



Australian Government

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



➤ Guide to non-RAV entry import approvals

January 2023

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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.

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Non-RAV entry import approval

A non-RAV entry import approval under the Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2019 allows an approval holder to import a vehicle that is not eligible to be on the Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) for a specific purpose or temporary period.

What is a non-RAV entry import approval?

The *Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018* (RVSA) replaced the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989* (MVSA) on 1 July 2021. The detail of how the RVSA regulatory framework operates is contained in subsidiary legislation, the *Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2019* (the Rules). The RVSA, the Rules and other related legislation are collectively referred to as the Road Vehicle Standards (RVS) legislation.

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

Road vehicles intended to be used regularly on public roads must be entered on the Register of Approved Vehicles (RAV) before they are provided to the Australian market. Vehicles being imported for specific purposes or for a limited period of time and 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.

Before applying for an approval, you should read these guidelines explaining how to apply and outlining the eligibility requirements.

Full details of non-RAV entry import approvals are in the [Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2019](#), sections 147 to 158.

What is the Register of Approved Vehicles?

The [Register of Approved Vehicles](#) is an online database of vehicles that meet the requirements of the RVS legislation and have been approved to be provided in Australia. The RAV is a publicly searchable database.

Once entered on the RAV, a vehicle is available for registration by a state or territory registration authority (in line with the regulatory requirements of the particular state or territory).

Why do I need an approval to import my vehicle?

Under section 22 of the RVSA, it is an offence to import a road vehicle into Australia without an approval. The department manages the approval process through its online application system, [ROVER](#). You must apply to the department and obtain an approval to import a road vehicle **before** importing the vehicle.

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 motor vehicle is designed solely or principally for use in transport on public roads, the physical and operational features of the motor 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 below eligibility requirements when applying for a non-RAV entry import approval.

- The road 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 road 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
 - 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 road vehicle may meet is that the import is ‘temporary’, meaning the vehicle will only be in Australia for a temporary period (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.

These requirements are set out in full at Sections 151 and 152 of the [Road Vehicle Standards Rules 2019](#).

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 case 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.

Exceptional circumstances may also include 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 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?

Under the non-RAV entry import approval option to import a vehicle only for use 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, a data search of the vehicle.

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

Applying for a non-RAV entry import approval

This section explains how to apply for a non-RAV entry import approval. If you are considering importing a non-RAV road vehicle you should read this information before you apply.

Who may apply for a non-RAV entry import approval?

Any person may apply for a non-RAV entry import approval. An agent may also apply on behalf of the applicant.

To apply for a non-RAV entry import approval you (or your agent) must first [create an account in ROVER](#) and supply identification details.

When do I need to apply?

You must apply and obtain an import approval **before** importing the vehicle. Importing a vehicle without permission is an offence under the RVSA and penalties may apply. 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 a decision made.

How do I apply?



After you have created an account in ROVER, click on the 'Single Road Vehicle' option. You will be asked a series of questions from the online application form, which will direct you through the non-RAV entry approval pathway. You will be required to upload documents, where necessary, to support your application.

At the end of the application, you will need to sign a declaration confirming the accuracy of the information you have supplied.

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've 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 information do I need to apply?

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

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.
- 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 relevant state or territory authority to use the vehicle on a public road (in exceptional circumstances), or
 - 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. For example, testing and evaluation other than a vehicle type approval holder), or
 - you may make a declaration on your application form 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.
- Period of use that the vehicle will be required for.
- Application specific information as set out in Table 1 on page 9.

Important: All RVS applications must be submitted through [ROVER](#) the department's online application and approval portal.

