



Escorting Guidelines

For oversize and overmass vehicles and loads in
South Australia



Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

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V1.2	2026	Minor update: - List of locations that may require additional escorts stated on the Oversize and overmass vehicle webpage added to Section 8.4's list of locations. - Removal of reference to the Oversize and overmass vehicle webpage.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.



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Introduction

This guideline outlines the roles and responsibilities of pilots and escorts which accompany oversize and/or overmass (OSOM) vehicles and loads that are travelling on South Australian roads under an exemption (permit or notice) issued under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) or the Road Traffic Act (RTA).

This guideline should be used in conjunction with the exemption applicable for the operation of the vehicle, noting that additional requirements may be applied to some OSOM's via the exemption.

Pilot and escort vehicles are essential in preserving road safety when large oversize loads are moved on the road. Pilot vehicles with appropriate signage provide advance warning to approaching traffic.

For larger oversize loads (police) escorts are required for the safe movement of other traffic. Pilot and escort vehicles are defined as follows under the HVNL:

- an escort vehicle means a pilot vehicle that is driven by a police officer or another person authorised to direct traffic under an Australian road law
- a pilot vehicle means a motor vehicle that accompanies an oversize vehicle to warn other road users of the oversize vehicle's presence.

South Australia is divided into three areas for the purpose of determining pilot and escort requirements:

- Adelaide metropolitan area
- Adelaide Hills Area
- SA country area.

Maps of these areas are located on the [Approved areas or routes page](#) under Operating a heavy vehicle.

1. Pilot and escort vehicle eligibility

Pilot and escort vehicles must comply with the requirements of Schedule 8 of the [Heavy Vehicle \(Mass. Dimension and Loading\) National Regulation](#) to be eligible to escort an oversize load:

Pilot and escort vehicles (Schedule 8, Part 1, Division 5)

- Requirements for a pilot vehicle (including vehicle size and warning sign) – s26
- Requirements for an escort vehicle (including vehicle size and warning sign) – s27
- Headlights on a pilot or escort vehicle (low-beam headlights switched on during the daytime) – s28
- Restriction on what a pilot or escort vehicle may carry – s29
- Where a pilot vehicle must be driven – s30
- Communication between drivers – s31

Warning light (Schedule 8, Part 3, Division 1)

- Characteristics of warning light – s35
- Visibility of warning lights – s36
- Switch for warning lights to be within easy reach – s37
- Warning lights to be on if required, and off if not – s38

Warning sign (Schedule 8, Part 3, Division 2)

- Face of warning sign (outlines surface material requirements) – s41
- Other specifications for warning signs (such as display and maintenance) – s42
- Size and shape of warning sign – s49
- Faces of warning sign – s50
- Fitting warning sign – s51

2. Exemptions from Road Rules

[Rule 311](#) of the Australian Road Rules exempts the pilot vehicle operator or escort driver from a number of road laws such as giving way, traffic signs and road markings, keeping left and overtaking, provided that the following requirements are met:

- it is not practicable for the driver to comply with the provision
- the driver is taking reasonable care
- the driver is complying with any other relevant law of this jurisdiction relating to oversize vehicles, including the conditions of any permit or authority issued in relation to the oversize vehicle.

Note: The Rule does not exempt the driver of a vehicle escorting or piloting an oversize vehicle from obeying traffic lights or arrows.

Where an oversize load proceeds through a traffic light or traffic arrow, and the pilot is not legally able to follow; the oversize load is required to wait for the pilot to continue, noting that the oversize load can continue to a safe location clear of the intersection. With 2 pilots the front pilot may be required to drop behind to cover the load.

3. Pilot vehicle operating guidelines

3.1 Role and responsibilities

The pilot vehicle operator must at all times:

- Provide a visual advance warning, by means of signs and warning lights, to other road users of the approach of an oversize vehicle using the road.
- Maintain the pilot vehicle in an appropriate position in relation to the oversize vehicle to provide adequate warning to other road users of the presence of the oversize vehicle, taking into account traffic speed, weather, visibility and other driving conditions.
- Inform oncoming or overtaking vehicles, by radio where possible, of load dimensions.
- Inform the oversize vehicle driver, by radio, of oncoming traffic, road conditions, bridge and traffic light status, clearance of load from trees and obstacles etc.
- Assess potential hazards and inform the driver of the oversize vehicle accordingly
- Provide 'rear vision' when required due to load width.

3.2 Traffic control

- Pilot vehicle operators do not have the power or authority to direct traffic. However, they may position their pilot vehicle in such manner within the appropriate traffic lane to prevent other traffic conflicting with turning manoeuvres of the oversize vehicle.
- The above duties must be performed in a manner consistent with the requirements of the [Road Traffic Act 1961](#) and [Rule 311](#) of the Australian Road Rules.

3.3 Clarification

While pilot(s) and/or escort(s) may be required as part of the exemption, the driver of the oversize vehicle and load remains responsible for the movement of the vehicle on road and complying with all conditions of the exemption.

