



USDOT Regulatory Relief Fact Sheet

Permits

Oversize/Overweight Permits

The federal maximum size/weight requirements are as follows: 80,000 gross, 20,000 single axle, 34,000 tandem as well as bridge formula.

To obtain oversize/overweight permits, the State(s) in which the vehicles will travel will need to be contacted. The link below provides contact information for State permitting offices: http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/sw/permit_report/index.htm. It is the responsibility of the motor carrier to ensure that the permits being requested are appropriate for the states being traveled through.

During a State of Emergency declaration, States normally put a process in place to expedite the permitting process. Section 1511 of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) extends the States' authority to issue Special Permits to vehicles with divisible loads that are delivering relief supplies during emergency and disaster responses. In addition, some states have special legislative or 'grandfather' provisions that allow additional weight for interstate travel. On a case-by-case basis a list of states with 'grandfather' provisions can be made available. Special Permits issued under Section 1511 of MAP-21 expire not later than 120 days after the date on which the President declares an emergency or major disaster, whichever declaration occurs first.

States may issue special permits during an emergency to overweight vehicles and loads that can easily be dismantled or divided if all of the following conditions are met:

- The President has declared an emergency or a major disaster under the Stafford Act;
- The permits are issued in accordance with State law; and
- The permits are issued exclusively to vehicles and loads that are delivering relief supplies

Hazardous Material Permits

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) may issue special permits authorizing a variance of specified hazardous materials transportation safety regulations. This provides for transportation of hazardous materials in a way that achieves a safety level at least equal to that required under existing law; or that is consistent with the public interest and Chapter 51, Title 49, if a required safety level does not exist.

There are three types of special permits : (1) those authorizing the offer of a hazardous material for transportation in a different manner than otherwise required in the Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR); (2) those authorizing the transport of a hazardous material in a different manner than required in the HMR; and (3) those authorizing the manufacture and sale of a packaging for use in transporting hazardous material, when the packaging does not meet the design specification or performance requirements in the HMR.

Truck/Weigh Station Bypass

States can make a judgment call to allow certain vehicles to bypass the truck/weigh stations based on the configurations of known vehicles during emergency and disaster response. This is up to each individual state.

USDOT Emergency Website

USDOT has created a website to assist public and private sector transportation stakeholders during emergency situations. The website has information related to transportation permits, waivers, and other regulations and authorities that are applicable during an emergency. www.dot.gov/emergency

Waivers

Hours of Service and Other Motor Carrier Safety Regulation Waivers

Exemptions (“waivers”) from most of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs) (49 CFR parts 350-399) occur “automatically “ in accordance with 49 CFR 390.23 when the President of the United States, a state Governor or a local government official issues a declaration of emergency (as defined in 49 CFR 390.5). Presidential and State declarations are effective for up to 30 days, and local declarations are effective for up to 5 days. Only a Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Regional or Field Administrator has authority to extend the waivers beyond the initial 30 days and to place additional restrictions on the waivers. The waivers apply to any commercial motor vehicle responding from anywhere in the United States to provide direct relief to the emergency. The FMCSA provides additional information at www.fmcsa.dot.gov/emergency.

Emergency Declarations temporarily lift most safety regulations, including hours of service, from interstate motor carrier drivers and operators providing emergency relief. Regulatory parts of 49 CFR that can be lifted are from 390–399, most significantly: 390: General Requirements (e.g., recordkeeping, vehicle marking); 391: Driver Qualifications (e.g., physical standards, English language proficiency); 392: Driving of CMVs (e.g., pre-trip inspection, fatigued operation); 393: Parts and Accessories (e.g., lighting, cargo securement); 395: Hours of Service (e.g., 11-hour driving limit, 14-hour on-duty limit); and 396: Inspection, Repair and Maintenance (e.g., post-and annual trip inspections). The following are not exempt: drug and alcohol testing, CDL requirements, vehicle size and weight limitations, insurance requirements, hazardous materials regulations, State vehicle registration requirements, household goods movers- consumer protection regulations, and other Federal commercial regulations.

Utility service vehicles are always exempt from Hours of Service limitations when they are providing for the “operating, repairing and maintaining” of public utilities. Government vehicles are always exempt, but government contractors are not (unless an emergency declaration is in effect).

Toll Waivers

Toll waivers are granted on a case-by-case basis during emergency and disaster assistance. This is up to each individual state and/or toll authority.

Jones Act Waivers

The Merchant Marine Act of 1920 (Jones Act) requires that all goods transported by water between U.S. ports be carried on U.S. Flag ships. Requests for waivers of certain provisions of the act are reviewed by MARAD and the Department of Homeland Security on a case-by-case basis. DHS issues the waiver based on assistance from MARAD in determining the necessity and extent and duration of waiver by identifying available U.S. flagged sealift capacity. Waivers can be granted in cases of national emergencies or in cases of strategic interest.

FRA Emergency Relief Docket

The FRA Emergency Relief Docket (ERD) is a special provision in USDOT’s regulations which provides for the expedited review and approval of waiver requests from railroads related to a specific emergency situation. The Administrator of the FRA has the authority to designate specific events as emergencies and, therefore, to trigger the opening of the ERD. Once opened, the ERD can grant relief from applicable inspection date requirements. The ERD allows railroads to seek expedited requests for waivers related to the emergency pursuant to 49 C.F.R. 211.45.

Contact Information

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