



# VIRM modification threshold updates

After plenty of work behind the scenes between the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) and the Low Volume Vehicle Technical Association (LVVTA), and consultation with the automotive industry, NZTA has introduced a group of updates to the VIRM modification threshold.

## Wording updates

The updates take effect on 1 April 2020 and apply to various sections of the VIRM. One update that will assist AVIs in carrying out their inspections is in relation to vehicle track modifications. As well as clarifying the wording to make the requirements simpler to understand and apply, the change also recognises the growing trend in modifying utility vehicles. The previous threshold allowed an increase in track provided that the tyre tread remained within the guards, or if the tyre tread was outside the guards, the track couldn't be more than 25mm greater than OE (12.5mm per side). This last part relied on the inspector being able to determine the OE track width, so this has typically not been well enforced. The new wording uses the body panel position as a datum point so can be more readily measured. For some vehicles this enables an increase in wheel track of over 25mm per side to be present without the need to refer the vehicle for LVV certification.

The new threshold can be found under the Tables and Images tab of the Tyres and Wheels page (section 10-1) on the VIRM threshold page of NZTA's website, or on the LVV certification threshold guide page of [www.lvvt.org.nz](http://www.lvvt.org.nz).

The new wording states: LVV certification is not required provided that:

- **the tyres:**

- have an outer circumference that is no more than 5 percent greater than OE, and

- are an appropriate selection for rim width (see LVVTA Infosheet 01-2009 Tyre Size to Rim Size Compatibility Guide),

- and

- have a load rating suitable for the axle (or vehicle where axle mass is not available)

- have a speed rating suitable for the vehicle

- **the tyre tread does not protrude beyond:**

- in the case of a vehicle that is not a class NA or class MC vehicle, the unmodified original body panels or factory-fitted mudguard extension/flare;

- in the case of a class NA or class MC vehicle, 25mm outside of the unmodified original body panels, provided that a flare or wheel arch extension covers the full width of the tyre tread.



A tyre that's tread protrudes from the OE unmodified original body panels by less than 25mm, as shown here, can be accepted if covered with an aftermarket flare.



The previous wording of the VIRM threshold allowed wheel track to increase no more than 25mm in total before LVV certification was required.



## Tyre protrusion

The updated modification threshold allows class NA or MC vehicles (utes, goods vans, and four-wheel drives) to avoid the need for LVV certification when fitted with tyres that extend up to 25mm outside of the unmodified original body panels, provided that a flare or wheel arch extension covers the full width of the tyre tread. 'Unmodified original body panels' means the original steel (on most vehicles) mudguard, and doesn't include any OE or aftermarket plastic fender flares. If an inspector is not sure about original model specifications, he or she should contact a franchise dealer for the specific brand of vehicle.

Some vehicles, such as many Mitsubishi Tritons, are factory-fitted with plastic fender flares which are covered on the underside, this can make determining where the end of the OE steel guard is difficult. If inspectors encounter this issue, they may contact the LVVTA technical team for advice.

In the case of a vehicle that is neither class NA nor class MC (eg passenger cars or passenger vans), the tyre tread must not extend beyond the unmodified original body panels or factory-fitted mudguard extension/flare without LVV certification.

LVVTA and NZTA have worked with the aftermarket wheel and tyre industry in New Zealand to develop a revised threshold which is more convenient for all affected parties, without unreasonably compromising road user safety.

The requirement for vehicles fitted with tyres which have an outer circumference that is 5 percent or greater than OE to be referred for LVV certification remains unchanged, as does the requirement for vehicles to be fitted with a tyre that is an appropriate width for the rim to which it is fitted. WoF and CoF inspectors should also note that wheel spacers/adaptors always require LVV certification.

Further explanation of this VIRM threshold update and other associated updates can be found on [www.lvvt.org.nz](http://www.lvvt.org.nz).



Standard vehicle - Wheels and tyres under the unmodified original guards, so no LVV certification is required.



The aftermarket wheels fitted to this vehicle are covered by aftermarket fender flares, however the tyre tread does not extend by more than 25mm outside of the unmodified original body panels, and so no LVV certification is required.



The Ford Ranger Raptor is factory-fitted with wide steel guards and plastic fender flares, the tyre tread is already 25mm outside of the unmodified original [steel] body panels, so any increase in wheel track on this vehicle would require LVV certification.



Fitted with aftermarket wheels, tyres, and mudguard extensions, this vehicle requires LVV certification due to the tyre tread extending further than 25mm outside of the unmodified original body panels, or factory-fitted mudguard extensions.

Photo credits: LVVTA, MTA and Team Hutchinson Ford.