



Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

(Draft December 20, 2016)

Date: December 14, 2016
Location: Hotel Omni Mont-Royal, Montreal
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: 74 participants, see Attachment 1

1. Welcome and Opening

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

2. Roundtable Introductions and Adoption of Agenda

Following roundtable introductions, Mr. Pearson drew attention to the agenda and invited revisions. Mr. Delaney (Petroleum Services Association of Canada) indicated that the report on the development of a training program for escort vehicle operators (Agenda Item 6b) would not be provided.

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

a. National Developments and MOU Amendments

Mr. Pearson provided a presentation (Attachment 2), noting that the Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy provides a national focus for coordination and harmonization of provincial and territorial regulations, policies and practices. He said that regular reports are provided by the Task Force to the Council of Deputy Ministers in order to advance recommendations on regulatory harmonization priorities and amendments to the standards contained in the National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions.

Mr. Pearson reported that, in September 2016, the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety approved two amendments to the MOU that provide opportunity to use longer wheelbase tractors on tractor semitrailer and B train double configurations. He noted that the amendments had originated from proposals presented at annual meetings of the Task Force. He observed that amendments to the MOU have no immediate effect; implementation may require time for regulatory or policy changes to be made in each jurisdiction.

Mr. Shaw (Manitoba Trucking Association) inquired when the updated MOU would be available online. Mr. Pearson noted that some administrative details are being finalized and that it should be posted in the next few months.

b. Provincial/Territorial Developments - Round table reports by jurisdiction

In roundtable review the following reports were provided:

Nova Scotia

Mr. Balsom reported that:

- regulatory amendments had been completed to bring the Province in line with the national and Atlantic MOUs,

- the LCV MOU had been signed by Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; the Province's guidelines need to be updated but permit conditions are current,
- some minor changes are being made to the Province's special permits and that the process has been streamlined to reduce the time needed to secure a permit, and
- a pilot project is underway in the Province regarding the use of wide base single tires on selected routes.

Ms. Ritchie (OBAC) inquired if consideration had been given to increasing availability of parking or rest facilities as part of the LCV program. Mr. Balsom noted that Nova Scotia's LCV network is quite short but that reference to rest facilities would be included in the LCV guidelines.

Prince Edward Island

Mr. MacEwen reported that government has announced that it intends to proceed with the completion of the Charlottetown Bypass Highway and work continues on this project, including the replacement of two intersections with roundabouts.

He said a legislative amendment has been introduced to the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of an engine brake on any highway with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less or any location where an official traffic sign prohibits the use of this type of system. He also noted that a penalty has been added to the Highway Traffic Act for any violation of the prohibition.

Mr. MacEwen reported that the Department has implemented the tridem-drive tractor semitrailer configuration, the increased length aerodynamic devices, 27.5 m B-trains and longer tractor wheelbase in a B-train configuration by enforcement directive. He said the regulatory amendments would be part of a package of amendments that will proceed through implementation next year.

Mr. MacEwen added that, as reported in previous years, self-steer quad axle trailer configurations are allowed by permit as are vehicles fitted with wide base single tires at a weight limit of 7700 kg per axle. He said these will move to regulation as part of the aforementioned package of amendments.

Following Mr. MacEwen's report, Mr. Albrechtsen (Paul's Hauling Ltd.) noted that engine brakes are an automatic part of some vehicle systems and he questioned whether operators would be subject to fines. Mr. MacEwen indicated that PEI's legislation was modelled on that in other jurisdictions. He suggested that the technology Mr. Albrechtsen referenced would likely be quiet and not disruptive and therefore would not typically trigger enforcement.

New Brunswick

Mr. White reported that the MOU amendments are being accommodated by permit or, in the case of the longer boat tails, by enforcement deferral. He said that an amendment to the Province's regulation is in progress.

He highlighted the MOU signed with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario on LCV operations.

Mr. White reported that the Province is working with the University of Illinois on a study of wide base single tires in order to understand the potential impact on pavement structures.

He also said the Province is partnering with industry to assess frost depths needed to initiate the program which allows extra weights to be carried during winter.

