

Guidelines for the use of bicycle carriers

This bulletin provides key regulatory information for carrying bicycles on motor vehicles.

There are regulatory limitations on how far a load can project rearwards or to the side of a vehicle in addition to width and height and dangerous projections.

As the operator of the vehicle it is your legal obligation to ensure any regulatory dimension is not exceeded and the loaded bicycle is positioned and secured appropriately.

Requirements

The Law

The [Vehicle and Traffic \(Vehicle Operations\) Regulations 2014](#) prohibit the use of a vehicle with a load that projects in a way that is dangerous to a person or property.

Types of carriers

There are generally two types of bicycle carriers; ones that are secured to a roof rack, and those that attach to the rear of the vehicle, usually to the towbar or boot/hatch. Carriers that utilise straps or suction cups to adhere to the vehicle body or window are becoming more common.

Whenever you choose a bicycle carrier, it is important to ensure that you choose one that is appropriate for your needs and suitable for your vehicle.

Regardless of the type of bicycle carrier you use, you should always follow the manufacturer's instructions when fitting, using and removing the carrier. You should also adhere to the manufacturer's instructions and capacity limits for all other components, including towbars, couplings and securing mechanisms.

- Roof-mounted

Roof-mounted bicycle carriers attach to a roof rack, and generally carry the bicycle in an upright position (with or without the front wheel removed), while others carry it upside down.



Guidelines for the use of bicycle carriers

- Rear-mounted

Rear-mounted bicycle carriers affix to the rear of the vehicle, usually through the towbar or on the boot/hatch.



Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all bicycle carriers, regardless of their construction or location on the vehicle:

- bicycle carriers must be securely attached to the vehicle, this may require routine checking
- bicycles must be securely attached to the bicycle carrier
- the loaded bicycle must not have accessory items fitted that may become detached when travelling
- the carrier must not carry more than the number of bicycles it is designed to hold
- you must not exceed the manufacturer's maximum weight specified for any roof rack, bicycle carrier or towbar assembly
- any attachments, bicycles, and any other load, including passengers, on or in the vehicle must not cause the vehicle to exceed its gross vehicle mass (GVM).

Dimensions, protrusions and other limits

Dimensions

In addition to the above guidelines, any vehicle, including a bicycle carrier and its load, must comply with the applicable dimension limits specified in Part 2 of the [Vehicle and Traffic \(Vehicle Operations\) Regulations 2014](#).

The maximum dimensions for any vehicle, including its load, are 2.5m in width and 4.3m in height. A vehicle fitted with a bicycle carrier, along with any bicycles must not exceed these limits.

Rear-mounted bicycle carriers or where bicycles are carried in a utility with the front wheel and frame straddled over the tailgate, or where the tailgate is in the down position to accommodate the bicycle, must also comply with rear overhang dimension limits. For rear overhang, the dimension from the vehicle's rear axle centre line to the rearmost point of the loaded bicycle or bicycle carrier must not exceed 60% of the wheelbase or 3.7m, whichever is the lesser. Wheelbase is the distance between the vehicles front and rear axle centrelines.

For further information regarding carrying loads and dimension limits, refer to the [Carrying Loads Information Bulletin](#) on the [transport.tas.gov.au website](http://transport.tas.gov.au).

Guidelines for the use of bicycle carriers

Protrusions

Any load, including bicycle carriers and any bicycles or other equipment attached to the carrier must not project more than 150mm from the outermost part of either side of the vehicle while not exceeding the total width dimension of 2.5m.

In addition to the rear overhang dimension limit, where possible, any bicycles on rear-mounted bicycle carriers should not project more than 1.2m beyond the rear of the vehicle. If due to the design or construction of the bicycle carrier, it is not possible to stay within 1.2m, a warning signal must be carried on the outermost part of the loaded bicycle.

A warning signal must be:

- during the day, a brightly coloured red, yellow or red & yellow flag, with each side at least 300mm long, and
- if driving at night, a red light that can be seen for at least 200m.

