

REAL Torque

January 2020

Heavy Vehicle Certifying Engineer – HVCE

Contact maintenance for any questions on 0800 80 80 69

HVCEs have an important role within the industry, but the part they play is sometimes misunderstood.

HVCEs are not only responsible for ensuring structural engineering work, repairs, and modifications carried out on heavy vehicles are safe, compliant, and structurally sound, but they are also required for new build certification, such as installing drawbars and chassis lengthening work, to name a few.

Recently, there has been increased demand on HVCEs. This is both due to the amount of compliance work now required, as well as changes in legislation requiring more regular inspection of skid plates, coupled with the recent drawbeam and drawbar recall, resulting in more scrutiny of HVCEs. These factors can contribute to increased time off the road for repairs.

Here are a couple of examples requiring HVCE input and an LT400 to be issued.

Replacing a Worn Skid Pad



Installing Towbar and Ferry Hooks



Replacing a Bent Tow Eye

Why can it take so long for a repair to be certified?

Take a skid plate replacement for example; a standard skid plate on a single trailer can take 40-60 hours of labour just for one replacement, and that's not considering the HVCE's time taken to inspect and certify the new skid plate.

Here's an example of the steps a HVCE takes to certify a replacement skid plate:

- 1 Visual inspection before any work is started; to take pictures, measurements, and consider what work is required.
- 2 This is followed by completing detailed design work, including calculations, analysis, and research to determine what engineering work is required. Once complete, the HVCE will then provide those detailed drawings and instructions direct to the engineering company undertaking the repair.
- 3 The HVCE will often inspect the vehicle while work is in progress.
- 4 The HVCE will personally reinspect the vehicle after the completion of the skid plate repair to ensure all work completed is to the correct standards and specifications.
- 5 Once the HVCE is satisfied with the work completed, an LT400 will be issued, which certifies the replacement skid plate as complete and up to the required standard.

Keep in mind that each visit by a HVCE must be scheduled and some HVCEs can take several days to get back to the workshop after being contacted.

What is an LT400 and why are they so important?

An LT400 is the physical document that proves to the vehicle testing station, and subsequently the NZTA, that the work completed is to the required standard. Repairs and modifications for structural repairs, towing connections, and skid plates are just some of the items that require an LT400 to be issued.

Given the importance of this document, the original copy must be presented immediately to the testing station for a COF to be issued and uploaded to NZTA. If you ever find one in a cab of the truck, please make it known to the TR maintenance team.

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Example of an LT400 Document



Tips and Tricks

- ▶ Be aware that there is a shortage of HVCEs.
- ▶ It is important we understand the work load HVCEs are under and make our customers aware that the increased work load can lead to some repairs taking longer than they did a few years ago.
- ▶ Original LT400 certificates are very important. If you do find one, make it known to the maintenance team. TR Group has a great system for storing and keeping these important documents, making them accessible whenever required.

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