

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

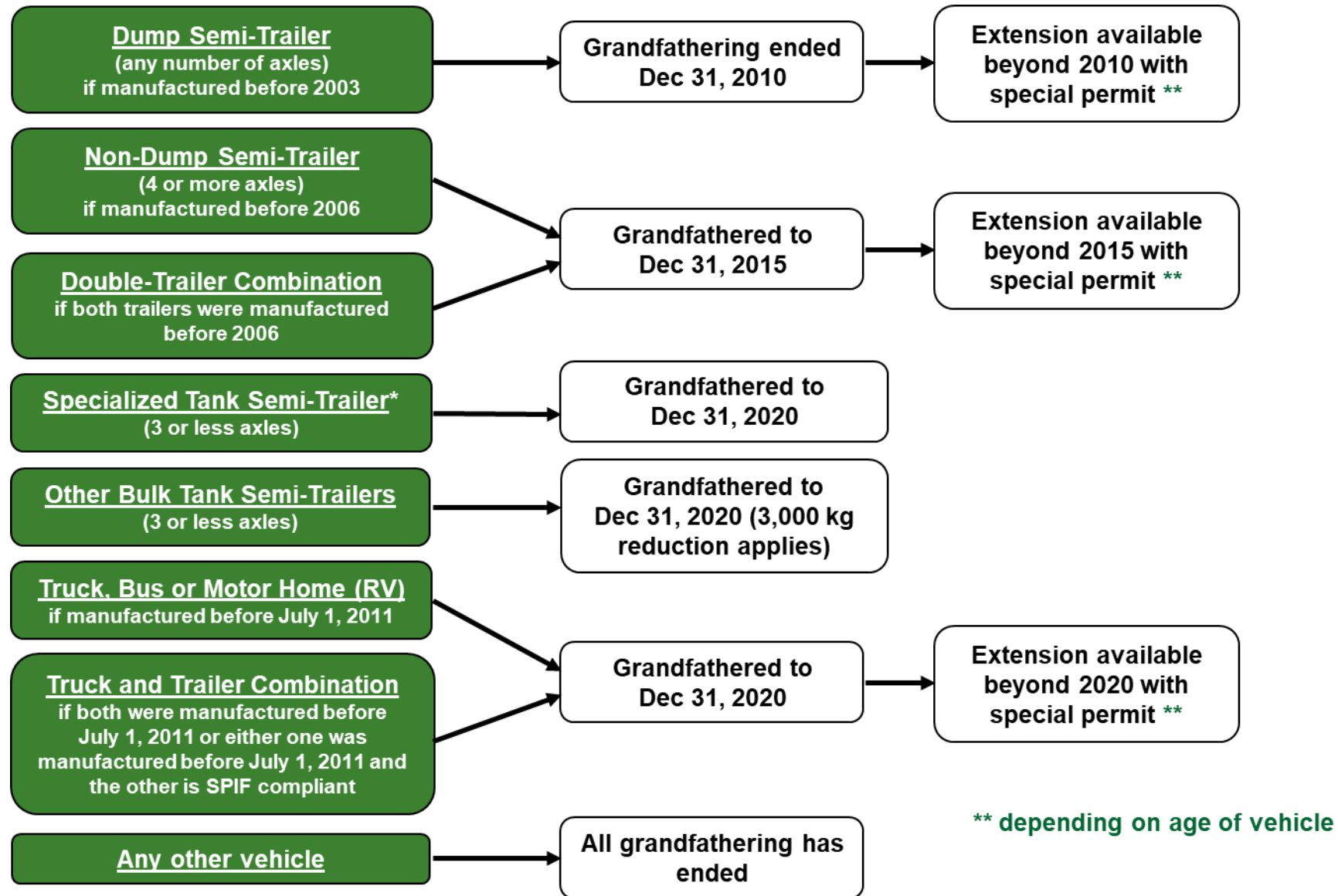
**Joe Lynch, P.Eng.
Ontario Ministry of Transportation**

