



CIRCULAR 0-14-1

PROCEDURES FOR SINGLE UNIFORM TYPE INSPECTIONS (SUTI)

1. BACKGROUND

A completed SUTI provides an additional confirmation of a vehicle's compliance with applicable Australian Design Rules (ADRs), and of the accuracy of Road Vehicle Descriptor (RVD) sheets.

2. WHEN IS A SUTI REQUIRED

The Administrator of Vehicle Standards (the Administrator) decides if and when a SUTI is required.

A SUTI is required for all new applicants for Identification Plate Approval (IPA) as part of the IPA process. The applicant will be advised via a Discussion Item (DI) on the Road Vehicle Certification System (RVCS), and a mutually convenient time for the SUTI will be scheduled. SUTIs conducted under these arrangements are linked to the RVCS application process, and the process is outlined in the procedures contained in this circular. Once satisfied that the new IPA holder is competent in the SUTI process, the Administrator may decide to remove the SUTI from future IPA application processes.

For all other IPA holders, SUTIs may be conducted after the IPA process is complete. Such SUTIs will complement the Administrator's existing audit and surveillance activities through Conformity of Production (COP) and Test Facility Inspections (TFIs). Whilst in these cases there is no linkage between the SUTI and the RVCS application process, the procedures outlined in this circular still apply in general, but without the interaction with the RVCS/RVD process. If the results of SUTIs are such that the Administrator loses confidence in the IPA holder's capability to present vehicles in compliance with applicable ADRs, the Administrator may decide to apply the requirement for a SUTI to be a necessary part of the IPA process. Unless major non-conformances were identified, this would not affect the IPA holder's ability to market vehicles.

Note : For vehicles not subject to a SUTI as part of the IPA process, bulk registration will be possible as soon as the RVD is made available to the registration authorities and published on the RVCS website.

3. APPLICABILITY

SUTIs may apply to all 'New' full volume or 'New' low volume vehicles, or significant upgrades to those vehicles.

4. PURPOSE OF A SUTI

The purpose of a SUTI is:

- (a) To ensure that, insofar as visual inspection and simple measurement can determine, the vehicle complies with ADRs applicable to its category.
- (b) To monitor, where practicable, that ADR related components are consistent with those for which evidence was submitted by the manufacturer.
- (c) To resolve Discussion Items (DIs) in relation to areas of possible non-compliance with applicable ADRs, in cases where SUTIs are required as part of the IPA process.
- (d) To ensure the RVD sheets provided by the manufacturer accurately describe the vehicle, and
- (e) To record instances where these requirements are not met.

5. ADMINISTRATION

For vehicles subject to a SUTI as part of the IPA process, the SUTI procedures consist of three phases:-

- (a) Pre-SUTI, which involves the examination of the Road Vehicle Descriptor (RVD) forms.
- (b) SUTI, where a type inspection of a vehicle is conducted, and
- (c) Post-SUTI, when the RVD sheets are distributed to registration authorities to assist in vehicle registration and posted on the RVCS website.

Initial bulk registration of vehicles would not normally be considered by registering authorities until receipt of RVD documents. However, this does not prevent such vehicles being individually inspected and registered by registering authorities, subject to a valid IPA having been issued, the provision of a weighbridge ticket and the vehicle being found acceptable for registration.

6. PRE-SUTI PHASE

In the pre-SUTI phase, RVDs are submitted electronically by the manufacturer through the RVCS and examined by Vehicle Safety Standards (VSS). All queries will be raised by an RVCS DI item. Amendments to the RVD require a completely new RVD with a new reference number to be submitted by the Licensee.

All RVDs will automatically be given a status of 'Received' when submitted to RVCS. Once the RVD has been examined the status will be changed to 'Examined' pending SUTI.

If a SUTI is required the RVD status will remain at 'Examined' until the SUTI has been scheduled, when it will be changed to 'Ready for SUTI'. The RVD has provision for a proposed date for SUTI, which should be completed when the RVD is first submitted. VSS will endeavour to schedule a SUTI as close to that date as possible. If a proposed SUTI date is not provided, a manufacturer should provide at least 4 weeks notice of a proposed inspection date. All critical RVD queries must be resolved before an inspection can be scheduled. Non critical queries can be resolved after SUTI.

If a SUTI is not required, and there are no DIs or any outstanding DIs, the RVD will be set to 'Passed' and issued.