4. Positioning a pilot vehicle(s)

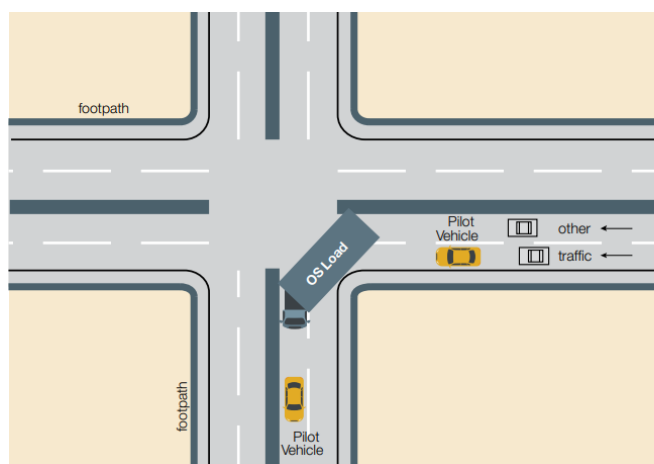
The distance between the pilot vehicle and the oversize vehicle should be adjusted to suit traffic and road conditions to ensure sufficient warning to other road users. Factors that could influence the distance between the pilot and oversize load are:

- traffic volumes
- approaching vehicle speed
- proportion of commercial vehicle traffic
- road alignment and sight distance.

4.1 Adelaide metropolitan area

Due to the higher traffic volumes and multi-lane carriageways in the metropolitan area, pilot vehicle operator(s) must remain as close as practical to the oversize vehicle without impeding its passage.

If two pilots are required as a condition of the exemption and the vehicle is operating on a multilane carriageway, the rear pilot should position their vehicle to 'block' lanes (within the parameters of Section 2) when the oversize vehicle is turning, to prevent other road users from colliding with the vehicle/load.



