



CIRCULAR 62/00-1-1

ADR 62/00-PROCEDURES RELATING TO NONSTANDARD MECHANICAL CONNECTION DEVICES BETWEEN VEHICLES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 ADR 62/00 deals with devices used to connect motor vehicles and trailers. It has been designed to ensure the safety and, interchangeability of couplings on vehicles first coming into service in Australia. It applies to motor vehicles and trailers, when fitted with towing couplings, as follows:

- mopeds and motorcycles - 1 March 1992;
- passenger cars, forward control passenger vehicles and off-road passenger vehicles - 1 January 1992; and
- all other vehicles (including all trailers) - 1 July 1991.

1.2 The result of implementing this ADR has been to make it impractical to use some otherwise safe couplings fitted to existing vehicles. This has created problems, particularly for some operators with large fleets or dedicated trailers with nonstandard couplings.

1.3 This circular has been issued to:

- provide notice of review of ADR62 to cater for these problems: and
- Specify interim procedures to facilitate certain suitable operators that have safe reliable vehicle control systems obtaining new vehicles with suitable non-complying couplings.

1.4 The ADR is a national standard under the Motor Vehicle Standards Act. A priority function of the Act is to make road vehicles and vehicle components safe to use.

1.5 The Act requires all vehicles, when first used in transport in Australia, to comply with the ADRs except in special circumstances. The Administrator can only approve nonstandard vehicles where the safe use of the vehicles is assured.

1.6 So far as connections between vehicles are concerned, safe towing involves two matters. The first is whether the device connecting the vehicles is strong enough. The second is whether the couplings fitted to the vehicles are compatible.

1.7 ADR 62/ 00 limits the range of couplings which may be used. These are referred to as standard couplings. Some vehicle operators currently use couplings not specified in the ADR. The ADR is being reviewed to determine whether these practices should change. In the meantime, procedures to authorise the use of nonstandard couplings have been developed.

1.8 The arrangements for nonstandard couplings described in this circular will only apply for the period of the review of the. ADR to fit nonstandard couplings will not prejudice the outcome of the review.

2. OVERVIEW OF PROCEDURES

- 2.1 Arrangements to fit nonstandard couplings will only be available to vehicle operators, on application by operators, and will not be available to manufacturers.
- 2.2 The operator must demonstrate that safety is not compromised. This will require an assurance that the coupling meets all the strength requirements applicable in ADR 62/00 and that controls over interchangeability exist (e.g. closed vehicle fleets or fixed combinations such as heavy haul low loaders).
- 2.3 The operator must give an undertaking that the vehicles will be made to comply with ADR 62/00 before disposal.
- 2.4 In addition, operators must ensure that vehicles still comply with the requirements for locking mechanisms, marking and safety.
- 2.5 When fitting nonstandard couplings, operators must also ensure that vehicles continue to comply with the requirements of the other ADRs applying to the vehicle.

3. INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY THE OPERATOR

- 3.1 Operators wishing to use nonstandard couplings must provide the Administrator with a general description or identification of the couplings proposed to be used, together with an assurance that the couplings will provide safe towing and a summary of the evidence on which the assurance is based. The operator must as well set out the reasons the operator believes he qualifies for permission to operate in accordance with these procedures.
- 3.2 Operators wishing to use nonstandard couplings must also provide the Administrator with an undertaking that, if approved, the vehicles to which the non-standard, couplings are fitted will be used only in accordance with the conditions specified by the Administrator. The operator must have arrangements to ensure that all elements of the conditions specified, including the day-to-day use of vehicles with nonstandard couplings, are controlled.
- 3.3 Each authority can cover multiple vehicles of different make/models, categories and coupling types. The proposed arrangements, once accepted, will remain valid until withdrawn.
- 3.4 Although these arrangements are primarily intended for fleets using one coupling type throughout the fleet, under certain circumstances more than one coupling type can be used - for example, for different mass categories of vehicles. In this case information must be included on all coupling types to be used and the methods to be used to ensure mismatch cannot occur.
- 3.5 For the purposes of this circular:
 - closed fleets are those where all vehicles in the fleet are under the control of the operator seeking permission to fit a nonstandard coupling, and where all vehicles in the fleet capable of being used in combination are fitted with a compatible connection device; and
 - fixed combinations are those where vehicle is always used with, and particular trailer or trailers a particular hauling.

4. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 Couplings shall be a positive locking type with provision for a second independent locking device. They may have provision for automatic coupling and the locking shall be readily verifiable by visual examination.
- 4.2 The operator shall specify the height (including tolerance) to which the nonstandard coupling shall be fitted.
- 4.3 Couplings shall be mounted on motor vehicles and trailers in conformity with written procedures developed by the operator. Instructions shall include those provided by the coupling manufacturer.
- 4.4 Unless otherwise approved by the Administrator, marking and strength requirements of a nonstandard coupling shall be the marking and strength requirements applicable to the similar type couplings listed in ADR 62/00. For unique or special type couplings, requirements shall be as approved by the Administrator. Normally, a coupling strength rating shall be established by test.
- 4.5 Strength tests to validate the design and rating of a nonstandard coupling shall be reported to the Administrator. This evidence shall be reported to the Administrator, preferably by the coupling manufacturer prior to an application by an operator. Unless otherwise approved, the reporting method shall be by using the SE62/00 summary of evidence submission form with:
 - (a) SE62/00 form marked "NONSTANDARD COUPLING";
 - (b) coupling specification attached;
 - (c) test procedure adopted also attached, clearly noting any variation from the approved test procedure.
- 4.6 Unless otherwise approved, tow bar, drawbar and safety chain requirements shall be as required in ADR 62/00.
- 4.7 A nonstandard coupling shall satisfy the same conformity of production and test facility inspection requirements as would apply to a standard coupling.

5. PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

Motor Vehicles

- 5.1 Supplies of motor vehicles are to provide standard vehicles to the operator. Where nonstandard couplings are subsequently fitted, whether by the operator or the original supplier acting as agent for the operator, and whether at a later time or immediately following initial supply, the operator is to fit an identification plate adjacent to the compliance plate containing the statement. "This vehicle is fitted with a nonstandard towing coupling and is only for use by (name of operator)". The statement shall be embossed, indented, etched or engraved to show the information in relief in letters not less than 3mm high.
- 5.2 On disposal of the vehicle by the operator specified on the plate, the identification plate and the nonstandard towing coupling shall be removed.

Trailers 4.5 Tonnes and Over

- 5.3 In the case of a trailer fitted with a nonstandard coupling or not fitted with a coupling the trailer shall in all respects other than the coupling be a complying trailer manufactured in accordance with compliance plate approval held by the manufacturer. The trailer shall be fitted with an identification plate instead of a compliance plate. The identification plate shall be identical in all respects to the compliance plate specified in the approval except that the statement. **“This trailer is only for use by (name of operator)”** shall appear as shown in Attachment 1. The statement shall be embossed, indented, etched or engraved to show the information in relief in letters not less than 3mm high. The blank plate shall be a compliance plate blank supplied by the Department of Transport and Communications. Operators shall obtain from the trailer manufacturer detailed instructions on how to make the trailer standard on disposal.
- 5.4 On disposal of the trailer by the operator specified on the plate, the trailer shall be converted to a complying trailer by the fitting of a standard coupling as specified by the trailer manufacturer (refer para 5.3) and the statement of use shall be obliterated by over stamping each character in the statement with an X.

