



Guide brochure

Imported Vehicles – Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

Introduction

This guide document is intended to provide advice on the technical requirements and vehicle standards requirements for registering vehicles imported under a SOFA in Western Australia.

Federal import approval requirements

Vehicle import/customs clearance provided by federal agencies must be applied for and granted prior to application to Department of Transport WA (DoT), Vehicle Safety and Standards (VSS)

Advice received from the federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) specifies that a Vehicle Import Approval is not required, however completion of a Customs Import Declaration from the Australian Border Force is required.

Further information is available at:

[Status of Forces Agreements and certain Customs Tariff Act by-laws](#)

[Importing a motor vehicle \(abf.gov.au\)](#)

Considerations prior to importation

Vehicles imported under a SOFA do not need full compliance to the Australian Design Rules (ADR) and do not need to be Right Hand Drive (RHD) however:

- The headlights must not dip to the right (the light pattern on low beam must not shine upwards into oncoming traffic), therefore this can often be rectified by applying a small piece of tape strategically on the headlight lense or on occasions headlights from a RHD market vehicle is required to be fitted.
- If the rear indicators are red (amber preferred) they must not be part of the brake/stop light, i.e. the brake/stop light must not flash off and on when the indicator is used.

Once the vehicle is imported and approved under a SOFA, registration can only be transferred to another person who is also approved under a SOFA. If the owner intends to sell/transfer the vehicle to a non-SOFA member, the vehicle will require full Import Approval from DITRDCA and full ADR compliance. Import Approval and ADR compliance varies based on a number of factors, e.g. vehicle age, type of vehicle, mass etc and many vehicle modifications may be required to meet compliance, e.g. left to right hand drive conversion.

Calculations should be undertaken to establish the Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM). Any vehicle with a GVM greater than 4500kg is a Heavy Vehicle in Australia. This means it cannot be driven on a C Class (car) licence. The driver needs to ensure they obtain the appropriate heavy vehicle licence for the vehicle GVM.

Application to VSS

1. Vehicle owner applies to VSS by email tps@transport.wa.gov.au
 - Application to provide;
 - Full vehicle details including:
 - Make
 - Model
 - VIN/Chassis Number
 - Engine Number
 - Year of manufacture
 - Body Type
 - Vehicle owners full name and contact details
 - Evidence of current vehicle ownership
 - Copy of Customs clearance
 - Copy of the SOFA documents/orders with duration dates
 - Estimated date of vehicle entry into Australia
2. VSS assess and process application
3. VSS provide written advice of outcome
4. Approval letter will provide conditions of use and advice to the vehicle examiner
5. Vehicle owner or agent presents the vehicle for inspection with VSS letter of approval and customs clearance

Vehicle Inspection

Once VSS has issued a letter of approval, the vehicle inspection can be booked;

- By contacting an Authorised Inspection Station direct: [Get a vehicle inspected \(transport.wa.gov.au\)](#)
- At DoT's Kelmscott Vehicle Examination Centre: 1300 776 065

Any SOFA related inspection queries can be addressed by contacting VSS: 9216 8579

Transfer of vehicle ownership

Transfer of a vehicle licence imported under SOFA may only be approved to another person who is also under the SOFA.

1. Application to transfer must be made in writing by the new owner to VSS via email tps@transport.wa.gov.au
 - Application to provide:
 - Completed and signed DoT Notification of Change of Ownership – Vehicle Licence Transfer form (MR9)
 - Copy of the SOFA documents/orders with duration dates
2. VSS assess and process the application, approval will be notified by email and DoT's Transfers Section will complete the transfer process.
3. The new owner/purchaser will be notified of the approval to transfer.

Correspondence and enquiries

Vehicle Safety and Standards Section

Department of Transport

34 Gillam Drive

Kelmscott WA 6111

For enquiries contact 9216 8579