

Vehicle Standards Information



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Headlight covers

A popular accessory for cars and light trucks is a plastic cover that fits in front of the headlights to protect them from stone damage and sometimes to give the vehicle a more streamlined appearance. It is sometimes claimed that these covers reduce aerodynamic drag and so save fuel.

While there are no specific restrictions on the use of these covers, owners should always remember that it is important to maintain the maximum light output of their headlights at night and that even an apparently clear cover does absorb some light. If the amount of light emitted is reduced, so is the distance over which the driver can see or be seen.

Tinted covers are not permitted if they cover direction indicator lights or if they cause the headlights to emit a colour other than white.

Some vehicle owners have even gone to the extent of fitting opaque plastic or metal covers to their headlights. There is no objection to these covers if they are easily removable without the use of tools and are not used with the headlights on. Permanently fixed covers are not permitted. Covers with slots or holes in them are not permitted either, because they drastically reduce lighting efficiency.

Owners should remember that NSW legislation specifies strict requirements for vehicle lighting. Owners must ensure that if covers are fitted, headlights continue to clearly illuminate the road up to 50 metres away.

Remember that the manufacturer of your vehicle went to a great deal of effort to provide you with an optimum lighting system. Any downgrading of that system could put you at risk in traffic and it might also invalidate the insurance cover on your vehicle.



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