



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

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

(Draft Dec 14, 2022)

Date: December 7, 2022
Location: Omni Mont Royal Hotel, Montreal
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: 50 participants, see Attachment 1

1. Welcome And Opening

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants. Roundtable introductions followed.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Pearson drew attention to the agenda and invited amendments. None were proposed and the agenda was adopted by consensus.

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

Mr. Pearson provided a [presentation](#) about the Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy. He explained the Task Force was established under the original national MOU to maintain a government/industry forum for ongoing coordination and harmonization of provincial and territorial regulations, policies and practices. He reminded participants that the annual meetings provide an opportunity to exchange information and identify concerns.

a. National Developments & MOU Amendments

In his presentation, Mr. Pearson highlighted developments in 2022, including an amendment approved by the Council of Ministers in February to include RV Trailers as a special category.

He also noted the ongoing interest in reducing barriers to efficient trade within Canada and remarked that it is a complex regulatory field with many governments involved. He observed that much has been accomplished and there are always opportunities to improve efficiency and productivity of the highway transport system.

Mr. Pearson said that a report on issues raised and discussions during the meeting would be provided to the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety.

b. Provincial/Territorial Developments – Reports by jurisdiction

British Columbia

Ms. Lowther provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Weather events that were challenging in the last year,
- Current work with respect to front mounted hose reels, increasing the length limit for RV Trailers with 5th wheel hitches, and a new northern LCV route between Dawson Creek and Fort St. John, and

- Plans for commercial transport in 2023 with respect to managing workflow, supporting CVSE initiatives and progressing with a length and width review.

Alberta

Mr. Pillman provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Work to modernize the TRAVIS Permitting/Routing system, and
- The definition and application of economic corridors, including the High Load Corridor and the CANAMEX/North-South Trade Corridor.

Following the presentation, Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Service Ltd) expressed concern about the presence of hydro lines being installed by some municipalities over routes in the High Load Corridor. Mr. Pillman said he would follow up as that should not happen.

Saskatchewan

In the absence of a representative from Saskatchewan, Mr. Pearson referred participants to a [presentation](#) available online.

Manitoba

Mr. Borgford provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Work progressing on a strategic highway initiative,
- Upcoming regulatory amendments with respect to weight allowances for auxiliary power units, length exemptions for auxiliary items, and RV 5th wheel trailers, and
- Limited availability of wayside rest areas in some parts of the province and a willingness to work with private and local interests on this matter, when approached.

Following the presentation, Mr. Michaelsen (FPInnovations) suggested all provinces and territories should consider the need for rest areas equipped with fast charging infrastructure as electric heavy vehicles become more common.

Ms. Murray remarked that the movement of windmill parts will mean longer and bigger rest areas are needed.

Ontario

Mr. Lynch provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Ontario's Safe, Productive, and Infrastructure Friendly (SPIF) program and regulatory amendments made since its implementation, and
- Truck parking, a five-year rest area expansion program announced in 2021, and new facilities recently opened.

Quebec

Mr. Janelle provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Achievements in 2022 with respect to the departmental permit management system,
- New standards for stinger steer car carriers,
- Continuing analysis of other industry requests,
- Reforms planned in 2023 to address vehicle load and size limits regulation and special road train operating permits regulation,
- Regulatory reform planned in 2024 with respect to special permits,

- The Government and Industry Consultation Table on Load and Dimension Standards, and
- Modernization Plan 2022-2027 with respect to rest areas.

New Brunswick

Mr. Illsley provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- A regulatory update that will include the 2022 MOU amendments,
- Infrastructure work and investment to rehabilitate and improve network assets,
- Trucking programs updates including an extended semi-trailers pilot, electric passenger bus trial, and the holiday restriction removal pilot program for LCVs, and
- Truck rest stops, all of which are operated by the private sector in the province.

Nova Scotia

Mr. Connolly provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- Traffic Safety Act regulations on which public consultation has been completed,
- Draft regulations for weights and dimensions of vehicles provided for public consultation in 2022,
- Modernization of the Registry of Motor Vehicles, and
- Ongoing pilot programs including for extended semi-trailers, LCVs, wide base tires, roll-coupled hitches for Category 5 Truck/Trailer configurations, and farm combination vehicles.