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"> • Details of the event or series name (including organiser and location). • Whether the vehicle being applied for is a race/rally vehicle or a support vehicle (including vehicle features to show suitability as race/rally or support vehicle). • Competitor information, including club membership.
Public exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). • Documentation demonstrating the vehicle is not generally available in Australia (for example records of a data search under the make/model).
Film, video television program or advertisement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the type of production the vehicle will be used in. • 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.
Testing or market evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of testing (for example, type approval or Model Report). • How the vehicle will be used during the testing/evaluation period. • Details of the applicant's approval to carry out testing or market evaluation (for example, vehicle type approval or testing facility approval). • Details of the number of vehicles required for testing (note: each vehicle must have a separate application). • Period of time the vehicle will be in Australia. • The vehicle's intended use after testing/evaluation is complete. • Further information about testing or market evaluation is available at Appendix 1.
Significantly modified (including hot rod)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the type of vehicle being imported (significantly modified or a custom-built hot rod). • Original specifications of the vehicle. • Details of modifications to the vehicle (including dates of modifications). • If the vehicle is a hot rod – details of the special features that relate to the hot rod.
Other – vehicle is suitable to be granted a non-RAV entry import approval	<p>Information about why the vehicle should be considered for granting an import approval, noting that decisions must be consistent with the objectives of the RVSA. The object of the Act applicable to this type of application is to provide consumers in Australia with a choice of road vehicles that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) meet the safety and environmental expectations of the community, and (ii) use energy conservation technology and anti-theft technology, and (iii) are able to make use of technological advances. <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 road vehicles, such as mining vehicles, will be considered under this criteria.</p>
Temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of how the vehicle will be used during the temporary period it will be in Australia. • Date range of the temporary period (projected arrival and export dates). • Where the vehicle will be exported to.

Important: All vehicles being applied for under the non-RAV entry import approval option 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.

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 required for your application to be able to be assessed will be clearly requested 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.

How much is the application fee?

For an application to be assessed and decided on, you'll need to pay the [application fee](#) before submitting your application.

This fee is based on cost-recovery of processing the application and is generally non-refundable (except in exceptional circumstances).

Important: applications are **not** complete until the application fee has been paid through ROVER. Applications will not be considered until your payment has been received.

Checklist – am I ready to apply?

Before you create an account in ROVER

- ✓ Are you an agent or representative of the applicant? If yes, do you have an electronic copy of your [authority to act](#) on behalf of the applicant?
- ✓ Do you have the relevant proof of identity documents required to [create a ROVER account](#)?

Before you start the application

- ✓ Have you created an account in ROVER?
- ✓ Do you have information identifying the road vehicle you are applying to import?
- ✓ Do you have clear images of the vehicle you are applying to import?
- ✓ Have you identified who will be the primary contact for the approval and their details?
- ✓ Do you have supporting information to show that you meet the eligibility criteria?
(Refer to – [What information do I need to apply?](#))
- ✓ Do you understand the responsibilities of being an approval holder and what you are expected to do to comply with those responsibilities?

Outcome of the application

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

When will I find out the result of my application?

A decision will be made on your non-RAV entry import application within [30 business days](#) of the application being submitted.

If further information is needed to support the application, the 30 business-day timeframe is paused until you supply the required information. When the additional information is received, the timeframe re-commences.

What are the possible outcomes of my application?

The non-RAV entry import approval application process has 3 possible outcomes. Your application is:

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

Conditions of approval

All approvals issued under the RVS legislation 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 **if** specified in a written request from the Minister or inspector and that are reasonably required to assess whether the approval holder is complying with the RVS legislation, including information about the vehicle the approval applies to.

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

- the approval holder exports or destroys the vehicle that the approval applies to 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](#) (AVV).
- the approval holder keeps specified records for a specified period and provides them when requested to do so by the Minister or an inspector.
- prohibit the approval holder from giving another person access to the vehicle that the approval applies to.
- specify how the vehicle the approval applies to may be used.

Information entered 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 that apply to your approval (if granted) will be clearly set out in your approval notice.

Complying with your responsibilities

Under the RVS legislation, offences and civil penalty provisions apply when a person (individual or company):

- breaches a condition of the 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.

What if I am not happy with the outcome of my application?