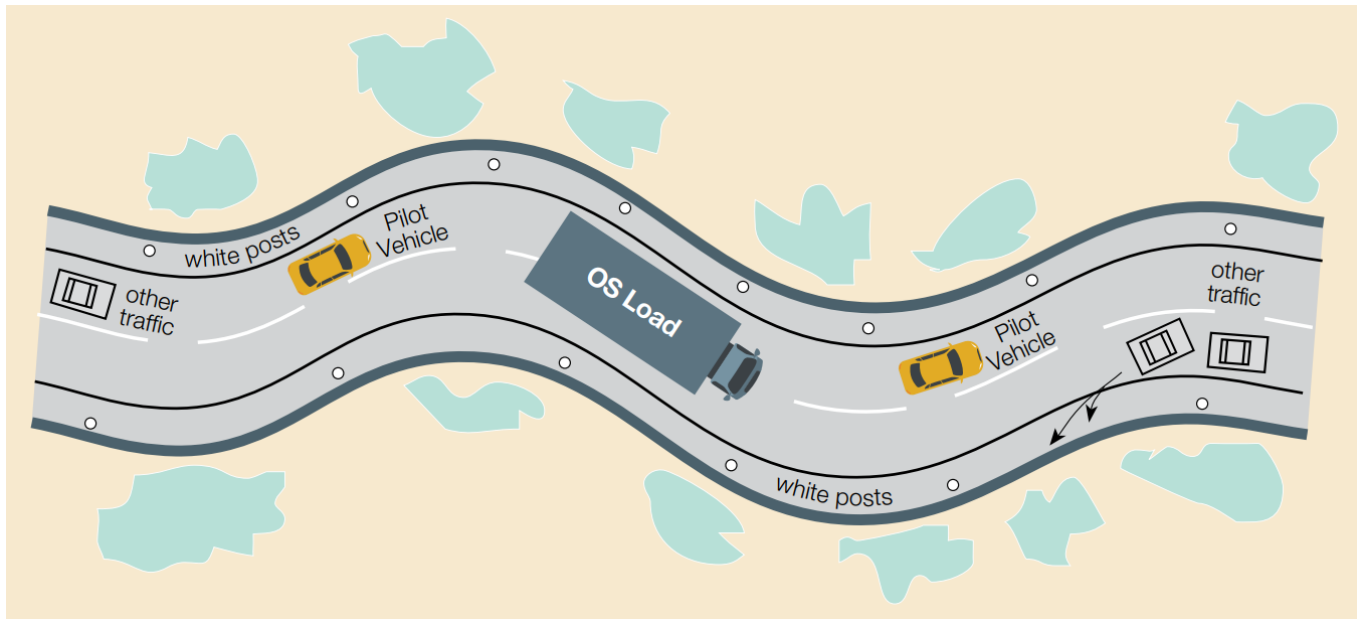
Metro area – left turn



Metro area – right turn

4.2 Adelaide Hills

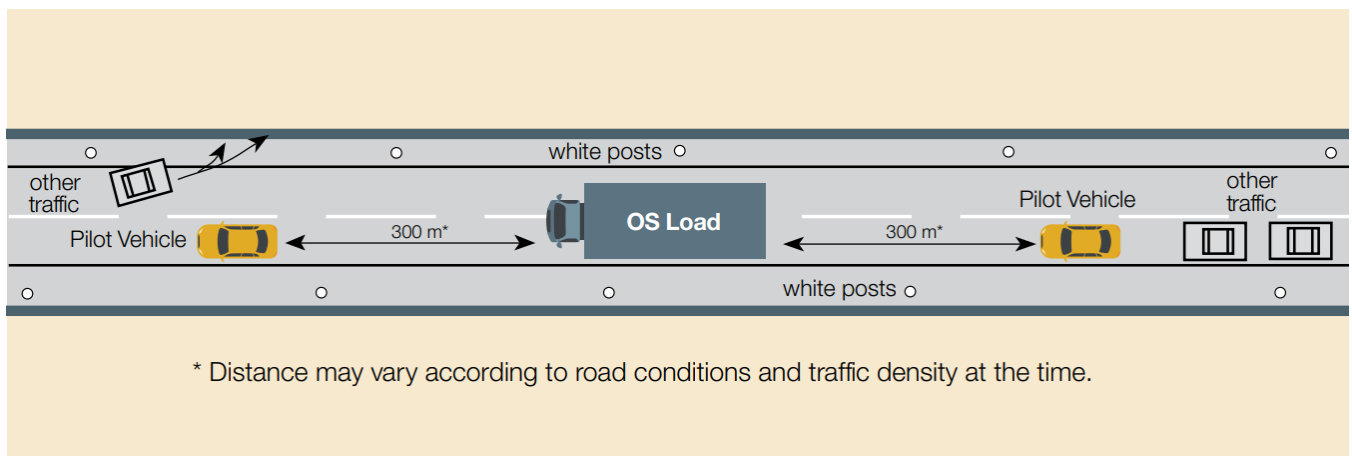
The pilot vehicle operator(s) should generally be positioned well ahead and/or well behind the oversize vehicle in order to provide sufficient advanced warning to approaching traffic of an oversize vehicle.



Adelaide Hills road – one lane in each direction

4.3 SA country areas

The pilot vehicle operator(s) should be positioned well ahead and/or well behind the oversize vehicle depending on the traffic volumes and road conditions in order to provide sufficient advanced warning to approaching traffic of an oversize vehicle.



Country road – one lane in each direction

5. Role of police escorts

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

- The role of police escorts is to maintain the safe and efficient flow of traffic around the oversize load, to minimise inconvenience to other motorists and ensure that no damage is caused to property.
- Police escorts manage the flow of traffic where authorised personnel such as utility providers or road infrastructure personnel are present and are required to lift electricity or telecommunication lines, or remove and/or replace roadside signs and lights etc.
- Police may travel in front or behind the oversized load to achieve a corridor of safety for the load to progress along the required route. [Section 6](#) of these guidelines explains general police vehicle positioning, which may vary to deal with changing conditions encountered along the route and is risk assessed to ensure the safety of all road users.

5.2 Checks undertake by the police

The police officer in charge of escorting the vehicle/load will verify the following requirements prior to the move proceeding:

Exemption (permit)

- Is the permit valid for the date and time the journey is to commence?
- Do the dimensions of the oversize vehicle/load match what is specified on the permit?
- Are all parties (pilot(s) and operator of the vehicle) familiar with the route including any special requirements or conditions, e.g. wrong side of the road, travel down the centreline of bridges, diagonally through traffic lights etc. at certain points?
- Are there any other conditions specified in the exemption that must be complied with that may affect the safe passage of the vehicle or impact on other road users?

Oversize vehicle and pilot vehicle(s)

- Are all vehicles roadworthy, registered appropriately, displaying legislated signs and warning lights as required for their individual tasks?

Driver's licences

- Are the licences of the drivers of the oversize vehicle and pilot vehicle/s current and valid?

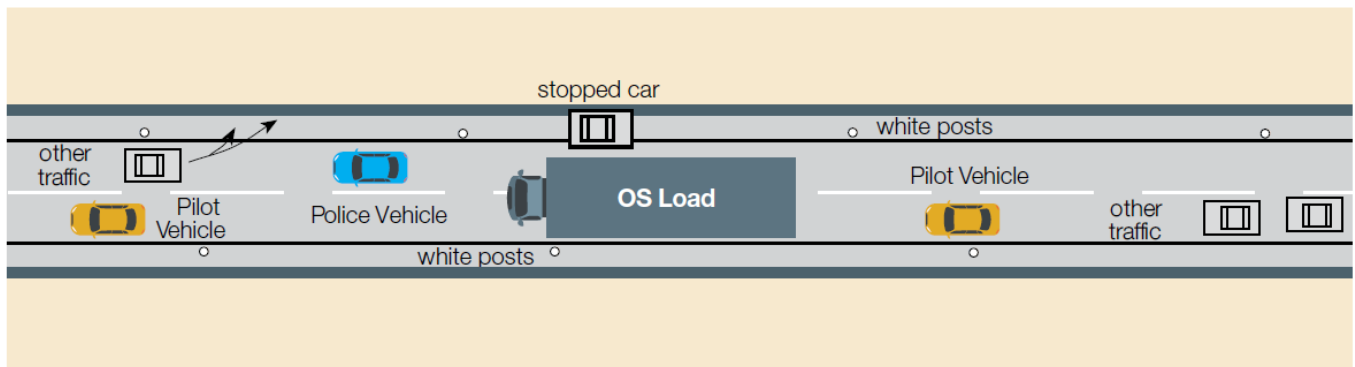
Radio communication

- Confirm that the oversize vehicle, pilot vehicles and police escort vehicles all have operational radio communication so that all parties can communicate.