December 3, 2025

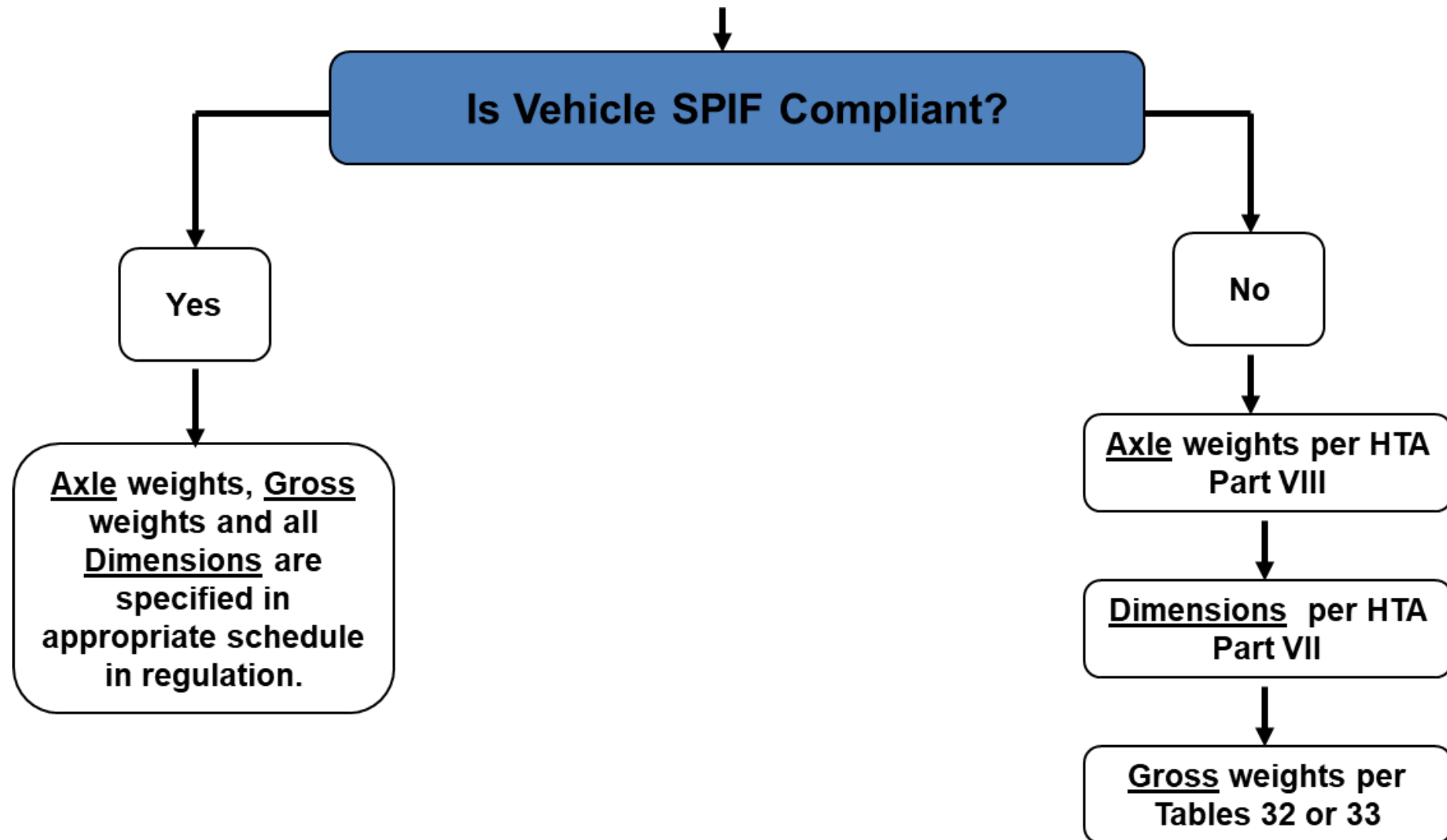
Overview

- O.Reg. 413/05 – SPIF
- Extended Semitrailer Program
- Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier Program
- Heavy Tow Truck Program

O.Reg. 413/05 – Vehicle Weights and Dimensions (VWD) for Safe, Productive, and Infrastructure-Friendly (SPIF) Vehicles



