

Truck-Weight Legislation: Frequently Asked Questions

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The questions below are from the Minnesota Statewide Truck-Weight Education Program. The responses noted on the subsequent pages of this document are a consensus of information from representatives of the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. The Minnesota Statewide Truck-Weight Education Program is a partnership between the Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program at the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies and Alexandria Technical and Community College, and sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

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1. What road limit changes were made in the 2009 session?

The biggest change was wording which allows gross weight of 80,000 pounds on properly configured axles on all roads. 80,000 pounds is possible with correct axle configurations as long as the axle limits are within the law. The previous maximum vehicle gross weight of 73,280 pounds for the non 10-ton highways was removed. As always, if there are restricted weights and bridges, those restrictions prevail.

Statute: 169.824, Sub 2 (a) (1)

2. Where are signs required?

Road authorities retain the authority to post roads as needed to prevent unreasonable damage. The 2009 legislature made all paved roads 10-ton unless otherwise posted and all unpaved roads 9-ton unless otherwise posted. Either road allows 80,000 pounds as long as axles are correctly configured and legal.

Statute: 169.87, Sub 1

3. What is the difference between 9 and 10 ton road limits?

Effective with the 2009 legislation, the difference is mainly the weight on a single axle and wheel weight limits. On a 10-ton road, a single axle can weigh up to 20,000 pounds. On a 9-ton road it can weigh up to 18,000 pounds. A "wheel" can weigh up to 10,000 pounds on a 10-ton road (half of the axle weight) and can weigh up to 9,000 pounds on a 9-ton road. There are also some differences in tandem weights depending on the axle spacing.

Statute: 169.823

4. What difference does axle spacing make?

The distance between axles determines how much weight the axles can haul. The normal rule is the more distance between axles, the greater weight allowed - up to the point where an individual single axle load is reached. For example, on a 10-ton road, two axles spaced 4 feet apart are allowed a total of 34,000 pounds. If those two axles were spaced 10 feet apart, they would be allowed 20,000 pounds each for a total of 40,000 pounds. If the two axles were to be spaced any farther apart, there would be no additional weight as the two axles have already maximized their individual axle limits for a 10-ton road (20,000 pounds each) so there's no place to put additional weight without violating a single axle load.

Statute: 169.824 (axle weight limits table)

5. Is there a distance where axles can be too close together?

If two axles are spaced too closely, they will only be counted as one axle. The law states that two axles spaced 40 inches or less apart is a "single axle". So, if you had a single axle load on a 10-ton road it would be allowed 20,000 pounds. If you added another axle for the purposes of hauling additional weight and it was located only 40 inches from the existing axle, it wouldn't give you any weight advantage as it is still considered a "single axle" and still only allowed the same 20,000 pounds. The second axle would need to be placed "beyond" 40 inches to be removed from a "single axle" classification, thus allowing more weight.

Statute: 169.822 Sub 3

6. I've seen the axle weight limits table, but how do I know if I'm reading it correctly?

The axle weight limits table is the template to determine the maximum gross weight for a truck based on its axle spacing. The axle weight table, without explanation, can give you the impression you can haul more weight than is legal. In order to use the table to achieve the maximum weight, the truck must be properly configured with proper axle spacing and proper tires. The table shows various distances between different axle options. The distance between all of the axles on the vehicle must be considered. Many of the people who attended the Minnesota Truck Weight Education Program found they were using the table incorrectly. It is highly recommended to obtain guidance when using the table for the first time. Understanding this table can assist with maximizing truck loads and configuring truck weight options.

Statute: 169.824 Sub 1

7. What considerations should I make when purchasing tires for my truck?

Once you determine your legal axle loads, you need to use tires with the proper rating and size. You never know what a legal tire load is until you know both the weight based on the tire size and the tire rating. The legal weight will always be the lesser of the two weights. Also, note a safety concern - if a truck is found to be operating with a tire weight in excess of the rating, it is considered "out of service" and cannot be operated on the highway. In determining the tire size, the law allows 600 pounds per inch of tire width on a steering tire (foremost or rearmost steering axle) and 500 pounds per inch on a non steering tire. Note: the size of the tire is embossed on the tire, do not "measure" for the size.

