

Headlight covers

Purpose

This Vehicle Standards Information (VSI) No. 29 is intended to provide information on the minimum performance requirements for headlights and the need to maintain this performance when fitting headlight covers.

Introduction

A popular accessory for cars and light trucks is a pair of plastic covers that fit over the headlights. They are usually fitted to protect the headlights from stone damage, and are sometimes used to change the appearance of the vehicle. If headlight covers are fitted they must not reduce the performance of the vehicles' headlights or front direction indicators as described in this VSI No. 29.

Requirements

The Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Regulation 2017 (the Regulation) stipulates that:

- headlights must show only white light, and when on at night, illuminate the road ahead of the vehicle for at least:
 - 25 metres on low-beam
 - 50 metres on high-beam.
- the light emitted by flashing direction indicators must be yellow, unless the vehicle was built before 1 January 1973, in which case the light may be white.

Vehicle manufacturers go to a great deal of effort to ensure their vehicles meet these requirements. Any downgrading of the lighting system could put drivers and other road users at risk and might also invalidate the vehicle's insurance cover.

Vehicle headlights must maintain their maximum light output at night, but even apparently clear headlight covers will absorb some of this light. If the amount of light emitted from the headlight is reduced, so is the distance over which the driver can see, or the vehicle be seen.

If headlight covers are fitted, the following requirements apply:

Clear headlight covers may be used provided that, at night, the headlights and direction indicators continue to meet the requirements of the Regulation as described above.

Tinted headlight covers must not be used if they cause the headlights or direction indicators to emit a colour other than that allowed by the Regulation.

Transport for NSW

Opaque headlight covers may be used provided they are easily removable without the use of tools and are not in place at night, in adverse weather conditions or during other periods when the headlights are required to be on. The same applies to opaque covers with slots or holes in them because these will also significantly reduce the lighting performance of the headlights.

Opaque headlight covers must not:

- be permanently fixed
- obscure the front direction indicators at any time.

Protrusions

Any headlight cover attached to a vehicle must be fitted in such a way that it minimises the likelihood of injury to a person making contact with the vehicle.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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