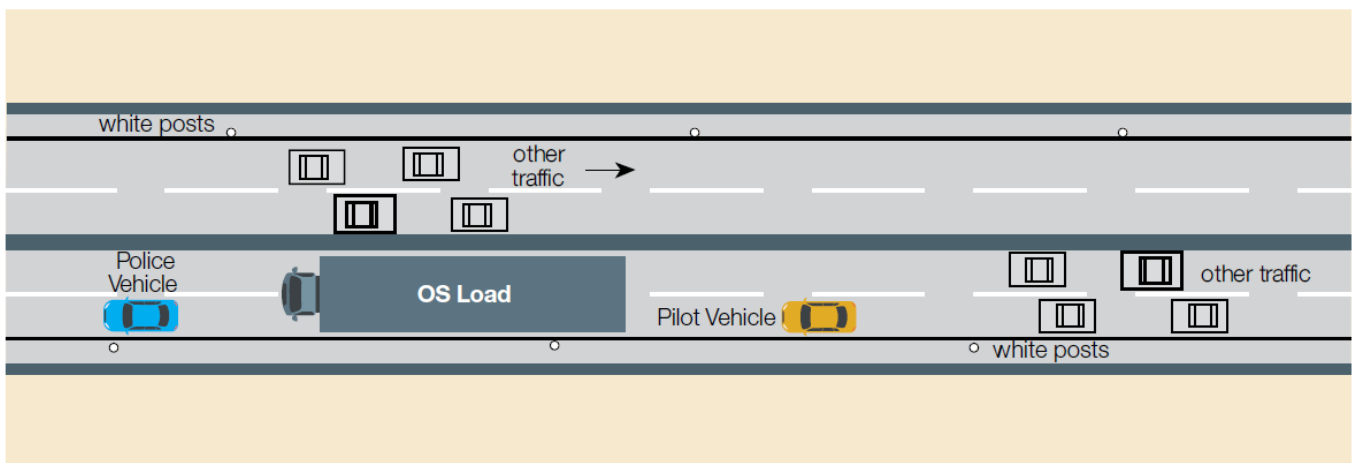
6. Positioning an escort vehicle(s)

6.1 One police escort

- On a road with one lane in each direction, a police escort that is required to accompany the oversize vehicle will generally be positioned behind the first pilot, with any second pilot behind the load.
- On roads where opposing traffic is separated by a median strip, police may travel at the front or rear of the oversized vehicle, except at intersections where police will take up a position ahead of the oversize vehicle to stop traffic ensuring safe passage of the oversize vehicle through the intersection.



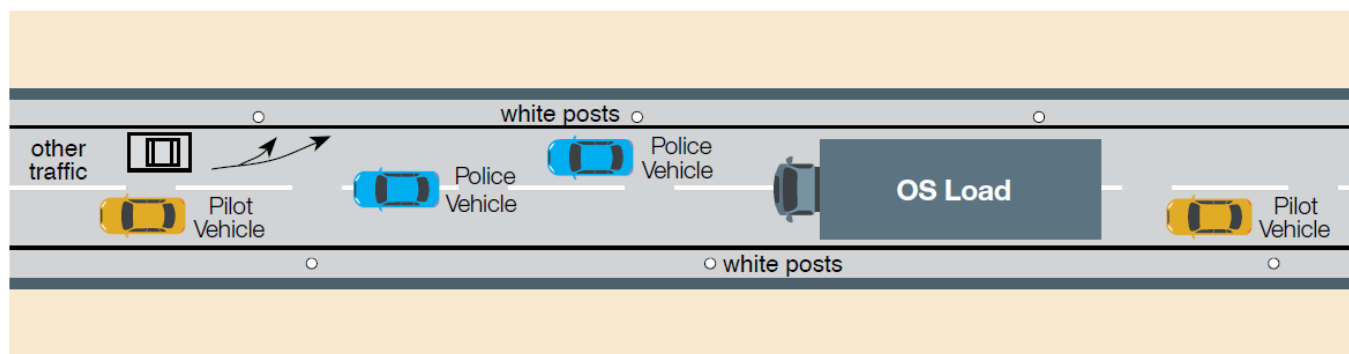
Road with one lane in each direction



Road with multi-lanes

6.2 Two police escorts

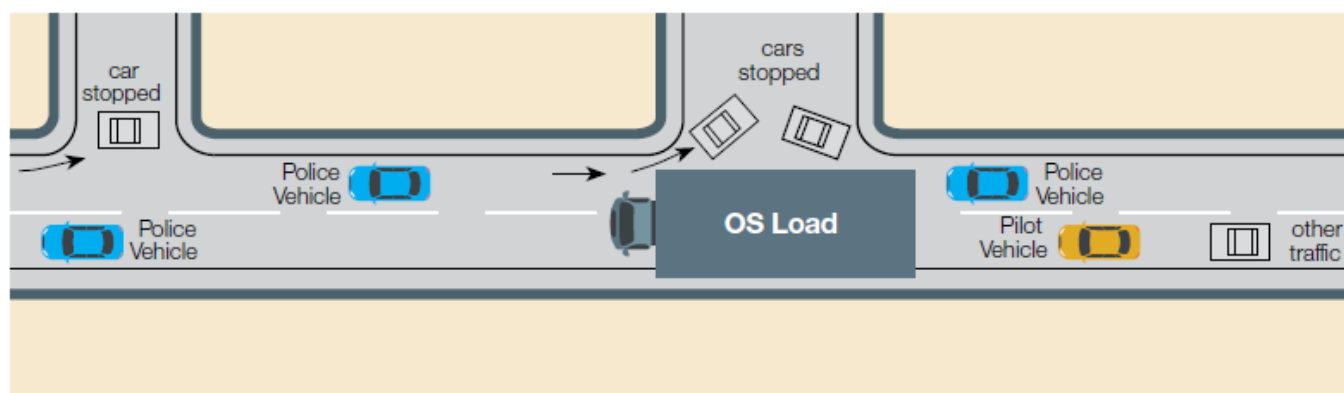
- On country roads if two police escorts are required, these escorts will travel in front of the oversize vehicle and may be up to 500m apart.
- On multi-lane roads there will generally be one escort at the front and one escort at the rear of the oversize vehicle.



