of the varied approval.

## Suspend or revoke an approval

You may request to suspend or [revoke](#) your approval. This may occur, for example, if you decide that you do not want to import your vehicle or that the importation process has been delayed and you are unsure when you will be importing it to Australia.

Requests to suspend or revoke and approval are treated differently to requests to vary and may be submitted via ROVER, email, or mail.

Once we receive a suspension or revocation request, we will suspend or revoke the approval as soon as practicable. Once the approval is suspended or revoked its status in ROVER will change to indicate this.

## Further information

For further information, please visit the [department's website](#) or submit an [online enquiry](#).

### Quick links

- [Guide to non-RAV entry approvals—Appendix 1—Testing and market evaluation vehicles](#)
- [Checklist for a non-RAV entry import approval application](#)
- [How to create a user account in ROVER.](#)
- [Importing a road vehicle](#)
- [ROVER application statuses and notifications](#)
- [What are the RVS fees and charges?](#)
- [What are RVS decision-making timeframes?](#)
- [How is my personal and commercial information in ROVER managed?](#)

**Note:** Please see the [Glossary of terms](#) on our website for a comprehensive list of road vehicle standards terms and their definitions.