Statute: 169.823 Sub 1 (3)

8. Are "Super Single" tires legal?

Super single tires are legal on any axle as long as the tire's size and rating complies with the weight imposed on the tire. Trucks can reduce their empty weight by making a

switch from dual tires to super single tires. There is ongoing controversy about damage caused by single tire axles. Some local road authorities strongly discourage super single tires on flexible pavements and prefer standard dual tires.

9. What if roads or bridges are “posted”?

In most cases (see #13 some exceptions for spring load restrictions), signs or postings are required to notify reduced load limits. Most road authorities sign roads in advance of restrictive limits such as bridges.

Statute: 169.84 (Bridges) and 169.87 (Seasonal Limits)

10. What impacts weight limits during the winter load increase (WLI)?

During the time the roads are frozen and road authorities have authorized the winter load limits, the truck weights are allowed to be increased by up to 10 percent when there is adequate axle spacing and tire ratings. These increases could allow up to 88,000 pounds on all roads. Posted roads or bridges will not receive the weight increases.

Statute: 169.826, Sub 1 and Sub 4

11. During the winter load increase, what can I haul on a road which has a 9-ton sign?

If there is a physical sign stating 9-ton weight, that sign “restricts” the road to 9-ton axle limits, so there would be no increases beyond the 9-ton weight limitations. This could limit maximum gross weights to 80,000 pounds if properly configured. 88,000 pounds is possible as long as the 9-ton axle limits are not exceeded.

Statute: 169.826 Sub 4

12. Do I need a transportation permit to haul the additional weights during the winter?

The winter load increase (WLI) is allowed on all Minnesota roads in the winter and does not require a transportation permit **UNLESS** you operate on an Interstate road. The increase comes at various times of the year depending on the ground temperatures. See website:

http://www.mrr.dot.state.mn.us/research/seasonal_load_limits/sllindex.asp for all seasonal load changes which include the dates of both spring and winter weight changes. This site gives you the ability to subscribe to notifications by electronic mail. There is also a requirement to have enough registration (license plate) weight to cover any additional weight. Restricted roads and bridges do not allow posted weights to be exceeded.

Statute: 169.826 Sub 1 (weight) and Sub 3 (permit), also 168.013 Sub 3 (registration)

13. If a road has no signs during the spring load limits, how do I know the weights?

The 2009 legislature changed the wording of this statute. Effective August 1, 2009, all paved roads, which are not otherwise posted (restricted), remain at 10-ton limits during restrictions. All non paved roads are reduced to 5-ton axle weight limits. In either case, no sign is required. If the road authorities wish to change those default weights, the roads must be posted to reflect the change.

Statute: 169.87 Sub 2

14. During road restrictions, what is the maximum weight I can haul on a 7- ton road?

The maximum weight can vary depending on how the axles are configured on the vehicle. A maximum gross weight of 80,000 pounds is possible as long as the 7- ton axle limits are not exceeded. Due to the different possibilities of axle configurations, the gross weight could vary. Unless a road has specific restrictions (postings) to “gross” weight, it’s the axle limits which are impacted.

Note: The two Web sites below will help identify spring and winter load limit changes. The first link includes an e-mail notification option for changes on the trunk highways. The second is a link to help with county information.

http://www.mrr.dot.state.mn.us/research/seasonal_load_limits/sllindex.asp
<http://www.mnltap.umn.edu/About/Programs/TruckWeight/CountyMap/index.html>

15. How does my license plate weight impact the weight my truck can haul?

License plate weight is “registration” weight. This weight is indicated on the registration card (also called “cab” card) which is, in most cases, required to be kept in the vehicle. This is a “tax” weight and indicates the weight range you have purchased. The law requires you have enough “registered” weight to cover the weight the truck hauls, but buying the weight does not authorize you to haul more weight than is legal for the truck configuration or the road limit. Increasing your license plate weight does not, by itself, allow you to haul more weight. Statute: 168.013 (weight ranges) 168.11 Sub 2 (registration card)