Quebec

Mr. Janelle provided a presentation (Attachment 3) with Quebec's update on issues and developments. He highlighted the status of the 2014 MOU amendments and said that work is underway to modify three regulations regarding load and size, special permits and LCVs. Mr. Janelle also identified five requests for changes to the regulations with respect to:

- Log hauling truck (increase the total weight limit by 10% in the frozen period),
- Calculation of the gross vehicle weight limit with a load axle higher than 5500 kg for a tractor of 7250 kg for a truck,
- Truck with three rear axles,
- Tow truck, and
- Loader with snow blower.

With respect to the Quebec LCV program, Mr. Janelle reported that the 2016/17 winter program had been announced in November and that Quebec has signed the MOU along with Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Ontario

Mr. Lynch reported that SPIF regulations have been amended to address the overall length and tractor wheelbase limits on B train double combinations and the allowance for boat tails.

Mr. Lynch confirmed that there continues to be a lot of interest in the Province's LCV program. He said that an announcement will soon be made regarding some changes to the program. He noted these changes will not affect the MOU that has been signed with Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia but will have an impact on business in Ontario.

He said that the Province is considering a project about smart lift axles on semitrailers, which may offer fuel savings for carriers and would be a climate change mitigation initiative.

Mr. Lynch also said that the Province is working with stakeholders regarding stinger steer auto carriers which operate with longer length limits in the US than in Canada.

Mr. Robert (Robert Transport) inquired about the certification required for driver trainers for the LCV program, with respect to the MOU that has been signed by Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Mr. Lynch said that the Province will recognize Atlantic training certification but that Ontario's program conditions must still be met.

Manitoba

Ms. Miller reported that:

- The Province has joined the New West Partnership with British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- A Red Tape Reduction Task Force has been launched; it will initially focus on four specific industries, one of which is transportation. Public consultations will begin in January and an action plan is expected in the spring 2017.
- Allowable weights for tridem axles have recently been increased in keeping with weights allowed across Canada.
- The Province is reviewing information in preparation for developing a policy about rest stops.
- The winter weight premium program is applied based on science rather than the calendar; north and south application zones currently exist and a third zone is being considered.
- An overarching policy regarding overweight and over-dimensional vehicles is being considered.
- The Province is seeking efficiencies in how it handles and prioritizes requests from industry regarding vehicle weight and dimension issues and, to that end, a form is available that can be used to submit requests. A goal is to focus efforts to achieve results on selected projects.

Saskatchewan

Mr. Cipywnyk said that:

- A regulatory amendment was made in the spring of 2016 to address boat tails, longer length B train double configurations and tridem drive tractor semitrailer configurations.
- The Province's permitting system has been updated and automated through an online interactive system; a notable change is that the bridge system is pre-rated for typical heavy-haul configurations.
- The high load corridor has been expanded.

Alberta

Ms. Durdle said the Province is compliant with the national MOU amendments through permits and that work is underway to make the necessary regulatory amendments.

She also said that:

- A project to modernise the Province's permitting and routing system is underway; it will update technology and make process improvements.
- A pilot project with new generation wide base single tires is also underway; related permits will expire at the end of January 2017.
- The New West Partners met with stakeholders in the fall to provide an update on work since consultations were conducted in 2010; comments received will be compiled into a report.

Mr. Bond (Manitoulin Transport) inquired about the wide base single tire project. Ms. Durdle noted that industry has asked that the pilot be extended until July 31, 2017 and the Province is considering how best to move forward with the initiative.

British Columbia

Ms. Lansing reported that Pilot Car Load Movement Guidelines have been released and will take effect in February. She said that changes are being made to requirements regarding signage and the proximity to the load. She also said that a review is getting started to look the conditions that trigger the need for a load movement to have a pilot car.

She also reported:

- The Province's regulations have been amended to address MOU amendments regarding boat tails and tridem-drive tractor semitrailer combinations. An amendment to the regulation to address longer wheelbase B train combinations is being worked on.
- Announcements should be made soon regarding expansion of the pre-approved corridor for oversize and overweight vehicles.
- The Province is updating its permitting system.
- Work continues on the Province's reducible load program and to establish parameters for the movement of "tiny homes".
- An inventory of rest areas in the Province is being developed; approaches to expand the network may then be considered.
- The Province is considering the potential pavement damage resulting from increased weight limits on axles fitted with wide base single tires.