Road with one lane in each direction

6.3 Three police escorts

- Three police escorts are generally used at night or where loads are greater than 8 metres wide, which on a road with a lane in each direction can take up both lanes restricting traffic flow.
- Three police escorts normally operate with two escorts at the front and one escort at the rear. In this situation:
 - the first forward police escort travels out in front of the oversize vehicle to direct traffic off the road at suitable locations to stop and wait until the load has passed
 - the second forward police escort travels in front of the oversize vehicle to ensure that no vehicles travel down the road into the oncoming oversize vehicle and to check that stopped vehicles are sufficiently off the road to ensure passage of the oversize vehicle
 - the rear escort controls traffic at the rear of the load assisting the pilot when overtaking is allowed.



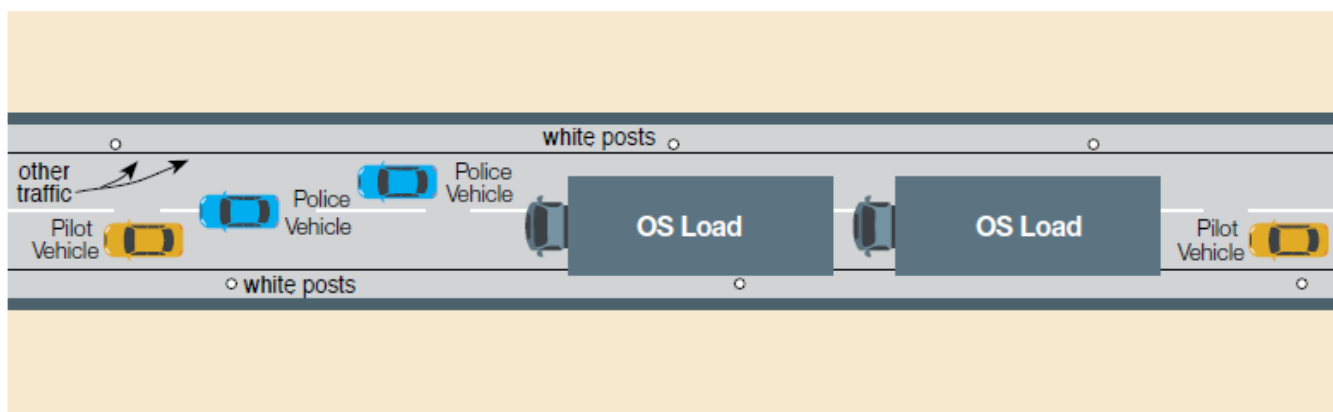
T-Junction with one lane in each direction

6.4 Four or more police escorts

- Four police escorts are generally used to escort large loads in the metropolitan area or in locations that may have infrastructure or road geometry requiring the oversize load to travel at slow speed and/or make adjustments when manoeuvring the load to its destination, this includes for night travel.
- Their role is to direct traffic at intersections and also past the load at various points albeit at a reduced speed to keep the traffic flowing.

6.5 Escorts for convoy travel

- Convoy travel will only be permitted while police escorts are in attendance.
- A minimum of two police escorts will accompany this type of operation and will be positioned dependent on the oversize loads dimensions and the topography of the location.
- Additional police escorts may be necessary for larger loads or where the road geometry results in slow or difficult manoeuvring.



Roads with one lane in each direction

7. General requirements

7.1 Restrictions on towing and loading

A pilot vehicle or police escort vehicle that is accompanying an oversize vehicle must not tow a trailer or carry a load, but may carry tools, equipment or substances for use in connection with the oversize vehicle or combination that it is accompanying, or for restraining the load on that oversize vehicle or combination.

7.2 Exclusion times

Where an oversize load requires a police escort, travel will not be permitted:

- on South Australian public holidays
- during public holiday periods
- when major events occur.

A public holiday period means a period of three or more consecutive days covering a declared SA public holiday and adjacent weekend days (for example Easter and every long weekend); and the period between 23 December and 3 January (inclusive).

7.3 Convoy travel

Convoy travel means two oversize heavy vehicles travelling together within a singular controlled movement. All vehicles travelling in convoy must have an exemption that allows convoy travel to be undertaken.

Vehicles travelling in convoy will be escorted from their origin to destination within South Australian borders. The times and days for convoy travel are at police discretion, which is designed to increase flexibility for operators transporting oversize loads. The convoy travel condition is:

Two pilots and a minimum of two (2) escorts and up to four (4) escorts to accompany the permit vehicles, with the time and days of travel at the discretion of the SA Police Escort Section.

7.4 Night travel

The [Heavy Vehicle \(Mass, Dimension and Loading\) National Regulation](#) provides for night travel for Class 1 vehicles up to 3.1m wide and 22m in length under an appropriate exemption (notice or permit).

Night travel will be considered within South Australia (excluding the Adelaide Hills Area) taking into account safety implications, the size and nature of the load and route characteristics with the pilot and escort requirements.