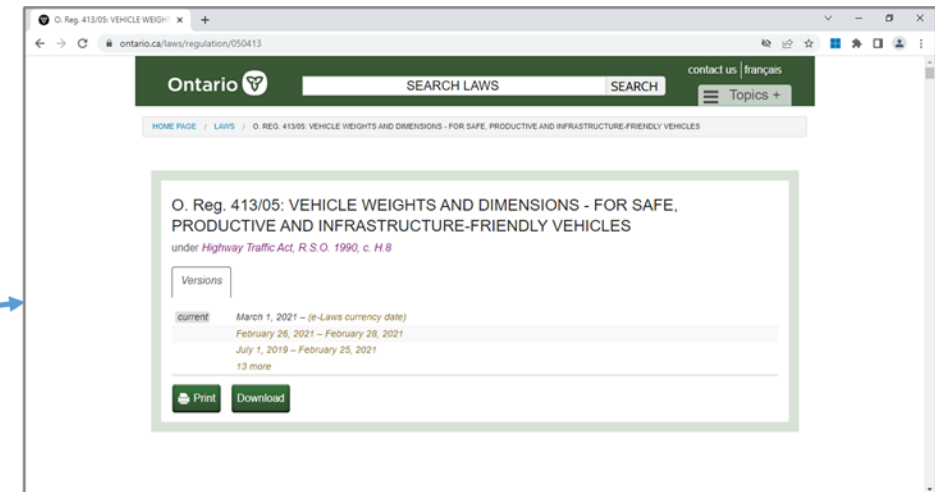
O.Reg. 413/05 – Vehicle Weights and Dimensions (VWD) for Safe, Productive, and Infrastructure-Friendly (SPIF) Vehicles



O.Reg. 413/05 – Vehicle Weights and Dimensions (VWD) for Safe, Productive, and Infrastructure-Friendly (SPIF) Vehicles

- November 2023
 - Clarify the exemption allowing manual controls on designated trucks and tractors to lift a self-steering axle in emergency situations as to be designed to be activated separately of the 4-way flashers
 - Amended [Section 5](#) of the regulation to modify the changes toward requiring for the self-steer lift axle controls to be separate and independent of the 4-way flashers, in addition to moving the effective date for emergency lift axle override switches from January 1, 2020, to January 1, 2024, so to accommodate those who purchased equipment during that time.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/050413>



