



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

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes (Draft)

Date: December 6, 2023
Location: Omni Mont Royal Hotel, Montreal
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: 52 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, review emerging issues, and identify harmonization concerns and priorities.

a. National Developments & MOU Amendments

In his presentation, Mr. Pearson summarized the status of implementation of amendments to the National Agreement (MOU).

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

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

- Changes made in 2023 with respect to the Province’s crane policy, steering trailers, and LCV and 5 m wide routes,
- Priorities in 2024, including reworking the Commercial Transport Policy manual, review of the oversize reducible load policy, updating the fixed equipment policy, and overweight route evaluation and expansion,

- Ministry projects regarding OnRoute BC, a truck parking strategy for the lower mainland, and a rest area management plan.

Following the presentation, Mr. Michaelsen (FPInnovations) observed that operation of quad axle semi trailers is not yet allowed in BC, MB and SK. He remarked they are a good option for the logging industry. Mr. Nguyen said they are not being considered in BC.

In response to a question, Mr. Nguyen clarified that changes have been made to the crane policy with respect to interaxle spacing, chassis length and overall length. He said changes will also be made to address load equalization.

Mr. Nguyen also acknowledged a backlog in issuing carrier permits has been challenging and that the Province will try to improve processes to address this noted concern.

Alberta

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

- The organizational structure of the Traffic Safety Services Division as of January 2024,
- Business modernization/transformation underway, including the ongoing development of the TRAVIS Permitting/Routing system, and a five-year initiative of the Government of Alberta to modernize registry services.

Ms. Sooley also noted that the Province has been permitting 60 ft trailers for five years.

Following the presentation, Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Service Ltd) remarked that a number of pilot cars in Alberta have begun operating with blue lights.

Saskatchewan

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

- The Province's goal to improve 10,000 km of highways, including in 2023/24 capital improvements, pavement preservation, thin membrane surface and rural highway upgrades, rebuild/replace some bridges and culverts, gravel road preservation and right-of-way maintenance.
- Projects to improve road safety, including the review of sightlines at every highway-to-highway intersection; 63% of obstructed sight triangles have been addressed,
- Work with industry stakeholders to identify opportunities for truck pull-outs, and
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance initiative to update its permitting system.

Manitoba

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

- Work progressing on a strategic highway initiative to improve trade and commerce transport across the province,
- A National Economic Trade Corridor Strategy with an initial focus on twinning the Trans-Canada Highway from Falcon Lake to the Ontario border,
- Regulatory amendments completed with respect to weight allowances for auxiliary power units, length exemptions for auxiliary items, RV 5th wheel trailers, pilot vehicle standards, the definition of sunrise and sunset, permitting over-dimensional loads to be marked with red or orange flags, allowing over-dimensional vehicles/loads operating under permit to be equipped with an amber flashing lights, and other housekeeping and corrections.

Ontario

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

- Ontario's Safe, Productive, and Infrastructure Friendly (SPIF) program and regulatory amendments made in November 2023 regarding self-steering axles,
- Results and conclusions of the extended semitrailer trial ending December 31, 2023,
- The Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier (ESSAC) program,
- The LCV program, and
- Truck parking and a five-year rest area expansion program announced in 2021.

Following the presentation, Mr. Maurais (Quebec Trucking Association) asked if there had been any reports of incidents involving the extended stinger-steer auto carriers. Mr. Lynch said the most substantial issue is scraping of vehicles on bridges.

Ms. Murray remarked that some insurance companies are refusing to insure pilot vehicles in Ontario.

Quebec

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

- Renewal in October 2023 of the ministerial order allowing the operation of LCVs on statutory holidays and during peak hours on the freeways in Quebec City and the island of Montreal,
- As of November 24, 2023, special permits for operation of 18.45 m semi-trailers on LCV routes,
- The status of regulatory reforms and modifications,
- The Province's permit management system allows users to request, renew and manage permits; 10,000 permits issued under the old system will expire on December 31 and will not be automatically renewed.

New Brunswick

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

- A regulatory update that will include the 2022 MOU amendments,
- 60 ft extended semi-trailers are permitted for specific routings only,
- "Tri-drive quad" pilot under the Strategic Corridor Initiative,
- A "Super B" B-train double pilot, and
- An "A-train logger" off-road pilot.

Nova Scotia

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

- Extreme weather impacts,
- Final drafting of Traffic Safety Act Regulations is underway,
- An amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act to streamline use of automated flagger assistance devices,
- The federal ELD mandate that came into effect in January 2023; carriers operating only in Nova Scotia are not currently required to have an ELD,

- Modernization of the Registry of Motor Vehicles,
- 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, and
- Construction underway of the Cobequid Pass rest area.

Following the presentation, Mr. Michaelsen asked about progress towards upgrading road classifications as requested by the forest industry. Mr. Connolly confirmed that is a priority and that internal discussions and work with stakeholders have begun.