Mr. Kolesniak (BC Trucking Association) asked if the Province is considering the use of smart lift axles. Ms. Lansing confirmed the matter is under consideration but no decisions have been made.

Mr. Millian (Private Motor Truck Council of Canada) sought more information about the status of 6 x 2 tractors in BC. Ms. Lansing said the technology is not currently permitted in the Province at all.

In response to a question from Mr. Robert, Mr. Pearson said that 6 x 2 tractors are legal in all provinces and territories except British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec, as long as they load-equalize within 1000 kgs when at a weigh scale and do not exceed manufacturer's ratings.

Northwest Territories

Mr. Beaulieu said that a regulatory amendment is expected to be enacted next year to address the national MOU amendments.

He also said that:

- The fourth weigh scale in the Territory will be complete this year; two more are planned.
- Repairs are being made to the bridge network in the Territory that, while underway, will require weight and dimension restrictions.
- The permit period for eight-axle and nine-axle configurations is being extended.
- A trial of wide base single tires is being considered.
- The all-season Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk highway will open in the fall 2017.

Canada

Ms. Deschatelets (Environment and Climate Change Canada) noted that Phase 2 of heavy-duty vehicle and engine greenhouse gas emission regulations will be published in Part 1 of the Canada Gazette early in 2017.

Mr. Rastogi reported that:

- Work continues to develop technical standards regarding electronic logging devices, which will be mandated for trucks operating in federal jurisdiction.
- The federal government intends to align with the US regarding the inclusion of electronic stability control in the Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; the proposal will be published in Part 1 of the Canada Gazette in 2017.
- Under NAFTA, Transport Canada is working on guidelines and procedures for Canadian trucks to travel into Mexico and for Mexican trucks to travel into Canada.
- The Council of Ministers directed that a new task force be formed to work with the provinces and territories through the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) regarding improving safety for vulnerable road users.
- The Council of Ministers also directed that a new task force be established to consider opportunities for trucking harmonization that could reduce impediments to interprovincial trade; the scope of work and membership of the Task Force has not yet been determined.

Mr. Delaney remarked on the new task forces being formed and he questioned whether these would impose additional expectations for industry representatives to participate. He observed that the areas of work for these new groups seem to overlap with other existing groups, such as the Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy and CCMTA. He noted those groups are already productive and questioned the merits of creating parallel structures. He asked whether the new groups are intended to replace those that currently exist. Mr. Rastogi reiterated that the scopes of work for the new task forces still need to be developed and said he could not predict what the expectation for industry involvement would be. Mr. Delaney expressed frustration that the task force terms of reference have not been developed, despite nearly three months elapsing since the Council of Ministers met.

Mr. Cipywnyk noted that, at the request of his Deputy Minister, he would co-chair with Transport Canada the new task force addressing interprovincial trade and harmonization issues. He said he understood the mandate would be to identify gaps and take steps to remove impediments to trade; he said there is no intention to change existing processes or create a new committee to replace existing committees.

Ms. Ritchie concurred with the concerns raised by Mr. Delaney. She observed that a lot of information already exists regarding the need for harmonization, not just on vehicle weights and dimensions issues. She suggested that Transport Canada could show some leadership and she cautioned against investing too much time gathering information when so much already exists.

Mr. Neuheimer (Forest Products Association of Canada) suggested that interdepartmental work, including Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada and others, could be beneficial. He also observed that a lot of groups are already working on related matters and that it is good to see progress being made.