Implements of Husbandry Most Common Questions

16. What is the current regulation on implements of husbandry?

Implements of husbandry are generally exempt from weight limits except: An implement of husbandry that is “not self propelled” and is equipped with pneumatic

tires may not be operated on a public highway with a maximum wheel load that exceeds 500 pounds per inch of tire width (taken from the size on the tire). If, for example, you have two 30-inch tires on your grain cart, it would be limited to a weight of 15,000 pounds per tire for a gross weight of 30,000 pounds on the cart.

Statute: 169.801, Sub 1 and 2 (a)

17. Does the 500-pounds-per-tire-inch apply to the towing unit?

No, the law regulating the pound per inch of tires is directed to a “towed” unit only, as long as it has pneumatic tires.

Statute: 169.801, Sub 2 (a)

18. What changed August 1, 2008, regarding implement weight?

The 2008 legislature passed additional language which states that implements of husbandry must comply with posted weight limits on a bridge. This includes all implements and tracked vehicles.

Statute: 169.801, Sub 4

19. What regulations apply to my “tracked” grain cart?

Due to previous statutory wording regarding pneumatic tired vehicles, implements which have tracks are exempt in some areas. However, the new legislation requires they comply with bridge postings. There are other statutes in traffic law which require a 40 percent reduction in weight, those statutes however, do not apply to the current implement of husbandry laws.

Statute: 169.823, Sub 2, and 169.801, Sub 2

20. What change becomes effective December 31, 2009?

The 2008 legislature included new wording which requires that after December 31, 2009, a person operating or towing an implement of husbandry on a bridge must comply with the gross weight limitations provided in statute 169.824 (the Minnesota Axle Weight Limits Table). This means that implements of husbandry must comply with the same gross and axle weight as other vehicles crossing bridges. Unposted bridges assume the crossing vehicles are not exceeding normal legal road weights.

Statute: 169.801, Sub 2 (b)

Agricultural Weight Increases by Annual Permit

21. What is the new Special Farm Product Law?

This is a law passed by the 2008 legislature and amended during the 2009 legislative session which allows, by permit, weights up to 90,000 pounds on six or more properly spaced axles or 97,000 pounds on a vehicle with seven or more properly spaced axles in accordance with the Minnesota Axle Weight Limits Table. The annual permits are valid only for raw or unprocessed farm products and issued from each road authority on whos roads the load is being transported. This may, in some cases, include permits from local road authorities (county, city, and township). Vehicles must comply with all bridge and road postings. Each road authority can charge a permit fee.

Statute: 169.865

22. Where can I get a copy of the Minnesota Axle Weight Limits Table?

If you have an Internet connection, you can go to the statute:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=169.824>

Or, it's available for download from the Minnesota Truck Weight Education Program at <http://www.alextech.edu/truckweight>

23. What is GVWR?

The GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating) is a safety standard used to prevent overloading. The most common definition says it's "how much weight a vehicle is designed to carry. It includes the net weight of the vehicle plus its load, fuel and any additional accessories." In Minnesota law, it's the weight value specified by the manufacturer as the maximum gross vehicle weight, and is located on the line assembly plate (or vehicle-identification plate) on each unit. Do not confuse this rating with GAWR (gross axle-weight rating) or GCWR (gross combination-weight rating) which could also be on the same plate. Federal regulation says GVWR is "the value specified as the loaded weight of a single vehicle."