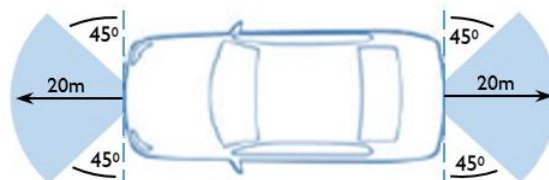
Any part of the bicycle carrier, including any bicycles which may be loaded onto it, must be fitted in a way so as to not be a dangerous protrusion to a person or property. The following general rules apply:

- any bicycle carrier, fittings, hooks or attachments must not have any sharp edges, corners or protrusions, nor should it extend unduly beyond the side profile of the vehicle
- all exposed sections of the bicycle carrier must be radiused and deburred
- rear and side protruding components should be designed to minimise the risk of injury to any person who may come into contact with the carrier.

Any dangerous or sharp protrusions must be removed or covered. Examples of dangerous or sharp protrusions include, bolt threads, unprotected bracket mounts or bracings, and any sharp or thin pieces of metal or plastic. This may include a number plate affixed to the rear of a bicycle carrier. The number plate should be surrounded by rubber or plastic if any sharp edges present a hazard to pedestrians.

Number plates

The rear number plate on the vehicle must be clearly visible from a distance of 20m within any point 45 degrees to the left, right or above the number plate as shown in the diagrams below.



Guidelines for the use of bicycle carriers

If a vehicle is fitted with a rear-mounted bicycle carrier and the number plate is not clearly visible in accordance with the above requirements, depending on the type of bicycle rack and obstruction you may do one of the following:

- remove the bicycle rack, or
- reposition the bicycle so as the plate is not obscured, or
- fit a bike rack number plate that replicates the vehicle's registration plate details.

Regardless of the style of number plate affixed, when using a bicycle carrier at night, the number plate must have sufficient lighting to ensure it remains visible in accordance with the above requirements. Hand painted or replica number plates are not permitted. Legislation requires number plates to be as issued by the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and to be displayed as outlined above. Information relating to bike rack [applications](#) and [fees](#) can be found on the [Transport website](#).

Lighting

The bicycle carrier and/or bicycles must not obstruct or affect the performance or visibility of any of the vehicles rear lights. If any of the lights are obscured, you will need to reposition the obstruction or fit portable rear lights.

When driving at night, or in hazardous weather conditions causing reduced visibility, the vehicle's lights must be on and clearly visible. It is a requirement that a vehicle's tail lights are visible for a distance of 200m behind the vehicle when in use, while indicator lights must be visible from 30 metres.

When required, portable rear lights must be fitted in pairs if any of the lights are obscured and not visible over the required distance.

If you intend to use a rear-mounted bicycle carrier at night, you must ensure that the rear lights (tail, brake and indicator) and number plate remain clearly visible.

Removing the carrier when not in use

To minimise the likelihood of injury to a person if they were to make contact with it, it is advisable to remove rear-mounted bicycle carriers from the rear of the vehicle as soon as it is practical to do so after use.

Useful Links

- [Vehicle Standards Information Bulletins](#)
- [Duplicate Plate or Bicycle Rack Number Plate Application Form](#)
- [Number Plates](#)

Guidelines for the use of bicycle carriers

Further Information

Further information relating to this information bulletin and conditions applicable when transporting large indivisible loads is available from:

Department of State Growth Vehicle Standards Unit

Phone: (03) 03 6166 3263

Email: vehicle.standards@stategrowth.tas.gov.au

Web: www.transport.tas.gov.au

Disclaimer

The information contained in this bulletin is provided as a guide only. All effort has been taken to ensure the information contained in this bulletin is true and accurate at the time. Any changes in legislative requirements will take precedence over the information that is contained within this bulletin. All diagrams are representations only and are not drawn to scale, they are for visual reference only.