



**Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for
Transportation and Highway Safety**

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

(Draft November 29, 2013)

Date: November 20, 2013
Location: Hotel Omni Mont-Royal, Montreal
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: 73 participants, see Attachment 1

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

2. Round Table Introductions and Adoption of the Agenda

Following round table introductions, Mr. Pearson drew attention to the agenda and invited additions.

Mr. Dolyniuk (Manitoba Trucking Association) suggested it would be helpful to have reports provided about the status of issues raised during the meeting in advance of the next meeting.

3. Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations in Canada - Update on Issues and Developments

Mr. Pearson reminded participants that the meeting provides an open forum for government and industry representatives to discuss issues pertaining to vehicle weight and dimension limits in Canada. He explained that, in most cases, decisions on proposals for changes in standards cannot be taken by the Task Force at the meeting and would require consideration and endorsement by each government individually and collectively by the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety before being reflected in the national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on interprovincial vehicle weights and dimensions. Mr. Pearson noted that the Council of Deputy Ministers looks favorably upon the forum and appreciates the input that is provided by stakeholders on impediments and concerns in this complex regulatory environment.

a) National Developments

Mr. Pearson provided a presentation (Attachment 2) with background on the Task Force and the MOU. He noted that the seventh amendment to the MOU had been completed in 2011 and he highlighted issues and proposals discussed in 2012, as listed below, and noted the status of each:

- Use of 6 x 2 tractors with 'smart' suspensions
- Overall length limit on B train doubles
- Inclusion of low bed and double drop semitrailers in the MOU as a special configuration
- Inclusion of tridem drive tractors in the MOU
- Use of saddlemount configurations
- Weight allowances for LNG powered tractors
- Use of a supercube configuration with 60' semitrailer
- Use of roll coupled hitches on pony trailers

b) Provincial and Territorial Developments

Mr. Pearson conveyed the regrets of representatives from the Yukon, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

In round table review the following reports were provided:

Northwest Territories

Mr. Beaulieu reported that amendments to regulations will be enacted in early 2014, and he noted the following:

- Length limits for A, B and C trains will increase from 25 to 26 m.
- Measurement of overall vehicle length will not include aerodynamic devices.
- Intercity bus weight limits will apply to recreational vehicles.
- An additional 225 kg will be allowed for auxiliary power units.
- The 31 m length requirement is waived on enhanced visibility corridors.
- Tridem drive configurations will be allowed full weights on the enhanced visibility corridor.
- Allowable weights on axles fitted with wide single tires have not been increased.
- Recognize tandem and tridem configurations with wide single tires at 12,000 and 15,000 kgs respectively.

British Columbia

In the absence of a representative from British Columbia, Mr. Pearson read notes provided by Jeff Monty, as follows:

- Developed and implemented LNG tank inspection standard and permit for use of LNG fuels vehicles in BC including weight allowance for LNG tanks and converter.
- Tandem steer/tridem drive picker trucks to be allowed shorter wheelbases and wider tridem axle spreads
- In order to provide greater operation efficiency and permit condition alignments between British Columbia and Alberta, British Columbia amended section 5.3.9 of the Commercial Transport Procedures Manual. The new tandem steer/tridem drive picker truck allowances are aligned to the information for Alberta, with the exception of the maximum legal weight on a tridem drive axle group: British Columbia allows 24,000 kg for tridem drive axle spreads without a weight permit.
- A new user-friendly information website for the trucking industry is now available. Under the New West Partnership Trade Agreement, the single-window website helps interprovincial carriers easily access trucking information from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- The new website saves time and effort by streamlining access to required interprovincial travel information such as permitting, commercial transport policies, legislation, regulations and road conditions. <http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/NewWestPartnership>

Alberta

Ms. Durdle highlighted:

- A focus for the department has been implementation of the multi-jurisdictional Transportation Routing and Vehicle Information System (TRAVIS MJ), which streamlines the permitting process for carriers.
- Work among the New West Partners (Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan) and Manitoba continues on the LCV harmonization program. Turnpike doubles had been added to the MOU in March and discussions continue with respect to Rocky Mountain doubles.
- Work with industry partners on the high load corridor continues to be a priority.
- A focus for the year ahead will be preparation of updates to the Province's weights and dimensions regulations.

- The western jurisdictions and the Alberta Motor Transport Association are developing a training and certification program for escort vehicle operators.
- A new safety standards policy is being developed for moving used buildings.