Adelaide metropolitan area

Escort requirements for night travel for Class 1 and 3 vehicles and loads in the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Dimensions of vehicle (including load)	Minimum number of pilot vehicles	Escort vehicles
Width >3.1m and up to 4.0m and/or length >22m and up to 30m	Two pilot vehicles required	nil
Width > 4.0m and/or length >30m	Two pilot vehicles required	Up to three escorts required

Travel within the Adelaide metropolitan area is prohibited between the hours of 7am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm Monday to Friday inclusive. The Adelaide metropolitan area curfew times remain unchanged. If an unexpected delay or other circumstances result in the curfew being missed, continued travel is not permitted.

SA country area

Night travel in the SA country area will be considered on a special assessment.

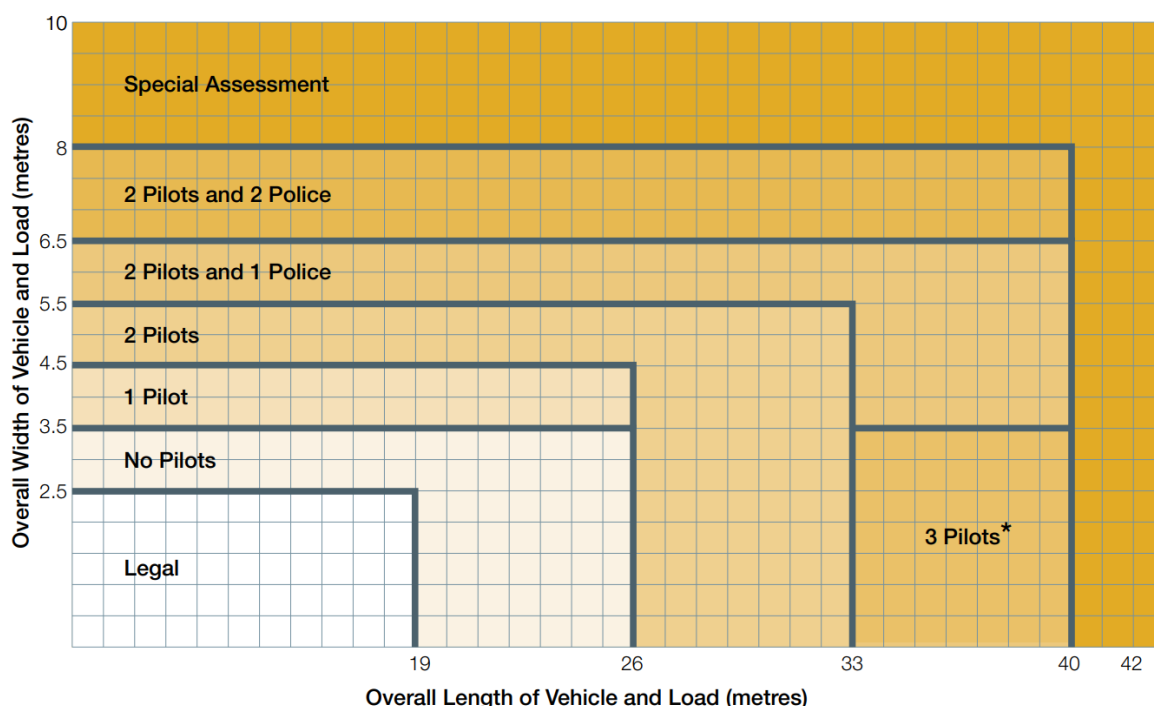
8. Minimum daytime pilot and escort requirements for oversize vehicles

South Australia is divided into three areas for the purpose of determining pilot and escort requirements:

- Adelaide Metropolitan Area
- Adelaide Hills Area
- SA Country Area.

Maps of these areas are located on the [approved areas or routes](#) page under operating a heavy vehicle.

