What the NHVR's annual report means for small operators

Maintenance and faults - checked 6 Nov 2026

You are likely to be checked, and checks are finding problems. In 2025-26 the NHVR and police ran 164,184 roadside intercepts, and nearly 3 in 10 random checks found something wrong. 213 people died in heavy vehicle crashes. Get the basics right - daily checks, speed limiters, work and rest records - and plan your move to HVA.

The year in numbers

What 2025 26

On-road intercepts (NHVR and police) 164,184
Random intercepts that found non-compliance 29.73%
Lives lost in crashes involving heavy vehicles 213 (up 4.9%)
Matters dealt with by the courts 2,143
Supply chain prosecutions and related actions 35 (up from 9)
Improvement notices issued 20
Supervisory intervention orders made by courts 20
NHVAS accredited operators 9,118

What the national operations found

Operation Focus Intercepts Non-compliance

Quay (Jul-Aug 2025) Freight to and from ports - all risks 2,550 36.1%
Ambit (Nov 2025) Fatigue 6,433 4.7%
Ambit II (Mar 2026) Fatigue 6,148 5.4%
Quicksilver (May-Jun 2026) Speed limiter tampering and speed 2,022 35.4% overall (8.2% speed limiter)

The Quicksilver figure of 35.4% covers everything officers found on those trucks. Speed limiter problems on their own were 8.2% - about 1 truck in 12.

Where operators get caught out

- Maintenance. At one company, NHVR inspections found more than 200 mechanical defects and almost 70 offences over two years - every one of the 16 vehicles inspected was defective. After repeated breaches of prohibition notices, the NHVR won its first injunction in the Supreme Court of

Queensland.
- Speed limiters. Quicksilver was the first national operation aimed at tampering with engine computers or making mechanical changes to get around speed limiters.
- Ignoring a court order. A company fined $1.2 million under the primary duty in July 2025 was also put on a supervisory intervention order. It then breached the order, and the company and its director were fined another $25,000 and $5,000.
- The wider chain. Improvement notices went to a wider range of chain of responsibility parties, including labour hire companies.
- Young drivers. NHVR research found male drivers aged 18-24 are significantly over-represented in fatal crashes involving heavy vehicles.

Accreditation and your SMS

- NHVAS accreditation carries on until it expires. Operators then move to Heavy Vehicle Accreditation (HVA).
- For medium-risk operators, the NHVR's Operator Intervention Program uses interventions based on the operator's safety management system.
- The NHVR has started work on measures for assessing safety management systems.
- A new Master Code of Practice was published on 21 January 2026. It is now organised by activity rather than by role.
- The NHVR updated its Written Work Diary and Unfit to Drive guides.

What this means for you

Your safety management system is no longer just an accreditation document. If the NHVR steps in with your business, expect it to look at how your SMS actually works.

What to do this month

1. Walk around every truck and trailer

Check it before it goes out - and write it down.

2. Check your speed limiters

Make sure they work and haven't been touched.

3. Look at last fortnight's records

Check work diaries or work and rest records for every driver.

4. Fix what you were told to fix

Anything an officer or auditor raised - and keep the proof.

5. Accredited?

Find your NHVAS expiry date and plan your move to HVA.

General information, not legal advice.

Sources

NHVR Annual Report 2025-26 - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/files/media/document/1002/202610-1823-nhvr-annual-report-2025-26.pdf