Prince Edward Island

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

- Completion of an amendment to the Roads Act, Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Regulations that:
 - o Increased weights allowed on wide based single tires on non-steer axles,
 - o Updated terms regarding maximum allowable dimension limits,
 - o Added three new vehicle configurations to the Schedule, eliminating the need for permits.
- Certification of six new CVSA Level 1 Inspectors, and
- Planned preparation of a regulatory amendment to add a specialized vehicles category that will include RV trailers with ball hitch or fifth wheel couplings.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Ms. Cull provided a presentation and highlighted:

- All MOU amendments have been updated in the Province's vehicle regulations with the exception of wide based single tires which are permitted to operate at parity to traditional dual tires for the Island portion of NL only,
- The weigh scale bypass program,
- 60 ft semi-trailers are not currently permitted to operate by regulation or permit; will review upon request,
- Implementation of electronic logging devices, and
- Implementation of entry level training requirements.

Mr. Pearson conveyed the regrets of Task Force representatives from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut and said that reports, once provided, would be made available on the website.

Transport Canada

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

- The federal government mandate regarding ELDs and Hours of Service regulations that came into effect January 1, 2023,
- Truck driver shortages and recommendations for collaborative actions to address the issues,
- 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan and supporting medium- and heavy-duty zero emission vehicles, and
- Establishment of a National Supply Chain Office.

4. Issues and Presentations

a. Use of Semi-trailers Longer than 16.2 m

Mr. Pearson invited roundtable discussion of the use of semi-trailers longer than 16.2 m. He asked whether there are issues that would benefit from regional or national attention. He asked if it would make sense to have a common specification for the configuration.

Mr. Millian (Private Motor Truck Council Canada) observed that use of such trailers is becoming more common across the country. He said that coordination and some commonality among jurisdictions makes it easier for industry to adopt new technology.

Mr. Dowling expressed concerns about potential impact on safe passing distances.

Mr. Harrower (Canadian Transportation Equipment Association) asked if there is a speed limit on the configuration. Mr. Lynch said there is no speed cap for extended semi-trailers, beyond mandated speed-limiter compliance.

Mr. Lynch asked if it would be beneficial for industry if extended semi-trailers could go beyond existing LCV networks. Mr. Millian suggested that would be helpful, while acknowledging the need to maintain some control with respect to approved routes.

Mr. Robert (Groupe Robert) observed that electric vehicles are known to be heavier and he asked if there is any plan to give a weight allowance for electric vehicles. He remarked that the focus of the meeting is to address harmonization and he urged the provincial governments to develop a common guideline for the future. Mr. Pearson suggested this issue is related to the next agenda item.

b. Low Emission Technologies

Mr. Schmidt (Alberta Motor Transport Association/Lafarge) provided a [presentation](#) regarding a request for consideration of allowing additional weight allowances for low emission vehicles.

Mr. Smith (Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association) expressed concern about the effect of extra weight on the permitting process, suggesting that different permit terms, requirements for extra pilot vehicles, and other factors, could result in lost travel days.

Mr. Bernard (Precision Specialized) suggested the Task Force should look at lift axles, which could be considered “low hanging fruit” in reducing emissions, but cannot be used throughout the west.

Mr. Schmidt remarked that concerns about impacts on infrastructure should also consider how many more trucks will be on the road if allowable weight limits are not increased.

Mr. Robert suggested electric vehicles are the way of the future and he emphasized the need to invest in recharging infrastructure.

Mr. Millian commented that industry has asked for weight allowances before and been told that allowable weights are at the limit given the capacity of the infrastructure. He observed that differing priorities among government departments, like infrastructure and environment, make resolving the issues challenging.

Mr. Pearson noted that the Supply Chain Task Force had reported that Canada has been under-spending on infrastructure for a long time. He remarked that it is a complex issue that cannot be solved alone by the Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy. It was agreed that the Task Force should consider who needs to be involved in further efforts to resolve the issue.

c. Improving Canadian transportation efficiency through collaborative initiatives

Mr. Michaelsen provided a [presentation](#) on behalf of FPInnovations.

Following the presentation, noting Mr. Michaelsen's planned upcoming retirement, Mr. Pearson thanked him for his valuable contributions to the Task Force, its meetings and the transportation sector throughout his career.

d. Forced Steer Trailer Axles Update

Mr. G. Noël and Mr. A. Noël (GN Solutions) provided a [presentation](#) including questions for the Task Force to consider to clarify the legislation needed to permit forced steer trailer axle systems.

Mr. Smith expressed interest in the technology, noting that it could be useful for the heavy-haul industry in the US where there are major issues with weight limits on bridges.

5. Oversize and Overweight Loads

a. Canadian Crane Rental Association

Ms. Belanger-Parker, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Lavoie provided a [presentation](#) on behalf of the Canadian Crane Rental Association. They suggested there would be value in working with the Task Force towards harmonization of weights and dimensions for the crane industry and to prepare for the impact of green technologies. Mr. Pearson said he would follow up to determine whether there are issues that need to be addressed regionally or nationally.

b. Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association

Mr. Smith provided a [presentation](#) on behalf of the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association.

c. Pilot Car Industry

Ms. Murray provided a [presentation](#) with updates from the pilot car industry.

7. Other Business

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

8. Adjournment

Mr. Pearson thanked participants and 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.

The meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Dr. Sarah Wells

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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 6, 2023 Montreal

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