



Queensland Public Library Standards and Guidelines

Mobile Libraries Standard

(June 2009)

5. Mobile Libraries Standard

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5.1 Objective

To provide standards and guidelines for a public library service delivered via a specially designed and equipped vehicle. Mobile libraries extend library service to clients without convenient access to a static library, providing a comparable level of service.

It should be noted that other standards, including those for staffing, collections and technology <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines> also apply to mobile libraries, and should be consulted in the planning of mobile library services. These mobile library standards and guidelines deal with issues specific to mobile library services.

5.2 Mobile Libraries Standard

5.2.1 Standard for planning

Mobile library services should be included in all library planning, where appropriate, including user surveys, long range planning and corporate/strategic plans.

A mobile library replacement fund should be part of the asset management strategy's forward planning. The life of an integrated vehicle is approximately 12 years. The life of the library body of an articulated vehicle is approximately 15 years. The life of the vehicle will be influenced by garaging and the maintenance schedule. Timing of replacement will be subject to condition based reporting.

Scheduled stops should be made at agreed points of congregation or community focal points, at times to optimise access by those facing difficulties visiting static branches. Criteria for temporary and permanent closure of stops should be established.

Schedules should be reviewed regularly, with community input to ensure they best match community need and respond to changes in demographics, usage patterns, and housing, recreation and commercial development.

5.2.2 Standard for vehicles

A variety of vehicle types are used for mobile libraries. Smaller vehicles will be of rigid construction, either a bus or cab/chassis configuration. Larger vehicles are usually semi trailers. The appropriate vehicle for each service will depend on the terrain, roads, client groups and budget. A semi trailer, for example, may not be feasible where the service involves travelling on mountain roads or barge transport or entering restricted driveways in retirement villages.

Heavy vehicles should comply with the relevant Queensland Transport legislation, regulations and guidelines http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/Industry/Freight_and_heavy_vehicles/Heavy_vehicles/Guidelines_and_regulations/ and the National Transport Commission's National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme. <http://www.ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?AreaId=35&DocumentId=108> See 5.5.2.

Subject to terrain and driving conditions, engine power to weight ratio should not be less than 7.5 kilowatts per tonne of Registered Gross Vehicle Mass for rigid vehicles, or Registered Gross Combination Mass for articulated vehicles. In the case of semi trailers, power should be not less than 180 kilowatts and construction should be as for heavy vehicles.

Vehicles should be fitted with:

- air suspension;
- air conditioning with medium sized mobile libraries requiring at least two units of BTU 10,700 each and semi trailers requiring three;
- a generator capable of powering all lights and electrical equipment, even if all scheduled stops have mains power available. Selection and location of the generator should aim at the lowest possible noise level and optimal ventilation. Generators should be fitted to the trailers of articulated vehicles;
- a reversing camera for lone operator services;
- battery powered auxiliary lighting;
- alternative access to the library for those unable to use steps;
- safety catches on all drawers and storage cupboards;
- shelving with a minimum 15 degrees slope for stability while traveling and depth appropriate to collections housed eg. minimum 30cm for non-fiction;
- protection from movement and vibration for computer equipment;
- steps with a minimum width of 280mm.

The vehicle should be sealed against water, dust and generator fumes.

5.2.3 Standard for maintenance

Maintenance agreements and schedules for the vehicle, tyres and generator should be used, including regular exterior and interior cleaning. Servicing of vehicles should be based on time and distance travelled. The minimum should be every 3 months or 5,000 km and the maximum every 6 months or 10,000 km.

5.2.4 Standard for scheduled stop sites

Parking spaces should:

- be level;
- allow adequate clearance of the road to enable free flow of traffic;
- have reasonable room for safe approach and egress without the need for reversing;
- be marked with appropriate parking reservation signs and/or line marking to denote a dedicated mobile library stop;
- have power and communications links available close to the parking space, with cables between the vehicle and power source conforming to workplace health and safety requirements;
- be maintained by local governments and other responsible authorities to ensure adequate clearance of vegetation for the vehicle and customers;
- be illuminated where there are night stops.

5.2.5 Standard for communications

Communications infrastructure should be in place to allow the operation of the Internet and the library management system in real time and at speeds comparable to those available in the library service's static branches. Telephone communication is also necessary for contact with customers, other library staff and for the personal safety of staff. Options to facilitate this include dial up, mobile and satellite technology. Refer also to the **Technology Standard** <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines>.

5.2.6 Standard for safety

- The mobile library vehicle, sites and practices should conform to the local government's workplace health and safety requirements.
- Staff should be trained in basic mechanical troubleshooting and maintenance to a level that will facilitate daily safety checks and communication with depot or emergency staff in the event of a breakdown.
- Driving skills should be updated regularly and associated training should be funded by the library.
- The mobile library should have a personal security strategy, supported by reliable communications.
- Fire extinguishers should be fitted in both the driver's cabin and in the library.
- An effective emergency escape exit should be available and clearly marked. An evacuation plan should be in place and all staff, including relief staff, should be familiar with the plan.
- First aid kits should be carried and the staff should hold a current first aid certificate, subject to council and fleet policies.

5.3 Guidelines

5.3.1 Guidelines for vehicle design

Equipment and fittings used in static libraries should, where possible, be provided in mobile libraries, including toilet and hand-washing facilities.