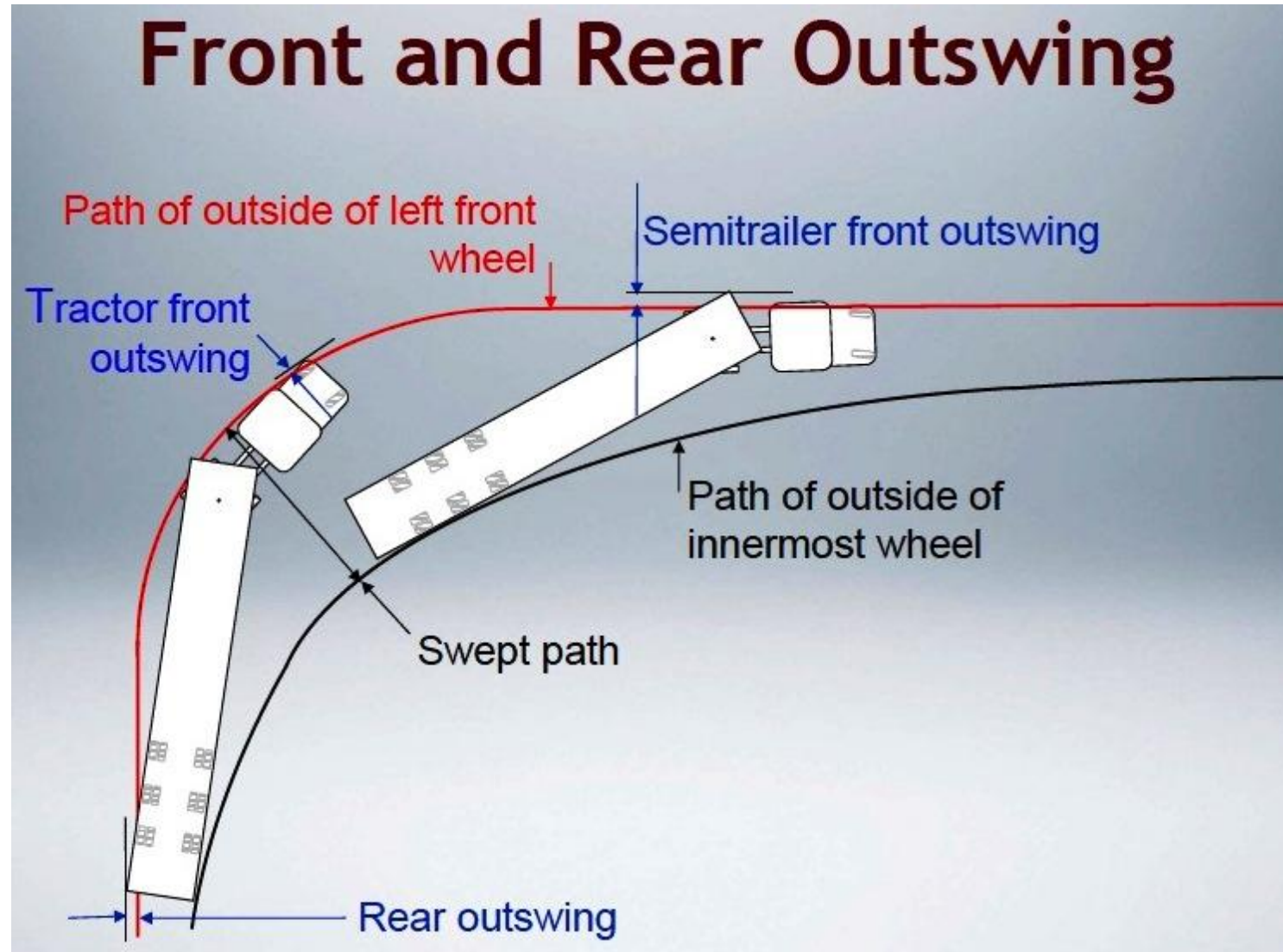
Extended Semitrailer Program

- In 2012, industry proposed the use of Extended Semitrailers to transport low-density cargo, to support economic and environmental benefits, by reducing the number of trips required to move the same amount of light-bulky freight.
- Extended Semitrailers provide more volume than the existing North American conventional 16.20 m (53 ft) van semitrailer.
- There are some road safety-related concerns with the use of Extended Semitrailers. Nationally accepted RTAC/CCMTA Dynamic Performance Measures and thresholds analysis revealed that the front-outswing of the semitrailer exceeds what is typically operated in North America.
- The goal was to complete a Trial Operation utilizing Extended Semitrailers in tractor semitrailer configurations whereby:
 - They operate at overall length and weight limits per *Highway Traffic Act* limits, thus limiting the potential for increased damage to infrastructure, or a reduction in road safety.
 - They can be operated on all roads in the province, rather than along a specific authorized network for travel.
 - They be proven to be operated in a safe manner across the network.

Extended Semitrailer Program

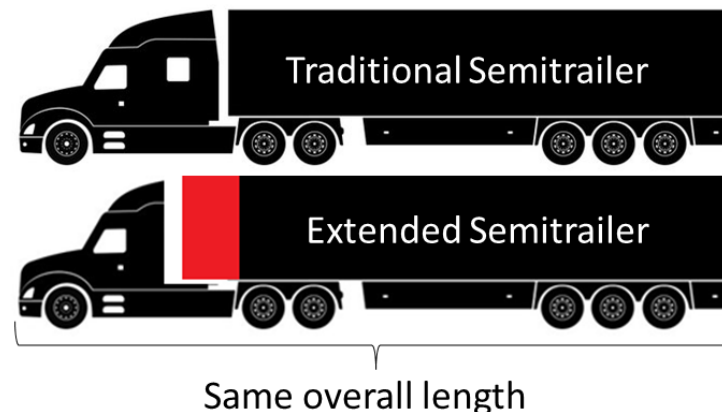
- An **18.45 metre (60 ft 6in)** semitrailer provides more volume capacity as compared to 16.2 metre (53 ft) semitrailer, increasing carrier productivity by reducing truck trips required to move the same amount of freight.
 - Due to the fact there is no weight advantage between the standard 16.2 metre and the 18.45 metre semitrailers, these extended semitrailers are more suited toward light-bulky freight, that cubes the trailer out in volume before meeting allowable weight limits.
- Strict tractor wheelbase dimensional criteria of 5.0 to 5.5 metres allowed the configuration to maintain front and rear outswing to an appropriate level; however, it required participants to further invest in a non-standard tractor design in addition to purchasing new non-standard length trailers.
 - Without such limitations being put in-place, the configuration would have to be restricted to an authorized network for use, similar to that of the Long Combination Vehicle Program.
- Some stakeholders were hesitant to consider Extended Semitrailers, mainly due to their experience in the 1990's when length limits for semitrailers were moved from 14.6 metres (48 ft) to 16.2 metres (53 ft), heavily impacting the for-hire carrier community.
- After thorough consultation with stakeholders across the entire trucking industry, trial and permit conditions for 18.45 metre trailers were negotiated toward what was acceptable to all parties.