Prince Edward Island

In the absence of a representative from Prince Edward Island, Mr. Pearson referred participants to a [report](#) available online.

Yukon

Mr. Kasprzak provided updates about:

- Weather and natural events that were challenging in the territory and delayed some key projects as a result,
- Issues with bridge strikes and fragile infrastructure nearing the end of its life span,
- Issues with inter-axle weights,
- A new online permitting system,
- Updates to the Motor Vehicle Act, now the Traffic Safety Act,
- Future updates to the Highways Act to address vehicle weights and dimensions; MOU amendments are addressed through permit,
- Truck pullouts and parking; on average, every 50 km there is a dedicated truck pullout, some with services,
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure which is widely available,
- Work being done on road classifications, and
- Five new weigh-in-motion stations planned in the next five years.

Northwest Territories

Mr. Bonnetrouge provided updates about:

- Permits for vehicles equipped with lift axles,
- Special permit allowances for configurations fitted with wide base single tires,

- One permit issued for operation of a 60-foot trailer,
- New Highway 10 (Inuvik- Tuktoyaktuk) and Highway 9 (Tłıchq),
- Implementation of Entry Level Training,
- Future work regarding electronic logging devices, and
- Truck parking and the aim to have a pullout about every 50 km.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Mr. Abbott said he was attending as an observer on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador and would take industry and jurisdictional concerns back to his government.

Transport Canada

Mr. Rastogi provided a [presentation](#) and highlighted:

- TC's ongoing engagement with the trucking industry on COVID and other related issues, as well as the status of COVID-19 border measures,
- The federal government mandate regarding ELDs and Hours of Service regulations, and progress towards implementation,
- Truck driver shortages issue and provided updates on collaborative actions across government departments and industry partners,
- 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan and Zero Emission Trucking Program,
- Cooperative truck platooning systems pilot program, and
- The final report and recommendations of the Supply Chain Task Force.

Following the presentation, Mr. Dolyniuk (Manitoba Trucking Association) said it had been reported at recent CCMTA meetings that Transport Canada is considering ELD exemptions for specific sectors; he asked for an update particularly with respect to towing and recovery services. Mr. Rastogi said he would take the question back and follow up with Mr. Dolyniuk.

4. Presentations

a. Zero Emission Trucking Program

Mr. Wolfe (Transport Canada) provided a [presentation](#) about the federal government's Zero Emission Trucking Program (ZETP). He described five key program activities:

- Calls for proposals to provide capacity funding to provinces and territories,
- Zero emission trucking testbeds,
- Directed studies and research,
- Medium and heavy zero emission vehicles safety research program, and
- Motor vehicle test centre capital investments.

He noted that the Zero Emission Trucking Program focusses on zero-tailpipe emissions, which includes H2 fuel cell, battery electric, or 100% internal H2 combustion but does not include hybrid configurations.

Mr. Wolfe also provided a [presentation](#) about the federal government's incentives for medium- and heavy-duty zero emission vehicles (iMHZEV), noting that this program does offer smaller purchase incentives for hybrid medium and heavy duty vehicles. He also provided an update on the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Task Force on Heavy Duty Vehicle Retrofits.

Ms. Murray noted that she has colleagues who operate heavy vehicles who would appreciate being contacted to discuss the impacts of zero emission programs. Mr. Barnes (AMTA) added that there are groups in the oil and gas sector in Alberta who would also be interested in consultation. Mr. Wolfe said he would follow up.

Ms. Bélanger-Parker (Crane Rental Association of Canada) asked if the crane industry had been consulted. Mr. Wolfe said cranes have not been within the scope of the program he presented but there is interest within the federal government.

Ms. Murray asked if studies had been conducted about how unshielded equipment will interact with computers; Mr. Wolfe said he would look into it.

Noting the terminology “capable of zero emissions”, Mr. Michaelsen asked if a hybrid vehicle would be eligible for the program incentives. Mr. Wolfe confirmed the program is technology-agnostic. Mr. Michaelsen asked about incentives for infrastructure needed to support operation of zero emission vehicles; Mr. Wolfe suggested programs available through the Canada Infrastructure Bank and Natural Resources Canada offer such incentives.