Statute: 49 CFR 571.3

24. Can I add additional axles to my vehicles to qualify?

Yes, additional axles can be added to the truck or trailer, however, you must comply with the GVWR on each unit. Be careful not to add axles which add weight which goes beyond the GVWR on each unit. Refer to the Minnesota Axle Weight Limits Table to make certain you have the length required for the weight you wish to haul. In some cases you may have a weight increase more than 80,000 pounds but less than the maximum 90,000 or 97,000 pound weights. This usually happens because of the inability of the truck configuration to meet the distance requirements in the weight table. Also, make sure you use axles and tires with ratings which allow the additional weight.

Statute: 169.865, Sub 3 (a) (1 and 5)

25. Can I take my truck or trailer into a dealer to increase the GVWR?

The new legislation makes reference to a federal regulation which references the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR). The federal regulation allows a dealer or an authorized vendor to make changes to the factory GVWR only prior to the sale of the vehicle to the first customer. This means if you find a new vehicle which has inadequate GVWR, you can have that rating changed by an authorized person prior to purchasing the vehicle. When this is done, the person making the change must apply a new certification stating who made the changes and identifying the new ratings. Normally these changes are done with the approval and knowledge of the factory which originally built the equipment. If you have older or existing vehicles with inadequate GVWR, the GVWR cannot be altered or changed.

Statute: 169.865, Sub 3 (5), also 49 CFR 567.7

26. Where can I find out what products qualify as “raw or unprocessed”?

Products produced on the farm such a, field crops, livestock and milk are examples. If in doubt, call 651-366-3669 for guidance.

27. Do I need to increase my registration (license plate) weight?

Yes, in all cases you must have registration to cover the gross weight. Registration is a tax issue and does not authorize weight where it would be illegal. To only increase registration and not obtain a permit, would be unauthorized transportation.

Statute: 168.013, Sub 3

28. What is the cost of the permit?

The State permit fee for the 90,000 pounds combination is \$300. The cost for the 97,000 pound combination is \$500. Permits are issued to the power unit only. Note: If you purchase the \$500 permit for the 97,000-pound 7-axle vehicle, it will also authorize the lesser weight on 6 axles with the same power unit. Also, a reminder - if you haul on county, city, or township roads, you need to check with those road authorities for permit authorization.

Statute: 169.865, Sub 1 (c) and Sub 2 (c)

29. Where do I need permits?

The state permits are valid on all state trunk highways. They are not valid on Interstate highways. The county permits are valid for paved county roads, city permits for paved city streets and township permits for paved township roads. Check first!

Statute: 169.865, Sub 3 (a) (4)

30. Will any other states honor these agricultural permits?

These permits are valid only within Minnesota and within the jurisdictions of the road authorities issuing the permits. There is no reciprocity between Minnesota and other states on these permits at this time.

31. What was the 2010 legislation regarding milk trucks?

Road authorities "may" issue a permit for single unit milk trucks (no semi or pup combinations) to allow an increase up to 10% of normal weights. These permits are not valid on the interstate routes, and cannot be operated on vehicles where the increased weight exceeds the manufacturer's gross weight ratings. Permits may not be issued after August 1 2012 (annual permits issued prior to that date would remain valid for their term). This permit does not allow the additional weight of the winter load increase. (no winter 10% in addition to the milk permit 10%)

Check with each road authority for the permit and the permit fee.

Statute: 169.867 (increase) Statute 169.86 Sub 5 (permit fee)

32. What are the road restriction exemptions regarding propane trucks?

The legislation exempts, from seasonally restricted roads imposed by the commissioner of transportation, trucks hauling propane used for heating and also dyed fuel oil. The trucks hauling these commodities must have 2 or 3 permanent axles and cargo tanks be loaded not more than 50% of capacity. Propane trucks must have a gauge and have capacity documentation. Dyed fuel must use the two forward compartments and carry a certified empty weight scale ticket. Cargo vehicles using this exemption must complete deliveries by 12 PM when practicable, and complete deliveries before the last week of April.

Statute 169.87 Sub 7

Disclaimer: This information regarding legislation found in the referenced Minnesota statutes is not to be construed as legal advice. Legal advice must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each case. Every effort has been made to assure that this information is up-to-date as of the date of this document.

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