Extended Semitrailer Program



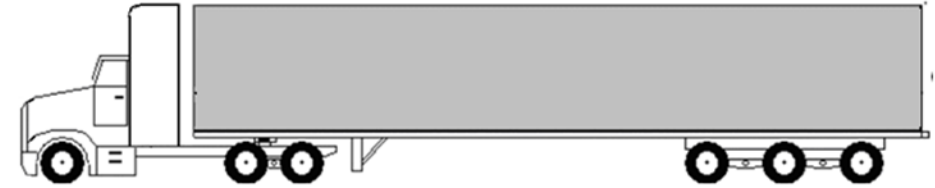
Extended Semitrailer Program

- In February 2013, MTO commenced a trial operation allowing semitrailers **18.45 metres (60 ft 6in)** in length, **2.2 metres longer** than allowed in regulation.
- The trial operated under a limited number of SVC permits and allowed participants to operate on Ontario's roadways unrestricted (i.e., on all 'highways' in the province).
- The purpose of the trial was to evaluate road safety; impacts on road infrastructure (poles, signs, etc.); acceptance from other road users and municipalities; and to evaluate the potential impact on Ontario's trucking industry, including market and operational issues.
- MTO began evaluation of the Extended Semitrailer Trial commenced upon completion of **3.2 million kilometres** of travel by all participants combined.
- With this evaluation the ministry determined it was safe to proceed with a further measured roll-out of extended semitrailer operations.