Mr. Robert (Groupe Robert) asked whether lithium batteries, now being used to keep vehicles warm, would be eligible for the program. Mr. Wolfe offered to discuss that further after the meeting.

Mr. Millian observed that long-haul trucks cannot currently operate on electric power as the infrastructure does not exist to support that. He suggested that, to reduce emissions as soon as possible, natural gas and other renewable energy sources gas must be used.

Mr. Robert suggested that the use of LCVs is a meaningful way to reduce vehicles on roads, the number of drivers needed, fuel needed, and associated emissions. He observed that it is worthwhile to consider new technologies but also important to take best advantage of the technologies already available. He urged the federal and provincial governments to recognize the benefits of LCVs and support their operation as part of a vision of the future.

b. Alternative Fuel Highway Tractors

Mr. Barnes provided a [presentation](#) about alternative fuel highway tractors, noting the higher tare weights of electric vehicles compared to conventional and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. He acknowledged that there are limits to the weights that infrastructure can carry but said governments and industry need to discuss allowances to encourage adoption of electric vehicles.

Mr. Barnes also described the Alberta Zero Emissions Truck Electrification Collaboration (AZETEC) project that will allow industry to try new technology vehicles in day-to-day operations.

Mr. Robert concurred that weight allowances are needed to support adoption of electric vehicles. He said about 4 tonnes allowance is required to get about 300 miles in an electric vehicle.

Mr. Millian observed that early adopters of greener, electric vehicles are being penalized because they cannot carry as much load, rendering them less competitive than vehicles still driving on diesel fuel. He remarked that reducing emissions improves overall health, so perhaps related savings could be invested in infrastructure to support extra weight.

Mr. Michaelsen suggested that grants offered by provinces and territories for electric vehicles will not make enough financial difference for trucking companies. He suggested an alternative would be to invest that money in infrastructure and increase weight allowances on vehicles.

Mr. Pillman offered a jurisdictional perspective, noting the challenges of harmonizing special permit conditions across the country. He remarked that new fuel technologies are being evaluated but not yet widely adopted. He said it may be possible to identify some infrastructure that can support it, but cautioned that if failures occur on main arteries then everyone is impacted.

Mr. Pearson acknowledged the continuing pressure to increase weight limits or allowances to encourage adoption of new technologies or alternative fuel systems which result in heavier tare weights for large vehicles. He noted that Canada's weight limits are already higher than in the US, which improves efficiency and productivity but has impacts on the condition and service life costs of highway infrastructure. He referenced the work of the Supply Chain Task Force that suggests investment in infrastructure will need to triple each year for the next 50 years.

Mr. Lynch emphasized that infrastructure is impacted by weight, regardless of the source of that weight. He observed that the infrastructure is being built to the same standards as in the past and that assets are depreciating. He noted that when regulatory reforms toward SPIF vehicles were put into place, they maximized capacities on highway up to the maximum possible under Bridge and Pavement Formulae in Ontario. Further, that these are tax-payer investments in assets. Allowing weights higher than is set-out under the SPIF regulations would cause rapid deterioration in infrastructure as it would increase damage to roads and bridges that are designed to meet both Bridge and Pavement formula. He added that the production of asphalt and concrete needed to build and maintain infrastructure generates high emissions, which complicates the challenges of trying to reduce emissions overall.

Mr. Robert suggested limiting truck speeds would save fuel and be a place to start, rather than investing billions in new technologies.

Mr. Lynch remarked that the Ontario Bridge Formula is based on speeds of 110 km/h for vehicles at 63,500 kgs. He said increased weights could require reduced speeds, but will still cause exponential damage, almost to the power of 4, which results in exponential costs to repair and replace, let alone depreciation of assets in a more rapid manner, leading to deficits.

c. Regulatory Harmonization Needs

Mr. Millian provided a [presentation](#) outlining a request for new configurations to be included in the national MOU. He acknowledged that the MOU protects infrastructure that varies in strength from region to region but suggested a balance could be found that would increase efficiencies while protecting infrastructure. He described proposed additions to Category 1 (Tractor-semitrailer) and Category 5 (Straight truck) configurations.

