

Bull Bars

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For further information please write to the Manager – Vehicle Safety & Policy
60 Denmark Street, Kew, 3101 or contact your local Customer Service Centre.

Introduction

Regulation 257 of the Road Safety (Vehicles) Regulations 2009 requires all modifications to a vehicle to either have specific approval from VicRoads or to be carried out in accordance with guidelines published by VicRoads. Fitting a bull bar to a motor vehicle is a modification.

This document is a published guideline for the purposes of Regulation 257.

General

Before fitting a bull bar or similar equipment to a vehicle the following should be considered.

- Bull bars may provide some protection to the front of the vehicle in low speed collisions. However, they are likely to be of little or no benefit in most other situations.
- A bull bar fitted to a passenger vehicle may result in greater injuries to other road users such as pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists in a crash situation.
- Bull bars may also reduce the designed impact absorption of a vehicle's front structure and panels, which are intended to crumple in a collision, and to minimise the forces imposed on the vehicle's occupants. Bull bars may also reduce the effectiveness of collapsible steering columns.
- The operation of a secondary restraint system, such as an air bag, in a crash situation may be adversely affected if a bull bar is fitted to the vehicle.

Requirements

If a bull bar is to be fitted to a vehicle the following requirements, consistent with the Standards for Registration, must be complied with in order for it to be considered an approved modification.

- The bull bar must be designed and fitted so that the safety of the vehicle is not adversely affected. It must be firmly and securely mounted and supported, and must not constitute a danger to other road users.

- The bull bar must not obstruct the vision of the driver and should not project further beyond the front of the vehicle than is necessary for its attachment.
- The bull bar and any fittings, hooks or attachments must not have any sharp edges, corners or protrusions, nor should it extend unduly beyond the side profile of the vehicle.
- All exposed sections of the bull bar and fittings must be radiused and deburred; forward and side members, should be designed to minimise the risk of injury to any person who may come into contact with the bull bar.
- The profile of the bull bar should follow that of the vehicle in plan, side and front view.
- The bull bar or fittings must not obstruct or affect the performance or visibility of head lamps, parking lamps, turn signal lamps or other mandatory lamps.
- The bull bar, together with its mountings and any winch or other equipment and fittings, must be taken into account for vehicle dimensions.
- Any part of a winch, fittings or other equipment which project forward of the bull bar, must not have any sharp edges or be an unsafe projection. Alternatively they should be enclosed with a suitable cover which is itself free from protrusions or sharp edges.
- Fittings such as driving lamp brackets or fishing rod holders must not protrude above the top or forward of the bull bar.

As well as complying with the Vehicle Standards Information 1, Bull Bars, the bull bar must meet the design requirements of the Australian Standard (Sections 1, 2 and 3.1 of the Australian Standards AS 4876.1 2002.)

Vehicles fitted with an air bag or manufactured to comply with Australian Design Rule (ADR) 69 or ADR 73, can only be fitted with a bull bar which:-

- Has been certified by the vehicle manufacturer as suitable for that vehicle; or,
- Has been demonstrated by the bull bar manufacturer to not adversely affect the vehicle's compliance with ADR 69 or ADR 73 or interfere with any critical air bag timing mechanism as the case may be.

Demonstration of compliance with ADR 69 or ADR 73 requires full scale barrier testing. Similarly demonstrating that the critical air bag timing mechanism is not affected when a bull bar is fitted may also require full scale barrier testing.

ADR 69 applies to all new model passenger cars manufactured on or after 1 July 1995.

ADR 73 applies to all new model passenger cars not exceeding 2.5 tonnes GVM, manufactured on or after 1 January 2000.