



HVNL – container weight declarations

The Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) imposes obligations on drivers, transport operators, consignors and consignees* in relation to the carriage of freight containers and container weight declarations.

What is a container weight declaration (CWD)?

A CWD is a written declaration of the weight of a container and its contents.

It may be either in hard copy or electronic form, or a placard attached to the freight container. It may consist of one or more documents in different formats (eg sheet of paper and email) but in any case it must be producible in its entirety to an authorised officer upon request.

There is no prescribed form for a CWD but it must include:

- The total weight of the container, including its contents
- The container identification number and any other details necessary to identify the container
- The name and residential address or business name and address in Australia of the responsible entity for the freight container, and
- The date of the declaration.

The CWD must be in writing and must be readily legible.

When is a CWD required?

A CWD is required when transporting a freight container, regardless of whether the container is loaded or empty, on a road using a heavy vehicle.

A CWD is *not* required for a freight container that has been modified so it is no longer fit for use in multi-modal transport or where its primary use is no longer the transport of freight (eg storage shed, portable office, portable plant equipment).

Responsibilities for CWDs

Consignor

The consignor of a freight container must prepare a CWD and provide a copy for the road transport operator or driver before the container may be transported by road.

Operator

An operator who arranges for a freight container to be transported by road must ensure that the driver is given a copy of the CWD before commencement of the journey.

Driver

A driver must not drive a vehicle carrying a freight container unless they have a CWD. While on the road, the driver must keep a copy of the CWD and produce it for an authorised officer when requested to do so.

Freight containers consigned for import or export by sea

There are specific additional requirements, administered by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA), for freight containers that will be transported by sea.

* For descriptions of these and other roles relating to heavy vehicles, see the relevant OneRMS safety management system (SMS) information sheets.