Mr. Dolyniuk inquired when other provincial motor transport associations can expect to see material being developed for the escort vehicle training program. Ms. Durdle remarked that British Columbia had consulted with stakeholders on the topic and results of that process are awaited. Mr. Wilson (Alberta Motor Transport Association) explained that the association is not leading the work to develop the training program but that he expected something would be ready to share with other motor transport associations soon.

Mr. Delaney (Petroleum Services Association of Canada) remarked that the oil and gas industry already has an escort vehicle operators' training program and had not been consulted about the new program. He expressed concern about the potential impact on the industry if a second program becomes a requirement. Ms. Durdle acknowledged the program available from Enform and said that those working on the new program had been informed about it. She added that any new program introduced in the Province would be phased in and that efforts would be made to ensure consistency with the existing program.

Saskatchewan

Mr. Cipywnyk reported that Saskatchewan is in the process of updating its vehicle weights and dimension regulations, including tridem drive configurations and combinations with pintle hook connections.

He also reported that Saskatchewan's high load corridor is being expanded. He noted the road network capable of carrying B trains is also being expanded, as older timber bridges are replaced.

Mr. Cipywnyk referenced ongoing work with Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) to expand the permitting system in the province to include routing. He explained the intention is to streamline the process for carriers.

Manitoba

Ms. McKee reported that:

- A project has been initiated to update the Province's permitting system. It is anticipated that the system will be implemented in 2016.
- A policy review is underway. As part of the review Manitoba's objective is to:
 - include tandem steer axle configurations in regulation;
 - harmonize weights with Saskatchewan for tridem axles fitted with wide base single tires;
 - increase truck tractor steer axle weights to be consistent with western provinces;
 - increase length limits for B trains to 26 m; and
 - include tridem drive configurations in regulation.

Ontario

Mr. Lynch noted that Ontario continues to expand its LCV program. He said that 71 different carriers had participated in the program this year.

He reported on the extended trailer (Supercube) trial, noting that five different carriers would be allowed to participate in the pilot program, with up to four permits issued per carrier. He said that four permits had been issued this year, starting in February 2013, and the trial would run for 18 months from that time. He indicated that a complete review of the program would then be conducted, taking into consideration road safety, viability, and potential impacts on the economy, among other factors.

Mr. Lynch also reported that the transition period for most Phase 3 vehicles in the Safe, Productive, Infrastructure-Friendly vehicles (SPIF) program would be extended, allowing continued use under permit for up to five more years.

Mr. Lynch noted that the tandem axle spread on straight trucks is being studied, with a change in the regulation planned to address a small anomaly in the dimension limits.

Mr. Lynch also noted that consideration is being given to changing the length limit for B trains to 27.5 m and extending tractor wheelbase to 6.8 m with a trade off the sum of semitrailer wheelbases.

In response to a question, Mr. Lynch indicated that no consideration is being given to allowing lift axles on B trains operating in Ontario.

Québec:

Mr. Cayouette reported that changes to the Province's vehicle weights and dimensions regulation had been adopted in February 2013. He said this had greatly reduced the number of special permits issued in the Province.

Mr. Cayouette also reported that a permanent consultation process has been established in Québec to deal with requests for changes to the regulation. He highlighted issues being addressed as a result of the consultation and prioritization process, including:

- Snow plow regulations
- Increased weights for trucks carrying lumber
- Lifiable axles
- Length limits for B trains

Mr. Cayouette suggested that results from working groups on those issues can be expected in 2014 and that another regulatory change is anticipated in 2015.

Mr. Cayouette also reported that a streamlined on-line version of the Province's permitting system should be operational in 2015.

New Brunswick

Mr. White reported:

- Consultation with enforcement and safety departments was completed regarding weight tolerances; a regulatory amendment is underway
- A new segment of four-lane highway opened in 2013 with another segment to open in 2014.
- New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are working on an on-line permitting process.
- 14 companies are operating LCVs in the province; the network is being expanded.
- Efforts continue to harmonize LCV operations and driver certification in the east.
- The Province is working with the forest industry on a winter weight program.

Prince Edward Island

Mr. MacEwen reported that the TransCanada Highway realignment work had been completed.

He noted that wide base single tires can be used in the Province under special permit. He also said that quad-axle semi-trailers are allowed under permit.