Discussion was deferred until the next agenda item.

d. Supply Chain Task Force Report – VWD Issues

Mr. Pearson referenced the [final report](#) of the National Supply Chain Task Force and provided a [presentation](#) outlining the recommendations relating to vehicle weights and dimensions.

Mr. Pearson identified configurations included in the National MOU and others which are commonly used in interprovincial transportation along with additional configurations which are designed and optimized for intraprovincial or regional markets (e.g. ON/QC/Michigan/New York). Acknowledging that markets may have changed over time, he asked whether there is a desire to expand the MOU to include some of those configurations that are currently used in regional operations. He asked whether the fleet of vehicles that is used for long haul transportation in Canada has changed over

time, suggesting that could inform consideration of new configurations to be included in the National MOU.

In discussion, participants offered the following comments:

- If infrastructure in general, and bridges in particular, are at the limit they can carry, could different configurations help?
- Would the quad-axle semi-trailer used in the east be useful in other regions?
- Rather than considering each configuration on its own, perhaps we could look at the impact of new technologies like steering axles on dynamic performance.
- Part of the challenge is that requests for additional weight allowances may seem modest when the impacts on infrastructure are not; for example a 500 kg increase in the weight allowed on a truck steering axle can increase the impact on pavement by over 30%.
- Lift axles are effective at equalizing weight but are not allowed in all provinces; that should be revisited.
- The original objective of the MOU was harmonization of weights and dimensions; we need to broaden the objective to meet current challenges and obligations.
- A trigger for the original MOU was growing concern that a truck could not be configured that could travel from coast to coast; that was successfully addressed.
- LCVs can be very efficient but cannot travel on two lane roads; 75% of the national highway system is still two lane roads.

Mr. Pearson thanked participants for their comments, noting it is an important discussion to have if the MOU is to continue to have value and fill its intended role. He acknowledged the need to review it critically, to consider the commodities being carried, the costs and the benefits of new configurations being considered as additions to the MOU. He said the Task Force would consider the issues and hope to rely on input from industry if additional information is needed. He suggested there may be a need to work together in a focused way on costs, benefits, and needs of the trucking industry in support of the Canadian economy.

e. Testing of Forced Steer Trailer Axles

Mr. Noël (GN Solutions) provided a [presentation](#) about forced axle systems and pilot projects that are underway.

Mr. Kasprzak said the technology is interesting. He noted that there may be issues to consider with respect to enforcement and inspection and suggested Mr. Noël should approach CCMTA and CVSA in that regard.

Mr. Perret (The Road Scholar) asked whether the system is speed sensitive and if it would deactivate at highway speeds. Mr. Noël replied that the system is always on but can have different modes when travelling straight ahead on a highway.

Mr. Pearson said the Task Force would gather some information about the challenges that may be encountered in implementing the technology and share it with Mr. Noël.

f. All-Terrain Cranes Pilot Project Survey Results

Ms. Bélanger-Parker and Mr. Andrews provided a [presentation](#) about an all-terrain cranes pilot project and survey results. They highlighted impacts on safety, workforce, support vehicles,

permitting and the supply chain. They recommended a Canada-wide study of bridge formulae to support plans for the infrastructure of tomorrow and harmonization of vehicle weights and dimensions.

5. Industry Updates

No discussion occurred under this item.

6. Special permits for Oversize and Overweight Loads

a. Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association

Mr. Smith provided a [presentation](#) with updates from the Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association.

b. Pilot Car Industry

Ms. Murray highlighted pilot car training required and available.

She said she would submit questions for the government representatives to Mr. Pearson.

Ms. Murray played a video commemorating pilot car drivers who had passed away in recent years.

7. Other Business

Mr. Pearson invited participants to raise other business; none was noted.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Pearson thanked participants for attending and acknowledged especially the speakers who had contributed to the agenda. He noted that any comments on the agenda and format for the meeting would be welcomed, suggesting as an example, that if there was interest the discussions related to Oversize and Overweight special permits could be held as a separate half day meeting before or after the general session.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Dr. Sarah Wells

Date Distributed: December 19

**Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy
Meeting – December 7, 2022 Montreal**

Attachment 1: Attendance List

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