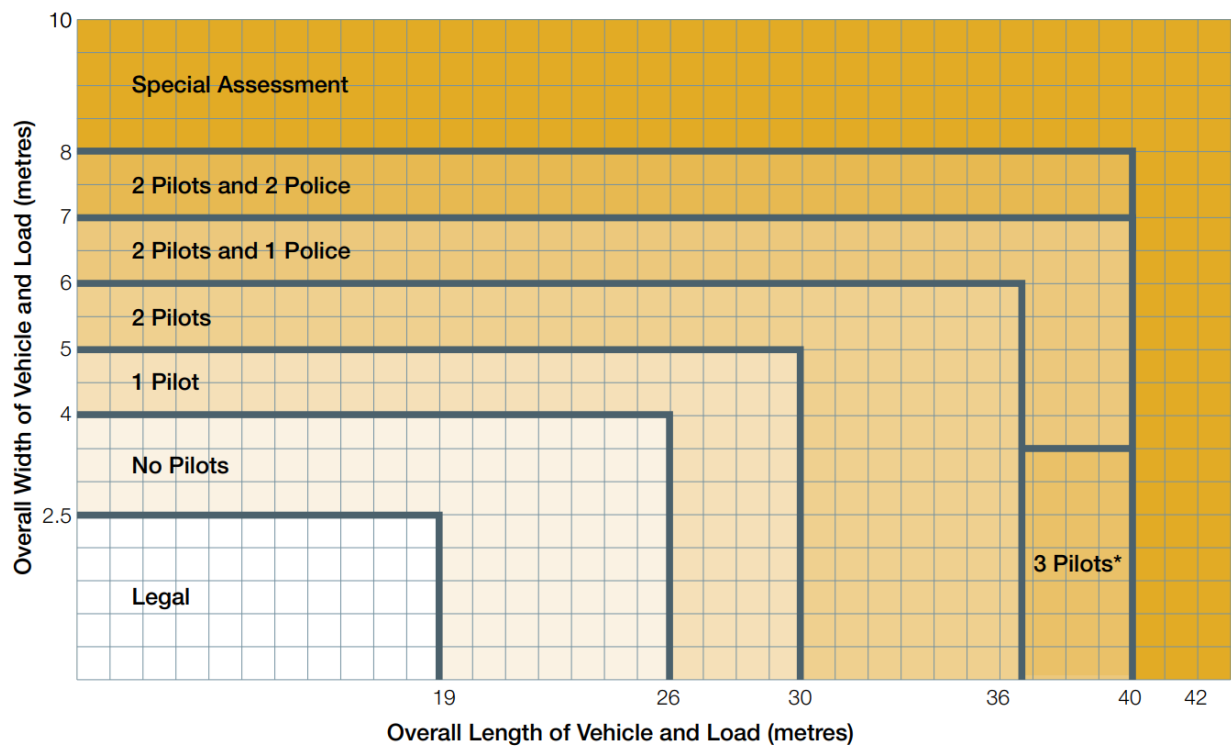
8.1 Adelaide metropolitan area



Minimum pilot and escort requirements - Adelaide Metropolitan Area

Note: *Escort(s) may be required in addition to or in lieu of a third pilot. This will be determined on a case by case basis taking into consideration the time and date of movement, traffic volumes, requested route, number of turn movements and road geometry.

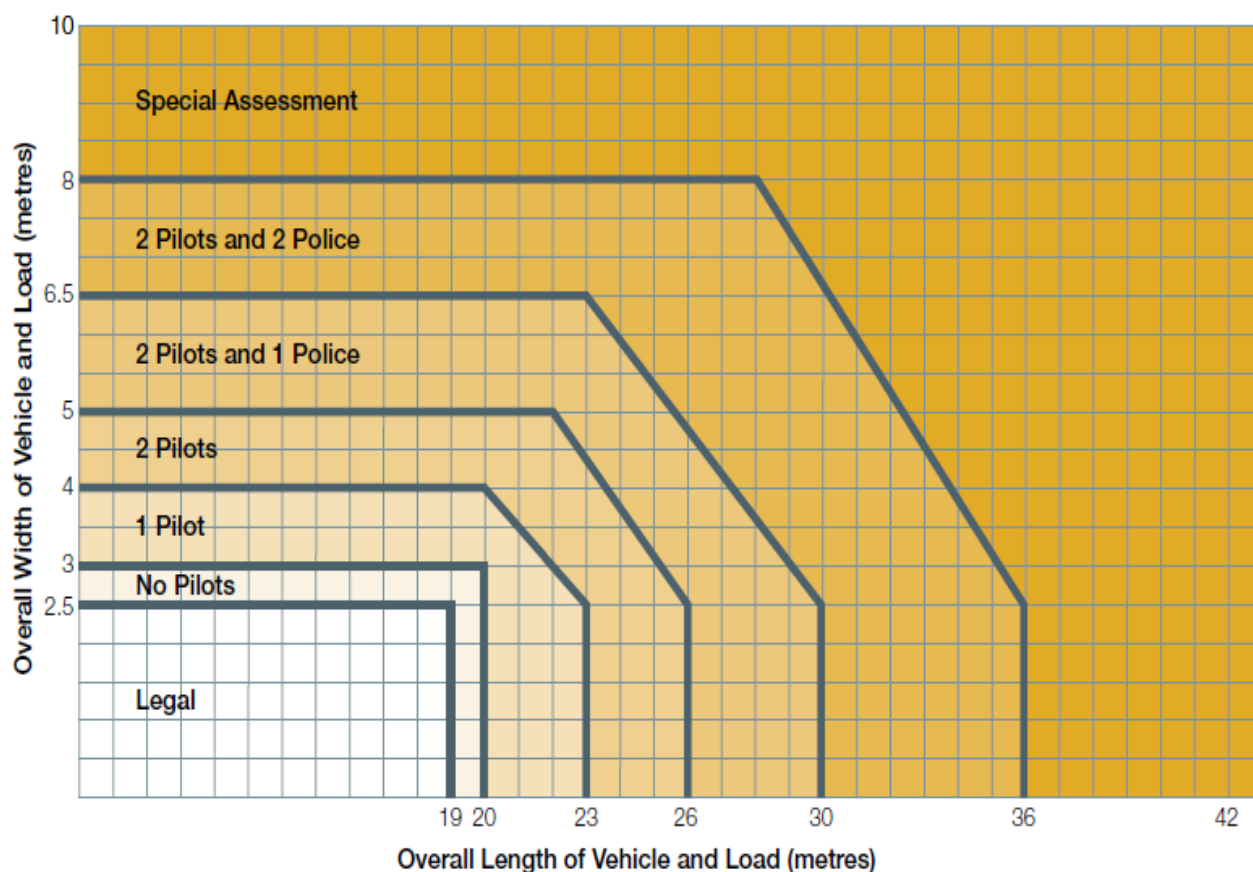
8.2 SA country area



Minimum pilot and escort requirements - SA Country Area

Note: *Escort(s) may be required in addition to or in lieu of a third pilot. This will be determined on a case by case basis taking into consideration the time and date of movement, traffic volumes, requested route, number of turn movements and road geometry.