7. SUTI PHASE

SUTI is normally carried out jointly by the VSS and/or State and Territory representatives, and involves a minimum of two inspectors. The RVD will be checked against the vehicle, and any mismatch will be noted for inclusion on the SUTI Summary Report (SSR). The vehicle will be inspected using the relevant Inspection Report forms (IR-1, IR-2, and IR-3) as a guide; blanks of these forms are available on the RVCS web site. Any observations and non-compliances will be noted for inclusion on the SSR.

If more than one variant is to be inspected (eg sedan and station wagon) then a separate inspection form and SSR will be required. In this case it may be acceptable to conduct one full inspection and one partial inspection to cover the difference between the two variants.

7.1 Facilities for a SUTI.

Where the inspection is carried out at the Licensee's premises, the following requirements relating to site, equipment, personnel, vehicle and documents apply :

Site. The inspection site must be clean, flat, well lit, sealed, under cover and out of the weather, and must provide sufficient space to move around the vehicle and under it, or for it to be raised on a hoist for taking measurements and/or photographs needed. The area must be in a location where there is a minimum of disturbance to SUTI officers conducting the inspection.

Equipment. The manufacturer shall have a clean hoist or pit and hand lamps or other adequate form of lighting available at the SUTI location to enable the inspection of the interior and exterior of the vehicle. A clean table, desk or bench shall be available for paperwork etc.

Licensee's representative. Inspectors will endeavour to expedite the inspection and will seek to restrict discussion to the end of the inspection. However, a Licensee's representative familiar with the vehicle specification should be available for clarifying all queries raised.

Vehicle. The vehicle to be inspected may be a pre-production vehicle but must be fully representative of production vehicles in relation to all features for which ADR requirements apply and include, as far as practicable, those options for which compliance with such requirements can be visually inspected. This includes all labelling requirements. The vehicle must be in a clean and fully operational condition to ensure the necessary visual inspection and function testing can be carried out.

Documents. Manuals and handbooks, or proof copies of them, intended to be provided with each vehicle must be available for inspection. For new low volume vehicles, a draft copy of the 0-4-5 certificate and steering conversion procedures must be available for inspection.

General. The movement of the vehicle on and off the hoist or pit and the removal and refitting of components for inspection is the responsibility of the Licensee.

Note : For Licensees that have production facilities in Australia, the SUTI is to be conducted at that facility. Where the vehicle is fully imported and no Australian production facility is used, the SUTI will be conducted at the premises nominated by the Licensee's Australian nominated representative.

7.2 SUTI Summary Report (SSR).

At the end of the inspection, all comments or observations on the RVD and the inspection report form will be noted on the SSR and signed by both inspectors. The Licensee (delegate or signatory or agent registered in RVCS) is to sign the SSR, and will be given a copy of the SSR. The Licensee's signature acknowledges receipt of a copy of the SSR. The SSR enables the Licensee to take immediate steps to resolve any queries.

8. POST-SUTI PHASE

On completion of the SUTI, the audited RVD form, the detailed inspection report and the original SSR are to be forwarded to VSS by the inspectors as soon as possible after the inspection. Copies of DIs are posted on RVCS.

The Licensee must respond to VSS on each item listed on the SSR. If RVD amendments are required the Licensee is to submit a revised RVD with a new reference number and a 'post-it note' attached, requesting the previous RVD to be withdrawn.

VSS will examine the SSR responses and the inspection report. If the inspection report included part numbers these will be verified against the corresponding SE forms submitted to RVCS. If any discrepancies between the inspection report and the SE forms submitted is found an RVCS DI will be raised. Once all SSR items and all DIs raised have been resolved, the RVD will be set to 'Passed'.

8.1 Distribution of RVD sheets.

A maximum period of two weeks may be necessary between a successful SUTI (RVD at 'Passed' status) and receipt of the RVD sheets by all registration authorities throughout Australia for bulk registration.

8.2 Embargo Provisions.

On successful completion of a SUTI and the RVD being 'Passed' the RVD will be automatically posted on the RVCS web site provided the Application is at 'Approved' status. Where a Licensee requests an embargo, the RVD will not be posted on the RVCS web site until that date. When setting the embargo date the Licensee should take into account the above processing time. If the Licensee wishes to change the embargo date then a new RVD will need to be submitted.