Nova Scotia

Mr. Balsom reported that amendments to the Province's vehicle weights and dimension regulations were made early in 2013. He said the amendments:

- increase the maximum allowable weight on intermediate weight roads to 49,500 kg
- expand the network where quad axle semitrailers can be used
- exempt trucks towing trailers with weight ratings less than 10,000 kg from the hitch offset requirement.

Mr. Balsom also reported that progress is being made on signing the MOU and the amendments coming forward will align the Province's regulations with the MOU.

Transport Canada

Mr. Rastogi deferred an update from the federal government until a later agenda item.

4. Long Combination Vehicle Operations – Provincial and Territorial Updates

It was noted that the status of LCV operations had been addressed in many of the preceding updates.

In response to a question, Mr. Lynch reported that there had been a few minor incidents with LCVs in the year. He said the incidents had been typical of others involving tractor-semitrailers.

Mr. Cayouette said that Quebec is entering its fourth winter season with LCV operations. He remarked that the program is going well and no issues have arisen. He added that a training package is being developed and the Province is harmonizing as much as possible with Ontario and the Maritimes.

5. Truck Size and Weight Issues in United States: Update

Mr. Loy (US Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) provided a report about size and weight regulations and initiatives in the US.

He noted that the MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) legislation calls for a comprehensive truck size and weight limits study to assess differences in safety risks, infrastructure impacts, and the effect on levels of enforcement between trucks operating at or within federal truck size and weight limits and trucks legally operating in excess of federal limits. He noted that the final report of the study is due to Congress next fall and added that the Transportation Research Board will conduct an independent peer review of the study.

Mr. Loy also drew attention to work on vehicle inspections and very high out-of-service rates for brake violations. He offered to share data from the study and said that the objective is to assemble a body of knowledge in order to lay the groundwork for better inspection criteria.

6. Technical Issues and Presentations

a) New Generation Wide Base Single Tires – Economic Life Cycle Analysis

Mr. Teeple (Michelin) provided a presentation (Attachment 3) in which he reviewed wide base single tire (WBST) assemblies and related performance, pavement loading and economic impacts. He suggested WBST offer advantages in fuel efficiency, payload and environmental impact.

Mr. Laskowski (Canadian Trucking Alliance) noted that Ontario and Quebec do not impose weight penalties on trucks with axles fitted with WBST and he inquired about the status in other provinces and territories.

Mr. MacEwen said PEI is not considering increasing weight limits for axles fitted with WBST to be equivalent to axes with dual tires.

Ms. Durdle remarked that pavement structures in the west are very different than in the east and that studies suggest that WBST are more damaging in terms of fatigue and subgrade rutting for the thinner western structures. She said Alberta has decided not to increase the weight limits for axles fitted with WBST.

Ms. McKee reported that Manitoba is contemplating raising weight limits for tridem drive configurations, to be consistent with limits in Saskatchewan.

b) Meritor 6x2 Tandem Axles for Heavy Duty Tractor-Trailer Combinations

Mr. Hicks (Meritor Inc.) presented an overview of Meritor 6 x 2 axle systems. He highlighted benefits of the systems but raised issues concerning weight regulations. He explained that Canadian regulations impose limits on the load distribution between two axles of a tandem by requiring the loading of each individual axle within the tandem to be within 1000 kg of each other. He noted that 'smart' 6 x 2 axle systems would comply with this during normal operation but may not strictly comply at all times during low traction conditions. He emphasized that greater damage to road surfaces should not be an issue as the duration of load transfer events are short, the frequency of events is low and the maximum load on the drive axle during a load transfer event does not exceed single axle load limits imposed by the provinces and territories.

Mr. Hicks requested that the Task Force consider the benefits of 6 x 2 axle systems and encourage regulation changes that would allow use of 6 x 2 axle vehicle configurations. He suggested one option would be to add wording to the effect that axle and suspension systems that normally distribute load equally but allow infrequent and short duration load transfer from one axle to another are acceptable provided the maximum load on any axle during this load transfer does not exceed the manufacturer's rating of the axle or the single axle load limit. Mr. Hicks suggested an alternative would be to add a phrase to clarify that the load shared between adjacent axles in a group must not vary by any more than 1000 kg except to permit traction control system interventions.

c) Fuel Economy Testing of 6x2 Tractors

Mr. Provencher (FPInnovations) provided a presentation (Attachment 4) about a testing program undertaken to compare the fuel consumption and traction performance of 6 x 2 and 6 x 4 tractors. He summarized the testing methodology and results that showed the 6 x 2 tractors consumed from 2.6% to 3.5% less fuel and that at virtually the same cost, 6 x 2 tractors replacing 6 x 4 tractors could reduce annually GHG emissions up to 193,000 tonnes nationally.