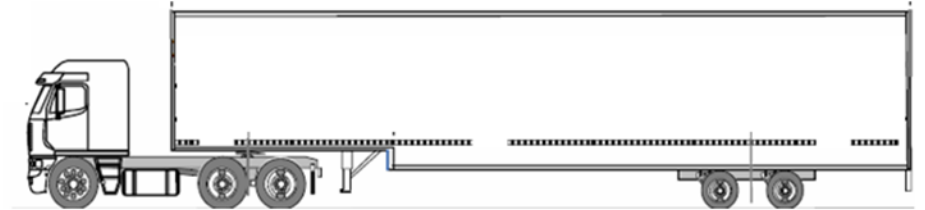


Extended Semitrailer Program

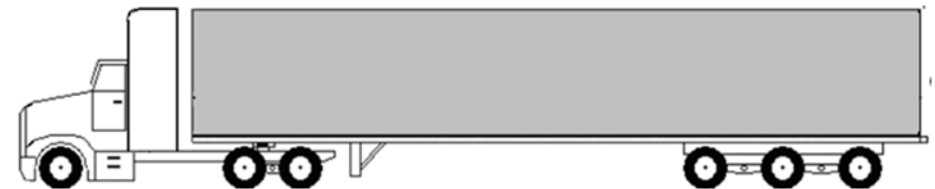
Van = ~14% more volume



Drop-deck Van = ~28% more volume



Container chassis = ~12% more volume



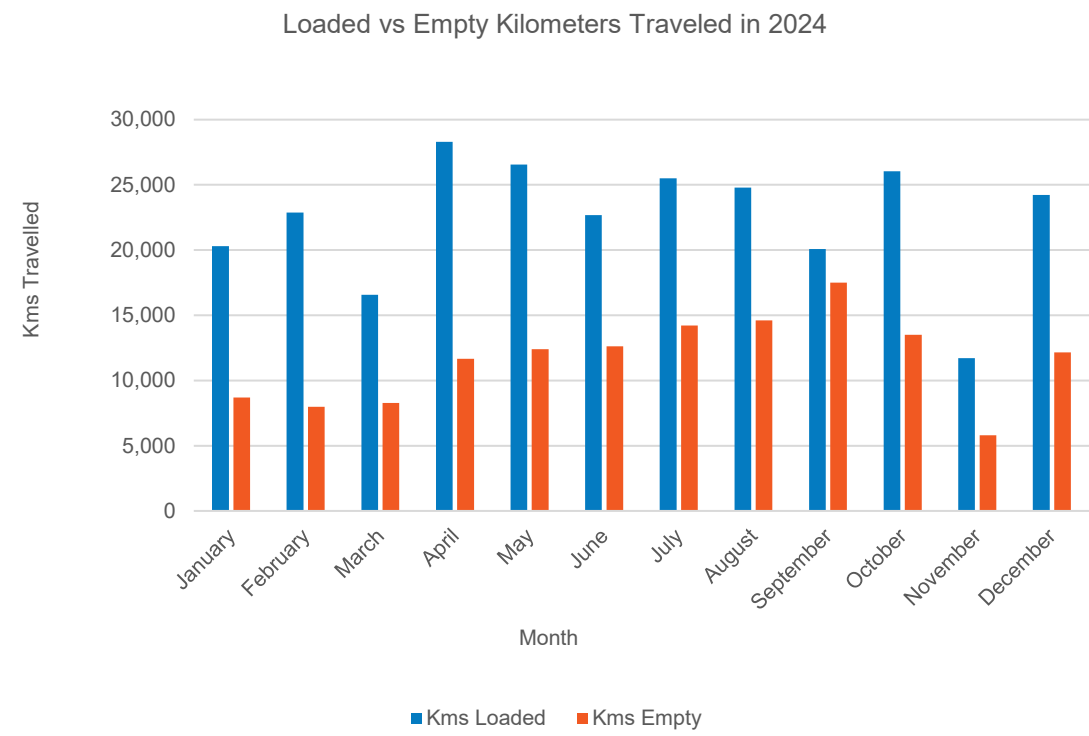
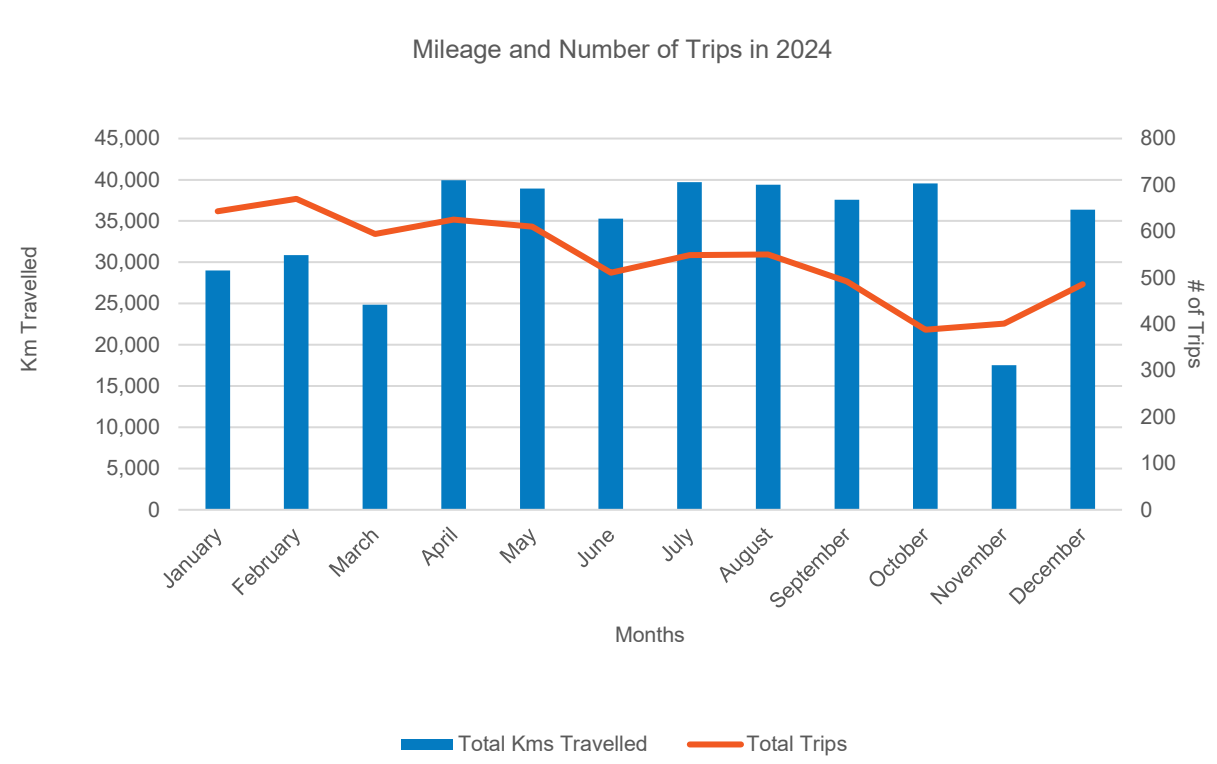
Extended Semitrailer Program Launch

