

## New pathways based on experience to progress to higher licence classes

### What are the issues?

To progress to a higher heavy vehicle class, a driver must have held a licence for a lower heavy vehicle class for at least 12 months. This approach has been criticised because it:

- does not guarantee that a driver has actually gained experience operating the lower class of vehicle
- delays skilled and competent drivers from progressing to drive more complex vehicles, impacting employment options and also contributing to a driver shortage for higher class heavy vehicles.

Most states and territories allow a driver to apply for an Multi Combination (MC) licence while holding an Heavy Rigid (HR) licence, effectively 'skipping' the Heavy Combination (HC) licence class.

### What is being progressed to address the issue?

#### Three pathways

There will be three alternate pathways to progress to a higher licence class:




- tenure, or
- driving experience, or
- supervision program.

Drivers can choose a different pathway option for each licence upgrade. For example, a tenure pathway can be taken to upgrade from HR to HC and then solo driving experience for an upgrade to MC.

#### New requirements MC licence

All MC licence applicants must have first had a period on an HC licence. This will enable drivers to build their capability and skills by driving less complex combination vehicles before moving to an MC licence and vehicles.

*Each pathway has different requirements to progress to a new licence class*

Pathway	To progress from MR/HR → HC	To progress from HC → MC
 <p>Tenure</p>	Drivers must hold an MR or HR licence for 1 year.	Drivers must hold an HC licence for 1 year.
 <p>Driving experience</p>	Drivers must have evidence of 600 hours of driving in MR or HR class vehicles over a minimum of 6 months.	Drivers must have evidence of 700 hours of driving in HC class vehicles over a minimum of 6 months.
 <p>Supervision program</p>	Drivers must have evidence of at least 420 work hours AND minimum period of 3 months AND at least 12-hours supervised behind-the-wheel driving.	Drivers must have evidence of at least 560 work hours AND minimum period of 4 months AND at least 16-hours supervised behind-the-wheel driving

*The progression pathways outlined in the table above indicate when a person is eligible begin training in the next higher licence class. The relevant training and assessment must be completed (see Fact Sheet 1) before unaccompanied driving in the higher class vehicle can be undertaken.*

**With a growing freight task and changing vehicle fleet, Australia needs a lot of well-trained and capable heavy vehicle drivers. That starts with effective driver licensing.**

### What problem are we trying to solve?

Heavy vehicles are over represented in crashes, particularly fatal crashes.

The National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework (the Framework) and heavy vehicle licensing regimes exist to help protect all road users by ensuring drivers are competent to safely operate the vehicles they are licensed to drive.

Through the review of the Framework, requested by Transport Ministers, three problems were identified:

1. Heavy vehicle driver licensing is not sufficiently focused on key risks.
2. Arrangements governing heavy vehicle training and assessment are affecting the quality of driver training.
3. Heavy vehicle driver licensing is applied inconsistently, even across jurisdictions which have adopted the Framework.

Australian transport ministers have approved changes to the National Heavy Vehicle Driver Competency Framework.

### What's next?

Austrroads is leading a national program of work with licensing authorities. Our focus will be to deliver a harmonised approach across Australia.

We expect to implement this large and complex program in stages. We anticipate it will be implemented in phases and take a number of years to be fully in place.