In discussion following the presentations by Mr. Hicks and Mr. Provencher, a question was raised regarding the origin of the 1000 kg limit on the differential between two axles of a tandem. Mr. Pearson explained that the comprehensive vehicle weight and dimension study undertaken many years ago had presumed that weight is shared equally among axles. He added that although it was known that would not always be exactly true, the principle remained that it should be the case, and that for the purposes of enforcement, equal loading was defined as being a difference of no more than 1000 kg between adjacent axles in a tandem or tridem group.

Mr. Pearson thanked Mr. Hicks and Mr. Provencher for their presentations and said the Task Force would consider the issue.

d) Forward Collision Avoidance and Mitigation Systems for Medium/Heavy Commercial Vehicles

Mr. Woodrooffe (University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute) provided a presentation (Attachment 5) about a study of commercial vehicle forward collision warning and autonomous braking systems. He summarized the research results which showed that current generation systems provide significant reduction in the frequency and severity of truck rear-end striking crashes. He added that the research indicates that future systems will provide additional benefit.

e) Tridem Drive Tractors and f) Length Limits for B Train Doubles

Mr. Madill (Canadian Trucking Alliance) provided a presentation (Attachment 6) describing requests being made to the Task Force on two issues.

With respect to length limits for B-train configurations, Mr. Madill noted that CTA had completed a full dynamic performance analysis of the proposed configurations. He acknowledged that high speed and low speed offtracking had initially been areas of concern and he presented a trade-off table of proposed dimensions that alleviate issues with performance measures compared to currently operational vehicles.

Mr. Madill said CTA is seeking an increase in B-train length limits to 27.5 m overall (including moose bumpers) providing the tractor wheelbase does not exceed 6.2 m and box length does not exceed 20 m, and the sum of trailer wheelbase does not exceed 17 m. He said CTA is also asking that the Task Force accept the concept of 27.5 m B-trains with tractor wheelbases up to 6.8 m, 20 m box length and an offset table gradually reducing the 17m sum of trailer wheelbase as tractor length increases.

Mr. Madill also conveyed the CTA request that a tri-drive tractor single semi-trailer configuration be added to the MOU. He said the configuration offers benefits including increased traction and increased payload over other existing MOU configurations. He presented proposed dimensions and observed that tri-drive combinations are currently operated in several Canadian jurisdictions. He noted that inclusion of the configuration in the MOU would encourage harmonization of its weights and dimensions.

Mr. Aubin (L'Express du Midi) urged the Task Force to address the requests from CTA. He observed that transport companies are expected to act quickly when new regulations are introduced and he said governments should also act quickly to address industry issues.

It was noted that the Engineering and Research Support Committee (ERSC) of the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety is reviewing highway marking and passing sight distance requirements and that related liability issues must be considered prior to accepting the request for longer length limits. It was further noted that the results of the ERSC review should be available early in 2014.

g) Weight Sensing Technologies and Lifiable Axles

Mr. Mizgala (ITD Trailers) raised an issue about weight sensing technologies and use of liftable axles. He noted that it is primarily an issue in Ontario as vehicles equipped with liftable axles would be non-SPIF compliant.

Ms. Durdle reported that lift axle systems are being used in Alberta. Mr. Cipywnyk said Saskatchewan requires empty-assist systems to have been certified by an independent professional engineer that they meet relevant criteria.

Mr. Rouillard (B et B Transport) provided a brief report on the significant fuel savings his company had experienced using liftable axles when running empty, noting the critical importance of being able to continue to use this technology in his operations.

It was agreed that a cross-Canada summary of approaches with respect to lift axles would be developed.

Action: Pearson

7. Developments in the Pilot Car/Escort Vehicle Sector

Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Service) provided a presentation (Attachment 7) with updates about issues and initiatives in the pilot car industry across Canada.

In discussion following the presentation, Dr. Ritchie (OBAC) inquired if there is interest outside of the west in formalizing training requirements for escort vehicle operators. Ms. Murray remarked that operators in the east are also interested in initiating a program. Mr. Pearson noted that British Columbia had compiled input from consultations with stakeholders on this issue and suggested the report could be shared with interested individuals.

