

## Heavy Vehicle Brake Rule Update

The New Zealand Government signed the Land Transport Rule: Heavy-vehicle Brakes, Rule 32015 late in 2006 which became effective in March 2007. VTNZ has been working closely with Land Transport New Zealand to ensure that we are able to test brakes to the requirements of the new Rule as soon as practicable. VTNZ will rollout the testing of laden or simulated laden vehicles from late 2008 to mid 2009.

The key part of the Rule which affects operators of heavy vehicles (i.e. all vehicles over 3,500kg) is the requirement for Enhanced Brake Testing. Currently brakes of heavy vehicles are tested in an unladen state every six months at Certificate of Fitness time. This will continue to be how brakes are tested until we have upgraded our station network with new brake testing equipment.

Following the implementation of the Rule, all heavy vehicles will be tested as if they were laden to verify, either directly or indirectly, that they can brake safely, with balanced brake performance, at any road legal condition.

The Rule requires the brakes of all heavy vehicles to be tested at a minimum of 60% of each axle's Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) or statutory limit, whichever is the lesser. To achieve this, operators have the choice of:

- (a) Bringing their vehicles into the testing station with a load on, so that all axles meet the minimum axle test weight; OR
- (b) having a simulated load applied by specialised equipment in the station.

Land Transport NZ has stated that it is the responsibility of the operators to meet any load requirements arising from the implementation of this rule.

VTNZ is installing Chassis Load Simulation (CLS) equipment at most of its testing stations to easily add weight to the vehicle to meet the required loading. Operators may need to provide engineered tie down points or de-clutter sections of the chassis where load simulation by tie down is required.



Chassis clamp in use (de-cluttered chassis rail shown)

When the roller brake machine is located at the exit end of a testing station (i.e. the vehicle is jacked up prior to the brake test), and the vehicle is presented laden, the operator may choose to provide a weight certificate to verify that it isn't too heavy to be jacked safely. If it is presented laden without a weight certificate, the brake test will need to be carried out first to determine the actual weight - verified by the roller brake machine. The remainder of the CoF inspection will be able to be completed immediately after the brake test if it is not too heavy. Otherwise, it will need to have the load reduced and then return to the station to complete its inspection.

Just as VTNZ isn't expected to be able to test laden or simulated laden heavy vehicles straight away, Land Transport NZ is also aware that operators cannot be expected to update their fleet overnight (if changes to the vehicles are required). This means that providing engineered tie down points or de-cluttered chassis rails will not be required until late 2008 at the earliest.

The first installation of Chassis Load Simulation equipment has successfully been completed at VTNZ Seaview, Lower Hutt. Hydraulic 'pull down' rams run along steel rails near the roller brake machine. The rams are attached to the vehicle using hooks, chains, clamps or strops and pre-determined loads are applied to the axle prior to testing the brakes. Safety features are installed to prevent overloading the vehicle.

Some structural changes are required to the inspection pit areas in nearly all of VTNZ's heavy vehicle lanes, though disruption to customers will be kept to a minimum. Although the new brake testing process will take longer to carry out, we aim to ensure that the six monthly CoF test takes as little time as practical for our busy and time-conscious customers.

Chassis Load Simulation will not be available for CoF inspections conducted at rural off-sites. At these sites operators will be required to present partially laden vehicles for testing using a VTNZ mobile roller brake machine. These mobile machines measure the vehicle weight while testing the brakes to ensure that they meet the load requirements.

For ongoing updates please see [www.vtnz.co.nz/HVBR](http://www.vtnz.co.nz/HVBR).