If the outcome of your application is a refusal to grant (or a refusal to consider), you may apply to the [Administrative Appeals Tribunal](#) (AAT) for a review of the decision.

How do I make changes to my approval?

After you have been granted a non-RAV entry import approval, you may make changes as your circumstances may have changed since the approval was granted. You can request 3 types of changes: vary, suspend, or revoke your approval.

The department has the authority to do the same in certain circumstances, for example, if you have breached a condition of your approval.

Vary an approval

You may want a change to your approval or choose to update certain information held by us regarding your approval.

To do this, you need to [request a variation](#) to your approval. The application must be made on the approved form in ROVER with the 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.

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.

Suspension or revocation requests are treated differently to variation requests. A request to suspend or revoke does not have to be on an approved system form—you may submit it via ROVER, email, or mail.

Once we receive a suspension or revocation request, we will suspend or revoke the approval as soon as practicable.

Appendix 1 – Testing or market evaluation vehicles

The eligibility criteria for a non-RAV entry import approval for a testing or market evaluation vehicle includes that the vehicle will not be used on a public road or will be used on a public road only in exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional circumstances may include situations where road use occurs regularly, but is controlled or limited by registration authorities and/or conditions of the approval.

An example of this situation is a vehicle manufacturer performing on road testing to confirm a vehicle is suitable for the road or climatic conditions in Australia.

Please refer to the [conditions of approval](#) above for the types of conditions that may be included in these approvals.

An approval could be granted that involves use on a public road, and include conditions to limit who can use the vehicle and prevent the sale of the vehicle while it is being tested.

Registering a vehicle for test and evaluation use

State and territory authorities and the NHVR have a long-standing agreement to allow vehicles to be registered for test and evaluation use in certain circumstances.

These circumstances include where the approval holder also holds a full volume identification plate approval (IPA) granted under the *Motor Vehicle Standards Act 1989*, this agreement is continuing for vehicle type approval holders.

The holder of a vehicle type approval or IPA will not be required to obtain in-principle support to include with the application.

Where the applicant does not hold an IPA or vehicle type approval and intends to use the vehicle on a public road, the applicant will be required to provide information demonstrating in-principle support from the state or territory registration authority (or the NHVR if applicable) for the vehicle to be used on a public road.

Note: while this information is applicable to import applications for non-RAV entry import approvals, if a local manufacturer is having difficulty registering a testing or market evaluation vehicle, they can submit an application for consideration.

Testing or evaluating multiple vehicles

If additional vehicles are required, justification for why multiple vehicles are required should be included in the test plan and attached to each separate application.

A test plan will need to be attached to the application and should include:

- a basic description of how and where the vehicle will be tested,
- who will operate the vehicle while the testing is being performed, and
- the intended management of the vehicle after testing is completed.

If covered by a vehicle type approval

A vehicle that meets the definition of a 'new vehicle'* can be entered on the RAV by the vehicle type approval holder or their authorised representative, if it is covered by the vehicle type approval.

A vehicle that has been used in transport on a public road is not eligible for entry on the RAV under the vehicle type approval pathway as it does not meet the definition of a 'new vehicle'.

***A new vehicle** is defined in the RVS Rules as: a vehicle that has not been used in transport on a public road in Australia or outside Australia, other than:

- (a) to have work done on it, or
- (b) to protect it, or
- (c) to store it, or
- (d) if the vehicle has been imported – to transport it to the importer, or
- (e) if the vehicle has been exported – to transport it to the exporter.

Section 41 of the Rules (an eligibility criterion for a concessional RAV entry approval) allows a concessional RAV entry approval to be granted for a vehicle to be entered on the RAV, if the Minister is satisfied that the vehicle is suitable for entry on the RAV.

In the case where a vehicle is identical to a vehicle identified in a vehicle type approval, other than the fact it has been used on a public road, the Minister may be satisfied it is suitable for entry on the RAV based on a declaration from the vehicle type approval holder.