8. Environmental Initiatives and Developments

a. Update on Transport Canada's ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles Program

Mr. Klomp (Transport Canada) provided a presentation (Attachment 8) about Transport Canada's ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles (eTV) Program. He highlighted the program's heavy-duty vehicle (HDV) technical investigations, including seven testing projects that had been completed in 2012/13 and 17 testing and evaluation projects that were active in 2013/14.

Mr. Klomp also identified potential future HDV technical work with weights and dimensions considerations, including:

- Connected vehicle systems, including cooperative truck platooning systems,
- Alternative fuels including dimethyl ether being developed by vehicle OEMs for use in HDV diesel engines,
- Advanced tire technologies, including the infrastructure impacts of next generation wide based single tires,
- Advanced propulsion technologies, including new powertrain/transmission technologies, emissions performance and weights and dimensions considerations for advanced technologies.
- Advanced technologies that manufacturers will introduce to meet increasingly stringent HDV GHG emissions standards.

9. Vehicle Weights and Dimensions – Regulatory Harmonization Needs and Priorities in Canada

Mr. Pearson informed participants that an annual report is submitted to the Council of Deputy Ministers on vehicle weights and dimensions harmonization issues. He sought feedback from participants about harmonization priorities and whether the process to identify those priorities is working. He noted that 2013 is the 25th anniversary of the signing of the original national MOU and the work that led to it began 35 years ago at a time when interest in, and a commitment to, national harmonization was high. He asked if national harmonization should still be pursued and, if so, are this forum and the Task Force the right means to do so.

Mr. Billing (Consultant) observed that the deficiencies in harmonization are evident in tables describing different regulations adopted in different jurisdictions. He suggested that increasing pressure to increase vehicle length is a priority and the Australian-style truck trains could be considered.

Mr. Laskowski suggested it would be difficult to achieve consensus on priorities as the trucking industry is not homogeneous. He observed that harmonization has been approached in an ad hoc manner, and that as technology advances, the Task Force comes under pressure to react. He suggested that a proactive approach should be taken, to consider what technological advances are coming and what the impacts will be.

Mr. Delaney observed that federal departments should share information about their initiatives with each other. As an example, he noted that myriad environmental regulations have an impact on the transportation sector and the trucking industry. He urged governments to talk with industry as opposed to talking to industry.

Mr. Laskowski observed that the existence of current equipment, and the significant capital investment that it represents for businesses, is a challenge to harmonization. He said that should not mean harmonization is abandoned but that a vision for the future should be established so that government and industry can work towards that vision. He said industry probably does want national harmonization although it is understood regional differences will always exist.

Mr. Dolyniuk noted that the RTAC study launched 35 years ago had solved a lot of issues for a lot of carriers. He said harmonization is important to those that operate in multiple jurisdictions and that some regionalization is beginning to be evident. He also noted that performance-based criteria had been an important basis for the RTAC work and said decisions should be made about what would be the basis for harmonization going forward.

Dr. Ritchie remarked that the slow pace of change in some jurisdictions forces regional, as opposed to national, harmonization to develop.

10. Other Business

No other business was raised.

11. Adjournment

It was noted that the next meeting would be convened in the fall of 2014, with dates and location to be confirmed.

In closing, Mr. Pearson acknowledged the time and effort contributed by presenters and thanked all participants for their contributions to a productive meeting.

He acknowledged Mr. Dolyniuk who had been a dedicated participant at the meetings and a valued contributor for many years. He congratulated and extended best wishes to Mr. Dolyniuk on his upcoming retirement.

Mr. Pearson also thanked participants for the opportunity to have worked with them, and others in the industry, for over 25 years.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Sarah Wells
Date: November 29, 2013

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1: List of Participants
- Attachment 2: Presentation – National Update
- Attachment 3: Presentation – Wide Base Single Tire Assemblies
- Attachment 4: Presentation – Fuel Economy Testing of 6 x 2 Tractors
- Attachment 5: Presentation – Forward Collision Avoidance and Mitigation Systems
- Attachment 6: Presentation – CTA Proposal B-Train Lengths and Tri-Drive Tractors
- Attachment 7: Presentation – Developments in the Pilot Car/Escort Vehicle Sector
- Attachment 8: Presentation – Transport Canada’s ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles Program

**Attachment 1:
Meeting – November 20, 2013 Montreal**

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