Driving offences at railway level crossings attract an expiation fee of $320 and 3 demerit points.

Offences include:

- Failing to stop at a stop sign at a level crossing.
- Failing to give way to a train or tram at a level crossing where there is a give way sign.
- Entering a level crossing if warning lights or bells are operating.
- Entering a level crossing if a gate, boom or barrier is closing, closed or opening.
- Entering a level crossing if a train or tram is on or entering the crossing.
- Entering a level crossing if an approaching train or tram can be seen from the crossing, or is sounding a warning, and there is a danger of a collision at the crossing.
- Entering a level crossing if you cannot pass through the crossing because it, or the road beyond it, is blocked.
- Failure to leave a level crossing as soon as it is safe.

In addition, there may be court penalties of up to $2500.

You must carry a licence when driving a heavy vehicle greater than 4.5 tonne GVM.
Expiation Fee: $108
In addition, there may be court penalties of up to $1250.

* Penalties are valid at 1 July 2009 and are subject to change
HEAVY VEHICLE PERFORMANCE

Due to their mass, heavy vehicles take a longer time and distance to brake and stop, and a longer time to accelerate from a standstill than cars.

Road conditions such as gradients, wet conditions, or unsealed surfaces significantly affect a heavy vehicle’s braking and acceleration performance.

LOOK FOR APPROACHING TRAINS

Heavy vehicles need to see an approaching train from a greater distance to account for these longer braking and acceleration times.

Drivers must be aware that obstructions caused by vegetation, embankments, curved tracks and buildings, might block the view of an approaching train.

Visibility may also be affected by wet weather, fog, or sun glare, so make sure you adjust your speed accordingly.

As a driver’s view is often restricted on the left hand side of the vehicle’s cabin, be especially aware when the road crosses the track on an angle.

In this crash, at Kerang in Victoria, 11 lives were lost at great cost to the community. The crash cost $15 million and the track was closed for a week.

HEAVY VEHICLES CAN CAUSE A TRAIN OR TRAM TO DERAILE, THIS COULD KILL OR INJURE MANY PEOPLE.

YOUR CHANCE OF SURVIVING A CRASH WITH A TRAIN IS VERY LOW. IT IS SAFER TO ALWAYS ASSUME THAT A TRAIN WILL BE ON THE TRACKS.

STOPPING FOR A TRAIN TO PASS MIGHT COST YOU A FEW MINUTES OF YOUR TIME, BUT CONSIDER WHAT YOU COULD LOSE IF YOU IGNORE THE ROAD RULES AND DO NOT PAY ATTENTION.

KNOW YOUR VEHICLE LENGTH

Because of their length and slower acceleration, a heavy vehicle takes longer to clear a level crossing. Make sure you allow enough time to safely get across.

If there are other cars in front at the crossing, be aware that there may be insufficient room on the other side of the crossing to stop your vehicle without hanging over onto the tracks.

Do not enter a level crossing unless you can clear the tracks completely on the other side without stopping.

A wide or turning heavy vehicle may damage level crossing signs or signals. Report any damage to the authorities immediately as this will affect the safety of other road users.

If a level crossing is on a hump, there is a danger of a long or low heavy vehicle becoming stranded on the crossing or damaging the tracks. If this occurs call the Police immediately on 000.

LEVEL CROSSING TYPES

Not all level crossings are the same. In South Australia, there are four different level crossing types which require different actions by the driver.

1. GIVE WAY SIGN
   - slow down
   - be prepared to stop
   - look both ways before proceeding.

2. STOP SIGN
   - stop means STOP
   - look both ways along the train line before moving off
   - do not begin to move off until all trains have cleared the crossing.

3. FLASHING LIGHTS
   - if lights are flashing, STOP and do not begin to move until the lights stop flashing
   - look both ways along the train line before moving off.

4. FLASHING LIGHTS AND BOOM GATES
   - STOP if the boom gates are down and do not move off until the boom is fully raised AND the flashing lights have stopped as there may be a second train coming
   - always look both ways along the train line before moving.