

HVNL COMPLIANCE ALERT**Tailgate Loaders & Vehicle-Mounted Cranes**

Under the HVNL, all tailgate loaders and vehicle-mounted cranes fitted to heavy vehicles must be maintained in a safe, serviceable condition, with inspection and service records kept up to date.

Classification

A tailgate loader is the primary lifting appliance on the vehicle — it lifts the load directly, so it falls within AS 1418 (design/construction) and AS 2550 (safe use), not AS 4991. AS 4991 (Lifting Devices) applies only to devices that attach to a primary lifting appliance (e.g. a sling or lifting beam), not to the primary lifting appliance itself. AS 4991 has no mandated major (10-year) inspection but higher proof-load requirements — classifying a tailgate loader under it does not reflect the standard's scope.

Standard	Applies to	Governs
AS 1418.8	Tailgate loaders (special purpose appliances)	Design / construction
AS 2550.1	Tailgate loaders — safe use	90-day, annual, and major (10-yr) inspection
AS 1418.11	Vehicle-loading cranes	Design / construction
AS 2550.11	Vehicle-loading cranes — safe use	90-day, annual, and major overhaul
AS 1418.1	Whole AS 1418 series	General requirements

Not applicable: AS 4991 (attachments, not primary appliances) should not be cited for tailgate loaders.

Inspection Requirements

Tailgate Loaders	Vehicle-Mounted Cranes
90-day — competent person	90-day — competent person
Annual — AS 1418.8 / AS 2550.1	Annual — AS 1418.11 / AS 2550.11
Major (10-year) — required, AS 2550.1	Major overhaul — 10 years or earlier

Why 90 days: a tailgate loader is a hydraulically and mechanically operated lifting appliance in near-daily use, cycling under load, exposed to weather, road vibration and grit. AS 2550.1 requires a competent-person inspection at 90-day intervals because wear in pivot pins and bushes, hydraulic seal and hose condition, structural cracking, and the operation of safety devices (emergency lowering, controls, load charts) can develop and become unsafe well within a 12-month annual inspection cycle. The 90-day inspection is the mechanism that catches in-service deterioration between the more detailed annual and major inspections.

Common Compliance Failures

Tailgate Loaders	Vehicle-Mounted Cranes
Emergency lowering inoperable or obstructed	Missing or damaged controls, guards, roll stops
Unsafe platforms or worn grip surfaces	Hydraulic or electrical faults
Missing or out-of-date inspection labels	Emergency stop or overload protection inoperative
Missing, damaged, or illegible load charts	Structural defects or hydraulic leaks
Worn pins, bushes, slewing or mountings	Out-of-date inspection records

Why This Matters

If equipment fails under load and emergency or safety systems cannot be operated, there may be no safe method of recovery. Allowing equipment to remain in service with known defects, or misclassifying equipment to avoid required inspections, may expose individuals and organisations to prosecution, prohibition notices, or insurance refusal under HVNL and WHS legislation.

Action Required

- Confirm inspection currency and apply current compliance labels; maintain records on the vehicle or readily accessible
- Address identified defects immediately — do not operate equipment that has failed inspection
- Classify tailgate loaders under AS 1418.8 / AS 2550.1 (not AS 4991) and vehicle-mounted cranes under AS 1418.11 / AS 2550.11
- Apply the 90-day, annual, and major (10-year) inspection requirements to tailgate loaders and vehicle-mounted cranes