Mr. Michaelsen (FPInnovations) suggested that a bigger payload truck would be on industry's wish list. He remarked that increased payloads means an improvement in litres of fuel used per tonne shipped which is better for greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Wood (Canadian Trucking Alliance) said that the national and provincial trucking associations have developed a work plan that identifies ten initiatives on which they would like to see greater harmonization of practices across the country. He commended the Task Force and the Provinces and Territories for the work done and progress made on seven of those initiatives: longer tractors, overall length of B train configurations, weight limits for wide base single tires, 6 x 2 tractors, smart lift axles, weight allowances for APUs, and length allowances for moose bumpers. He said the remaining three initiatives are still under discussion at CTA and will be brought to the Task Force in the future.

c. Status Reports

- i. Weight Limits for Wide Base Single Tires
- ii. Aerodynamic Devices on Rear of Trucks and Trailers
- iii. Length Limit for B Train Double Configuration
- iv. Longer wheelbase tractors in Tractor Semitrailer and B Train Configurations

Mr. Pearson presented a summary (Attachment 4) of the status of weight limits on wide base single tires, boat tails, length limits for B train double configurations and longer wheelbase tractors in each province and territory.

Mr. Wood remarked that the trucking associations appreciate the work done and progress made on these issues.

Ms. Durdle noted that Alberta's pilot is on 455 mm wide base single tires and any increases to allowable weights would likely apply only to those and not to 445 mm tires.

Mr. Michaelsen asked that a similar summary table be provided regarding the status of tridem-drive tractor semitrailer configurations across Canada.

4. Long Combination Vehicle Operations – Updates

Mr. Pearson remarked that the status of harmonization of LCV operations in the western and central/eastern regions had been addressed during the provincial and territorial updates. No other comments or questions were offered.

5. Technical Issues and Presentations

a. Transport Canada's ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles Program

Mr. Klomp (Transport Canada) presented results (Attachment 5) from fuel economy testing of a prototype three-vehicle cooperative truck platooning system.

Mr. Albrechtsen suggested that LCVs are simpler than truck platooning systems and said it would be helpful to see a comparison of the fuel economy between the two. Mr. Klomp observed that trucks from different fleets can take advantage of platooning systems and that the vehicle-to-vehicle technologies offer some safety benefits.

Mr. Dvorchak (Hendrickson) said that vehicles from different fleets may have different braking systems and he inquired if that had been considered in the study. Mr. Klomp acknowledged that would be an important consideration, especially with respect to legacy vehicles. He reiterated that the study was based on a prototype system that is not yet commercial and that there are other operational factors that would need to be considered.

Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Service) asked if there had been any investigation to assess whether radio frequencies would interfere with others in use. Mr. Klomp said that the 5.9 GHz dedicated short range communication frequency has been reserved for ITS technologies so interference should not be an issue.

Mr. Provencher (FPInnovations) noted that some testing of platooning systems is being conducted in the US. He said that FPInnovations is doing some work in this area and he invited those interested to contact him for more information.

Mr. Klomp also provided a presentation (Attachment 6) about a 6 x 2 drive train evaluation being conducted as part of Transport Canada's ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles program. He noted that full-scale testing would begin in January 2017 and infrastructure modelling is also planned, with a final report expected at the end of the year.

b. Reduced load season/Spring weight restrictions

Mr. Millian raised concerns about the reduced load season as it is applied across the country. He acknowledged the pavement damage that can result from carrying full weight when roads are thawing but he noted that some commodities are essential and carriers are challenged by the application of spring weight limits. He called for a national understanding regarding the application of weight limits on main routes.

It was noted that several provinces have exemptions for essential commodities moved during the spring restriction period.

It was also noted that technologies exist that allow trucks to operate at the same weight but at reduced speeds or tire pressures. It was agreed that a study about central tire inflation, conducted through the Engineering and Research Support Committee, would be made available to those interested in more information.

c. Dump Box Alert Technology

Mr. Sevigny (Cleral Inc.) provided a presentation about the safety benefits of Cleral's dump box alert system.

6. Oversize and Overweight Loads

a. Pilot Car Load Movement Guidelines in BC

Ms. Lansing provided a presentation (Attachment 7) about BC's pilot car load movement guidelines.

In response to a question, Ms. Lansing indicated that a decision has not been made about making pilot car driver training mandatory. She suggested that some time would be needed to assess how the guidelines are implemented.

b. Development of a training program for escort vehicle operators

No report was provided.

c. Oversize and Overweight Permit Harmonization

Mr. Todd (Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association) provided a presentation (Attachment 8) about issues and initiatives with respect to oversize and overweight permit harmonization in the US.