8.3 Adelaide Hills Area



Minimum pilot and escort requirements – Adelaide Hills area

8.4 Exceptions to minimum requirements

The pilot and escort requirements described earlier are the minimum level, factors such as traffic volumes, terrain, accident history and the safety of other road users may vary these requirements. Outlined below are areas of the state where variation to the minimum requirements may be required.

Areas of the State where additional escorts may be required

A Road Manager or the SA Police Escort Section may apply additional escorts if necessary to ensure the safety of other road users. These areas and routes include, but are not limited to the following:

- Between Lonsdale and the north of the Adelaide metropolitan area.
- Marion Road / Sir Donald Bradman Drive.
- Sturt Highway between Truro and Accommodation Hill (East and West).
- Corner of Ryan Avenue and Gorge Road, Athelstone to Chain of Ponds.
- Victor Harbor Road, Mount Compass to the intersection Victor Harbor Road/Welch Road, Hindmarsh Valley.
- Port River Expressway / Magazine Road at Dry Creek (to enable oversize vehicles to make a u-turn)
- Goolwa Road, Mount Compass to Alexandrina Road, Currency Creek.

SA country variation

For travel in remote areas (off major highways) north of a line joining Cockburn, Lyndhurst, Woomera and Yalata, police escorts will not normally be required.

Escorts for travel over structures

Operators must have SA Police in attendance to preserve safety and direct traffic whilst travelling over the following structures:

When vehicles and/or loads exceed 3.5m in width:

- Hindmarsh Island Bridge – Goolwa Police.

When vehicles and/or loads exceed 4.0m in width:

- Port Augusta Rail Bridge approximately 2.5km southeast of Joy Baluch AM Bridge – Port Augusta Police.
- Swanport Bridge – Murray Bridge Police.
- Berri Bridge – Berri Police.
- Blanchetown Bridge – Blanchetown Police.
- Kingston Bridge – Barmera Police.

To arrange police escort at the above sites please phone 131 444. **Prior arrangement is required in order to avoid delays.**

9. Marshalling yards

The following areas of the State have been designated as marshalling locations for escorts and oversize vehicles that are required to accompany the load:

9.1 Adelaide metropolitan area

Shea-Oak Log

The parking bay 2.3km south-west of Daveyston Road, Sturt Highway, for vehicles travelling south-west bound into the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Mount Barker Summit

The rest area 17km north-west of Callington exit on the South Eastern Freeway, for vehicles travelling west bound into the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Sellicks Hill

The parking bay at the intersection of Main South Road and Country Road, Sellicks Beach, for vehicles travelling to / from the Adelaide Hills Area.

Currency Creek

The junction of Goolwa Road and Alexandrina Road, Currency Creek.

Lower Light

The parking bay at Port Wakefield Road, Lower Light, for vehicles travelling south bound into the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Bolivar

For vehicles travelling northbound from the Adelaide metropolitan area, the first parking bay north of the service station on Port Wakefield Road, Bolivar, or for long or high vehicles, the third lane provided 200m north from that point. If northbound loads are exiting onto the North-South Motorway exit at Bolivar Road there is no marshalling point.

Accommodation Hill

The first parking bay east of Truro (approximately 8km) on top of Accommodation Hill, for vehicles travelling south bound towards the Adelaide metropolitan area.

9.2 Borders

South Australia or Victoria

- Bordertown/Serviceton
 - Service Station on Western Service Road, off Dukes Highway entering Bordertown.
 - Rest area on the Western Highway, Serviceton, Victoria.
- Yamba
 - Fruit fly inspection point, Sturt Highway, Yamba.
 - Service Station, Yamba.
- Glenburnie/Mount Gambier
 - The truck parking bay 6km on the Victorian side of the border on the Princes Highway, Mumbannar
- Pinnaroo
 - Service Station on the Mallee Highway, Pinnaroo or Murrayville (Vic) by arrangement.

South Australia/Northern Territory

- Stuart Highway, Kulgera (the service station or border park).

South Australia/New South Wales

- The rest area at the Barrier Highway, Cockburn.

South Australia/Western Australia

- Opposite the Border Village Service Station on the Eyre Highway.

Other locations:

- Lyndhurst

10. Pilot pick up / drop off locations

The following areas have been identified as pick up/drop off points for pilots that are required to accompany an oversize load:

Currency Creek

The intersection of Goolwa Road and Alexandrina Road, Currency Creek for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide metropolitan area.

Hindmarsh Valley

The intersection of Victor Harbor Road and Welch Road Hindmarsh Valley, for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide metropolitan area.

Glen Osmond

The intersection of Portrush Road and South Eastern Freeway, for vehicles travelling east bound from the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Penfield

The interchange connecting the Northern Expressway and Heaslip Road, for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide metropolitan area.

Bolivar

The interchange connecting Port Wakefield Road and North-South Motorway, Bolivar, for vehicles travelling north bound from the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Waterloo Corner

The interchange connecting Port Wakefield Road and the North-South Motorway, for vehicles travelling south bound on into the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Athelstone

The intersection of Ryan Avenue and Gorge Road, Athelstone, for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide Hills area.

Tea Tree Gully

The intersection of Haines Road and North East Road, Tea Tree Gully, for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide Hills area.

Vista

The intersection of Lower North East Rd and Perseverance Rd, Vista, for vehicles travelling to/from Adelaide Hills area.

Note: If escorts are required to accompany an oversize load then these pick up/drop off points may not be used (refer to Marshalling locations for pick up/drop off points).