Can I use an electronic work diary (EWD) instead of a written work diary?

Fatigue and work diary - checked 7 Nov 2026

Yes - an electronic work diary (EWD) approved by the NHVR can replace your written work diary. Check it is on the NHVR's EWD register before you buy, because many work diary and logbook apps are not approved EWDs and don't count. Your obligations are the same as with a written diary.

Not every app is an EWD

A work diary app is only a legal work diary if it is an NHVR-approved EWD on the NHVR's EWD register. Phone logbooks, spreadsheets and timesheet apps don't replace the National Driver Work Diary.

Before you choose an EWD

- Check it is on the NHVR's EWD register. You don't need to apply to use an approved EWD - only the provider applies.
- Make sure it supports the hours option your drivers work under - standard hours, BFM, AFM or ACA-Fatigue.
- Ask how you get the records out for your own work diary reviews and audits.
- Ask what training the provider gives. The NHVR says drivers and operators need training on their EWD.

What changes with an EWD

- You have the same obligations as with a written diary - the EWD just automates a lot of it.
- The EWD is the driver's official work diary. Records go automatically to the record keeper, and an officer checks the EWD at a roadside check.
- Small overruns of 8 minutes or less (in periods of 24 hours or less) recorded on an EWD aren't counted as a breach.
- The driver still needs to be able to show the last 28 days of records.

What drivers need to know

1. Log in every shift

Make sure the EWD is on and you are logged in before you start work.

2. Pick the right hours

The hours option on the EWD must match the hours you are working under.

3. If it stops working

Follow your EWD provider's steps and the NHVR rules - usually switching to a written work diary - and tell your boss straight away.

New EWD standards are coming

The NHVR and Transport Certification Australia are bringing in a Generation 2.0 EWD framework with a new system specification and stronger testing. If you already use an approved EWD, nothing changes - existing approved EWDs stay approved and you don't need to replace them.

Still review it

An EWD records the hours, but it doesn't manage fatigue for you. Keep reviewing your drivers' records regularly and act on any breaches.

General information, not legal advice.

Sources

NHVR - Electronic Work Diary (EWD) - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/electronic-work-diary-ewd

NHVR - EWD register - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/electronic-work-diary-ewd/ewd-register

NHVR - Work diary - https://www.nhvr.gov.au/safety-accreditation-compliance/fatigue-management/work-diary