Trailers Under 4.5 Tonnes

- 5.5 In the case of a trailer fitted with a nonstandard coupling or not fitted with a coupling the trailer plate specified in Vehicle Standards Bulletin 1 Revision 1 - "Building Small Trailers" Section 3 shall not be affixed. Instead a plate shall be affixed which provides the information required in Section 3 together with a statement. **“This trailer is only for use by (name of operator)”** in lieu of the statement specified in Section 2. Operators shall obtain from the trailer manufacturer detailed instructions on how to make the trailer standard on disposal.
- 5.6 On disposal of the trailer by the operator specified on the plate the trailer shall be converted to a complying trailer by the fitting of a standard coupling as specified by the trailer manufacturer (Refer para 5.5). The trailer plate shall be removed and a plate complying with the requirement of Section 3 shall be affixed.

Use of Other Than 50MM Fifth Wheels and King Pins

- 5.7 The use of other than 50mm fifth wheels and kingpins may be approved for use in closed fleets by the Administrator under procedures and conditions in paras 5.1 through 5.4. However, it is recognised that there may exist a requirement for an individual operator of a prime mover to equip the prime mover with a fifth wheel compatible with existing trailers fitted with nonstandard kingpins. Such operators may apply to the Administrator to fit a 90mm fifth wheel complying with the dimensional requirements of Australian Standard 1773-1990 **“Articulated Vehicles Fifth Wheel Assemblies”**, giving details of the proposed use, indicating the names of organisations using 90mm king pin trailers which will be used with the, prime mover, together with information to be provided in paras 3.1 through 3.2. The procedures and conditions specified in paragraphs 5.1 through 5.2 are to apply.

6. RECORDS, DISPOSALS, INSPECTIONS AND AUDIT

- 6.1 The operator will maintain a register of the vehicles in the operators fleet covered by these arrangements. The operator will report to the Administrator, at intervals

determined by the Administrator, a list of the vehicles fitted with nonstandard couplings since the previous report, as well as any disposals of vehicles previously added to the fleet under these arrangements. Where such disposals have taken place, the report will set out the action taken to make or restore vehicles to a complying condition.

- 6.2 On disposal, the vehicles must be rendered standard and the identification plates removed. For motor vehicles, nonstandard couplings must also be removed. For trailers, nonstandard couplings must be replaced with standard couplings. The compliance/trailer plate must then be replaced in its original position or fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's original-instructions, as the case may be.
- 6.3 Used couplings may only be transferred to a new vehicle if all the requirements of Part 4 of this circular are still met. It is recommended that all wearing components be brought into the tolerance range specified for new components. Usually this would be by replacement of these components.
- 6.4 The operator shall ensure that the arrangements agreed to by the Administrator are adhered to.
- 6.5 The arrangements provided for in this circular may be subject to audit by inspectors authorised by the Minister or the Administrator under Section 25 of the Motor Vehicle Standards Act such audits would normally be carried out by officers of the Audit and Safety Investigations Section of the Federal Office of Road Safety.

7. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Operators wishing to take advantage of the procedures and options outlined in this circular must submit a written notification of their request, of their reasons for seeking the exemption, technical details of the nonstandard coupling as required on SER62/00 and of the arrangements that have been or will be put in place to ensure compliance with the requirements of these procedures.

Applications should be addressed to:

Administrator of Vehicle Safety Standards

GPO Box 594

CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

Facsimile: (06) 274 7922

Telephone enquiries: (06) 274 7111.

Attachment 1

Trailer Identification Plate

MAKE-MODEL	DELTA ZS-350	
DATE	10/89	ATM 31.50 TONNE
VIN	6B83400156324567	APPROVAL No. 9200
THIS TRAILER WAS MANUFACTURED BY		
EPSILON TRAILERS PTY LTD		
TO COMPLY WITH THE MOTOR VEHICLE STANDARDS ACT 1989		
THIS TRAILER IS ONLY FOR USE BY		
(NAME OF OPERATOR)		
COMPLIANCE MARK APPROVAL NUMBERS		
9998 CS	9997 FB	9996 SS
THIS PLATE IS AFFIXED WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE ADMINISTRATOR MOTOR VEHICLE STANDARDS		