In discussion following the presentation, Mr. Kolesniak observed that consistency in permitting practices within jurisdictions is as important as consistency between jurisdictions. Mr. Todd referenced a project being conducted by the Federal Highway Administration to develop best practices for automated systems that will notify valid permit holders if construction restrictions will impact routing.

Mr. Todd also reported that federal guidelines for pilot cars and driver training are being developed and he offered to share those with Mr. Pearson when they become available.

d. Update on Pilot Car Sector

Ms. Murray provided a presentation (Attachment 9) about the need for standards in the pilot car sector, and the potential impacts when standards or enforcement are lax.

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

Mr. Loy (US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) provided an update about developments in the US. He noted:

- The federal rule regarding electronic logging devices has been published and includes an implementation timeline. Temporary exemptions may be considered for carriers already using electronic on-board recorders.
- FMCSA has established entry-level driver training requirements.
- FMCSA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) continue work on the development of federal rules for speed limiters for large commercial vehicles; over 7000 comments were received on the proposed rule-making.
- NHTSA has published a policy on autonomous vehicles; FMCSA will work with the States and may develop a pilot program for autonomous vehicles.
- Vehicle weights and dimensions legislation may be part of the first 100 days of the new presidency in the US.

8. Trade Barriers and Corridor Efficiency

a. VWD Regulatory Harmonization Needs and Priorities

Mr. Pearson noted that the meeting had provided an opportunity to highlight a variety of initiatives that are underway or planned to improve harmonization of vehicle weights and dimensions regulations. He remarked on the attention being given to such issues, citing discussion of Canadian free trade, the Agreement on Internal Trade and the recent report from the Standing Senate Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce, entitled “Tear Down these Walls: Dismantling Canada’s Internal Trade Barriers.”

Mr. Pearson reminded participants of the Task Force’s opportunity and obligation to report to the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. He noted that a number of initiatives are already underway and will be reported, and he invited comments about other issues that should be raised with the Council.

Ms. Ritchie expressed frustration that insufficient progress is being made with some long-standing issues. Mr. Pearson sought clarification on the nature of those issues and Ms. Ritchie suggested they include truck parking/rest areas, LCV parking, and consistency of enforcement within and between jurisdictions. Ms. Couture (OOIDA) offered some examples of non-uniform enforcement with respect to hazmat cards, signage, or sunvisor rules.

Mr. Wood noted that there can be challenges when policy changes are requested. He suggested that it would be helpful to industry if the Task Force could clearly identify what is needed to get an answer when a request is made. He noted that the forum provided for government and industry stakeholders to meet is valuable and suggested that it should continue as it is working well.

Mr. Shaw remarked that the time it takes to make regulatory changes can be challenging and he suggested the concept of enforcement deferral should be promoted. It was noted that cannot be used in all circumstances.

Mr. Barnes (Alberta Motor Transport Association) concurred that it would be helpful if legislation changes could be made more timely. He acknowledged the good work of government representatives but noted that the backlog of legislation is an issue.

9. Other Business

No other business was raised.

10. Adjournment

It was noted the next meeting would be convened in the fall of 2017, with dates and location to be confirmed.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Sarah Wells
Date: December 20, 2016

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1: List of Participants
- Attachment 2: Presentation – National Update
- Attachment 3: Presentation – Quebec Update
- Attachment 4: Presentation – Status Report on Implementation of MOU Amendments
- Attachment 5: Presentation – Fuel Economy Testing of Cooperative Truck Platooning Prototype
(Transport Canada)
- Attachment 6: Presentation – ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles: 6 x 2 Drive Train Evaluation
(Transport Canada)
- Attachment 7: Presentation – Pilot Car Movement Guidelines in BC
(BC Transportation and Infrastructure)
- Attachment 8: Presentation – Oversize and Overweight Permit Harmonization (Specialized Carriers
and Rigging Association)
- Attachment 9: Presentation – Pilot Car/Escort Vehicle Driver Training (Sparrow Piloting Service)



Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Attachment 1:

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy Meeting – December 14, 2016 Montreal

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