While advantage should be taken of opportunities for natural lighting, control of heat and glare should ensure collections can be protected from direct sunlight.

Doors, steps, wheelchair lifts, awnings and pods should be automated with safety mechanisms to prevent injury to people caught in closing doors and to optimise air conditioning efficiency.

5.3.2 Guidelines for the Mobile Library depot

Secure undercover garaging with automatic doors should be provided. This will prolong the vehicle's life, particularly its graphics. An office area for administrative tasks should be available at a location convenient to the vehicle's parking area.

5.3.3 Guidelines for scheduling

The schedule should allow at least 15 minutes at the beginning and end of each day for safety checks, tidying and preparing the vehicle for the day's run. A minimum of half a day, preferably one day, per week off the road should be allowed for regular maintenance, cleaning and administrative work.

One hour should be the minimum opening time per scheduled community stop. Stops should be visited no less than once every three weeks. The schedule should allow adequate time before opening and after closing each stop for setting up, packing up and delays. The schedule should be designed to ensure staff have access to meal and other breaks available elsewhere in the library service, with special consideration given to the needs of lone operators.

Procedures for off the road operations should be developed, including notification of and alternative service for customers.

5.3.4 Guidelines for scheduled stop sites

A prominent sign at each stop should advertise opening hours and feature contact details. These signs must be regularly maintained, kept current and visible.

Power boxes should be regularly cleaned and fumigated for insects using non-flammable spray. The bases of power outlet boxes should be no more than 150cm high.

5.3.5 Guidelines for collections

Unless the mobile library provides a specialist service, all categories of library items should be made available, including periodicals. Refer to Library Collections Standard 6.3.1. <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/publib/policy/guidelines> . The proportions should vary to reflect the needs and interests of the community served. Access to web based resources should be available at all stops.

Mobile services with small collections should be turned over with regular rotations of stock from a larger collection and/or participation in floating collections.

The request or interlibrary loan service must operate with enough flexibility to allow for limited opening hours at each service point. For example, interlibrary loans should be requested for longer than usual periods to accommodate variations in travelling times to be accommodated in schedules.

5.3.6 Guidelines for staff

Staffing levels should be responsive to usage levels, with additional staff available for high activity stops. Sufficient backup staff, experienced and qualified to drive the vehicle and provide the library service, should be available to ensure continuity of service.

Position descriptions should reflect the full range of duties and responsibilities, including those associated with operating the vehicle and license requirements. Initial and on-going training, including customer service and driver training, should be provided for all mobile library staff. They should also have the opportunity to participate in regular staff meetings and planning activities.

5.3.7 Guidelines for marketing and programming

Mobile libraries should be included in all library wide programming and marketing material. Mobile specific programming and marketing should also be developed eg. schedule promotion or vehicle involvement in public events. The mobile livery should be a key part of the library's and council's marketing plan.

5.4 Performance Indicators

- A full range of services and collections is available from the mobile library service.
- The schedule is assessed as appropriate for the users and the location.
- The mobile library is maintained and replaced according to a planned schedule.
- Interruptions to service due to mechanical, communications or staffing issues are kept below agreed levels.

5.5 Definitions and References

5.5.1 Definitions

Brake Horse Power: the power delivered at the crank and available to do work.

BTU: British thermal unit - the amount of heat an air conditioning unit is capable of removing from a space.

Floating collections: an arrangement which can be used by multi-branch library services, where items remain at the branch at which they are returned.

Heavy vehicle: a motor vehicle or trailer with a RGCM greater than 4.5 tonnes.

Registered Gross Combination Mass (RGCM): the total of the RGVM of the truck and the trailer.

Registered Gross Vehicle Mass (RGVM): the maximum loaded mass of the motor vehicle, applicable rigid vehicles.

Reversing Camera: a rear mounted camera providing a closed circuit television image to the driver.

Semi trailer: a trailer that has 1 axle group towards the rear and a way of attaching to a prime mover that results in some of the load being imposed on the prime mover.

Static public library: a library permanently based in a building.

5.5.2 References

State and National Regulations

Queensland Transport – Heavy Vehicle Guidelines

- Guideline for 14.6 m long and 4.6 m high semi trailers in Queensland
- Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995. Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Mass, Dimensions and Loading) Regulation 2005
- Axle Mass Limits in Queensland Comparison Table
- Guideline for Concessional Mass Limits, Form 21, Version 1
- Guideline for increased front steer axle mass in Queensland, Form 20, Version 1
http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/Industry/Freight_and_heavy_vehicles/Heavy_vehicles/Guidelines_and_regulations/

Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995.

www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/w/workplhsaA95.pdf

National Transport Commission - National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme

<http://www.ntc.gov.au/viewpage.aspx?AreaId=35&DocumentId=108>

Other Standards and Guidelines

Country Public Libraries Group of Victoria – Mobile Library Occupational Health & Safety Best Practice Guidelines 2005. <http://www.mobilelibraries.com.au/oh&s.htm>.

LIANZA - Standards for NZ Public Libraries

<http://lianza.org.nz/publications/other-publications/index.html>

Pestell, Robert. Mobile Library Guidelines. IFLA Headquarters. The Hague. 1991

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED350014>

US Association of Bookmobiles and Outreach Services Guidelines (2008)

<http://www.abos-outreach.org/2008BookmobileGuidelines.pdf>