An application for concessional RAV entry approval would be on a vehicle-by-vehicle application and approval basis. A separate application will be required for each vehicle.

The RAV would record the vehicle RAV entry pathway as 'Concessional – Otherwise Suitable'.

To apply, applicants should use the 'personal effects' vehicle under the Single Road Vehicle application in ROVER and ensure they include in the comments section that they are seeking consideration that the vehicle is otherwise suitable for entry on the RAV, as well as a detailed reason for this.

Vehicles imported to develop a Model Report

Where the vehicle was imported to develop a Model Report, an application can be made for a single road vehicle using the option 'concessional RAV entry – vehicle to be modified by a RAW'.

The vehicle will still be verified by an AVV approval holder. However, the modifications may have already been performed while developing the Model Report.

In this case, the applicant must make it clear in the application that the vehicle has already been modified and cannot meet the condition of being modified by a registered automotive workshop (RAW).

Where it is suitable, the approval can be granted under section 41 of the Rules where the application almost meets the eligibility criteria.

Specific conditions will be added to the approval for the vehicle to be verified by an AVV in regard to certain elements outlined in the Model Report.

This may include checks for manufacture or modification, damage and corrosion, deterioration and recall completion.

Conditions of approval for testing or market evaluation vehicles

Non-RAV entry import approvals for testing and market evaluation vehicles may include conditions for an approval holder to maintain control of the vehicle until it is exported, destroyed or entered on the RAV.

Non-RAV entry import approval conditions

When a condition may be added	The condition that may be included
An applicant has indicated a vehicle will be used on a public road	<p>The approval holder must ensure that, when the vehicle is driven on public roads, it is only driven by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> people engaged directly or indirectly by the approval holder, or are contracted to the approval holder or the approval holder's nominated representative in Australia, or people who are under the supervision of a person that is within one of the classes of people listed above. <p>The approval holder must not transfer ownership or sell the vehicle.</p>
An applicant has indicated a vehicle will NOT be used on a public road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The approval holder must not use the vehicle on a public road. The approval holder must not transfer ownership or sell the vehicle.
An applicant has indicated the vehicle will be exported or destroyed after completion of testing or market evaluation	<p>The approval holder must dispose of the vehicle at the end of the test or evaluation program, by either exporting or destroying the vehicle, and provide documentation to the department within 30 days evidencing that it has been exported or destroyed.</p>
An applicant has indicated a vehicle will be entered on the RAV in accordance with their type approval if/when granted	<p>The approval holder must not transfer ownership or sell the vehicle until the vehicle has been entered on the RAV in accordance with the type approval.</p> <p>If the vehicle is not eligible for entry on the RAV, the approval holder must either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make an application for a concessional RAV entry approval, or export/destroy the vehicle (including if the concessional RAV entry approval is refused), and provide evidence this has been done. <p>This condition must be met within 12 months of completing the test or evaluation of the vehicle.</p>
An applicant has indicated a vehicle will be entered on the RAV in accordance with a concessional RAV entry approval if/when granted	<p>The approval holder must not transfer ownership or sell the vehicle until the vehicle has been entered on the RAV. If the vehicle is not eligible for entry on the RAV, the approval holder must export/destroy the vehicle and provide evidence this has been done.</p> <p>This condition must be met within 12 months of completion of the test or evaluation of the vehicle.</p>

Further information

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

Quick links

- [Non-RAV entry approvals](#)
- [How to create a user account in ROVER.](#)
- [ROVER portal](#)
- [RVS legislation and determinations](#)
- [Importing a road vehicle](#)
- [Guides and resources](#)
- [ROVER application statuses and notifications](#)
- [What are the RVS fees and charges?](#)
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- [How is my personal and commercial information in ROVER managed?](#)
- [ROVER guide: How to withdraw, amend and resubmit or delete an application](#)
- [Guide to withdrawing, amending and resubmitting an application](#)
- [Guide to varying approvals in ROVER](#)