



# ADR68/01 & Seatbelts

## Frequently Asked Questions

April 2025



## Introduction

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This FAQ has been designed to help you navigate the new Australian Design Rule (ADR) 68/01 – *Occupant Protection in Buses* design rule requirements that were [announced](#) in January this year.

The new design rule aims to improve seatbelt wearing rates in buses and coaches mainly through Visual and Audible Warning Requirements for Occupant Seatbelt Awareness commonly referred to as *seatbelt reminder systems*. It has been introduced by government following consultation with the states, territories and industry.

## What you need to know

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### Changes

Q: Why were signs and reminder systems implemented?

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A: There was a need to improve occupant safety, specifically seatbelt usage in buses where they are provided. Studies demonstrated that increasing seatbelt usage significantly reduces the risk of occupant injury or fatality in the event of an accident. The visual and audible reminders encourage compliance, particularly in long distance and regional buses where seatbelt use may be inconsistent. It also assists operators by providing a strong baseline to support their drivers in reminding occupants to wear them.

Q: What makes up a seatbelt reminder system?

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A: These new requirements for buses and coaches will include visual and audio alerts, similar to those featured when travelling by air, to encourage usage where 3-point seatbelts are already fitted. It also removes a loophole that allowed some coaches not to be fitted with seatbelts.

1. A label on the back of each seat with the words “**Fasten seatbelt while seated**”.
2. On each cabin bulkhead, a lit sign with the words “**Fasten seatbelt**”.
3. An announcement saying “**Please fasten seatbelt while seated**” when the last door closes.

### Retrofitting

Q: Will I need to fit all my existing buses with seatbelts?

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A: As a general rule, ADRs are not retrospective; they are a design or safety improvement from a specific date. Existing buses in service are *not required* to be retrofitted with the requirements of the new ADR 68/01.

## Applicability

Q: What does 'applicability requirements' mean?

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A: This refers to when the new requirements should be fitted to new vehicles (as per below).

- **1 November 2026 for all new-model vehicles**

Any new models introduced into Australia with a manufacturing date post-November 2026 must comply with a specific regulation or standard (e.g., if an OEM brought in a new model for the first time after 1 November 2026, it would require the seatbelt reminder systems fitted).

- **1 November 2027 for all vehicles**

All new vehicles manufactured post this date will require the seatbelt reminder systems fitted (e.g., any model buses that OEMs sell today which are manufactured and sold after 1 Nov 2027 must have seatbelt reminder systems fitted in accordance with the new ADR 68/01 after 1 Nov 2027).

Q: Does that mean that all new buses post these dates must have seatbelts?

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A: No, as there are exemptions. A common example is where buses designed to carry standing passengers will continue to do so as per the ADR.

Q: What types of new buses are affected by this new requirement?

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A: This vehicle standard applies to...

- Light buses
  - *Category MD3 omnibus – over 3.5t GVM and up to 4.5t GVM*
  - *Category MD4 omnibus – over 4.5t GVM and up to 5.0t GVM*
- Heavy buses
  - *Category ME heavy omnibus*

There are two exemptions...

1. *is a '**Route Service Omnibus**' not equipped with any passenger 'Seatbelt Assemblies', or*
2. *is an omnibus with less than 17 'seats' including the driver.*

Q: The exemption says *Route Service Omnibuses* only. What about other bus types?

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A: The term *Route Service Omnibuses* used in this exemption means that, under the official ADR definition, any bus with space specially designed for standing passengers is exempt from fitting seatbelts for passengers.

The official ADR definition is:

*Route Service Omnibus – an omnibus specially designed with spaces for standing passengers.*

Q: So, what really changes, then?

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A: If an applicable type of new bus (from the above dates) is fitted with seatbelts, only then will it have to include seatbelt reminder systems.

## General

Q: How loud should the audible announcement be?

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A: ADR 68/01 doesn't specify a volume, and it's for the OEM to determine what the volume should be. Some customer contracts may specify general volumes for any audible announcements in vehicles or refer to other standards, such as *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport* or *Australian Standard 1428.5*.

Q: I have read some articles that say *seatbelt monitoring systems* are required as part of this ADR change. Is this correct?

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A: No, *seatbelt monitoring systems* that detect when someone is in the seat are not required. They may, however, still be fitted as an option by the supplier or customer, though not mandated.

Q: Can a seatbelt symbol be used instead of the wording?

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A: The wording must always be used as per ADR 68/01. There nothing prohibiting a symbol being used as an additional measure, though. If in doubt, please check.

Q: Where do I find a copy the actual ADR?

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A: For information the Australian Design Rule ADR 68/01, refer to [ADR 68/01](#).

## Still have questions?

Please feel free to [contact the BIC team](#) at any time or the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA).

### Note

The ADR always takes precedence over any advice provided. If still in doubt, please feel free to contact us.

## Get in touch



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