- On Friday, June 14th, 2024 the Ministry launched the Extended Semitrailer Program.
- A slow and measured approach will be taken toward releasing permits to carriers, whereby a single permit can be utilized to operate an infinite number of trailers, but where the number of permits released will rise over several years before an unlimited number of permits can be purchased by carriers.
- Thus far, only those who participated in the Trial have enquired about receiving additional permits. The Ministry has responded to and provided information to carriers who are interested in operating within the regime however, the Ministry has not received any permit applications for the Program.
 - Capital investments are required by carriers to purchase non-standard semitrailers. In some cases, carriers must also invest in truck-tractor equipment that meets the required wheelbase limits. This will delay on-boarding of carriers into the Program for several months, as carriers plan capital expenditures and acquire equipment.
 - Carriers are required to evaluate their routes and make plans toward safely operating across those routes. There is a need for carriers to review whether or not their origin and/or destination locations can in-fact accommodate Extended Semitrailers.
 - Carriers must implement some form of driver training and oversight model that reviews where, and why, drivers must be aware and adjust for semitrailer outswings while navigating tighter settings.

Snapshot – 2024 Data Tracking

Extended Semitrailer Program

- Collectively, active carriers traveled **377,852 kilometers** and completed **6,031 trips**.



Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier (ESSAC) Program

- The Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier (ESSAC) Program is designed to allow ESSACs to operate with configurations in compliance with the US VWD regime. The idea was presented in 2016 by stakeholders who suggested that Ontario's VWD regulations be amended to align with those of the US Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act).
- The USA enacted the FAST act in 2015, changing aspects of the VWD regime to include regulations for Overall Length, Front Load and Rear Load Overhang limits.

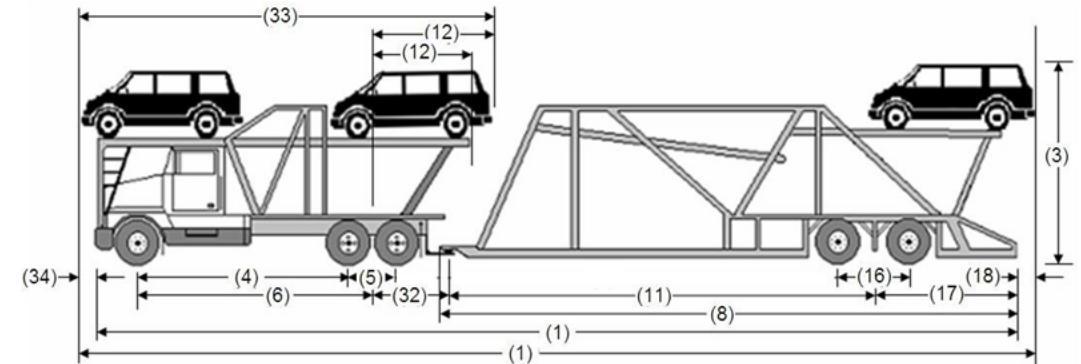
In early 2017, MTO released a White Paper with all Program Conditions to stakeholders. The Paper outlined the specific conditions that ESSACs may operate under, and any other safety related concerns were mitigated through the SVC permit program.

- The ESSAC Program was launched on November 13, 2017.
- 3 Configuration Types -- Full ESSAC, Transitional Hybrid, and Ontario-ESSAC (ON-ESSAC).

Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier (ESSAC) Program

- Full ESSAC
 - Must travel along the authorized network of highways
 - Overall Length = Max. 24.55 m
 - Front Load Overhang = Max. 1.22 m
 - Rear Load Overhang = Max. 1.83 m
 - Tractor Wheelbase = Not controlled
 - Trailer Length = Max. 15.24 m
 - Trailer Wheelbase = 6.25 to 12.5 m
- Transitional Hybrid
 - Must travel along the authorized network of highways
 - Overall Length = Max. 23.0 m
 - Front Load Overhang = Max. 1.22 m
 - Rear Load Overhang = Max. 1.83 m
 - Tractor Wheelbase = Not controlled
 - Trailer Length = Max. 14.65m
 - Trailer Wheelbase = 6.25 to 12.5 m

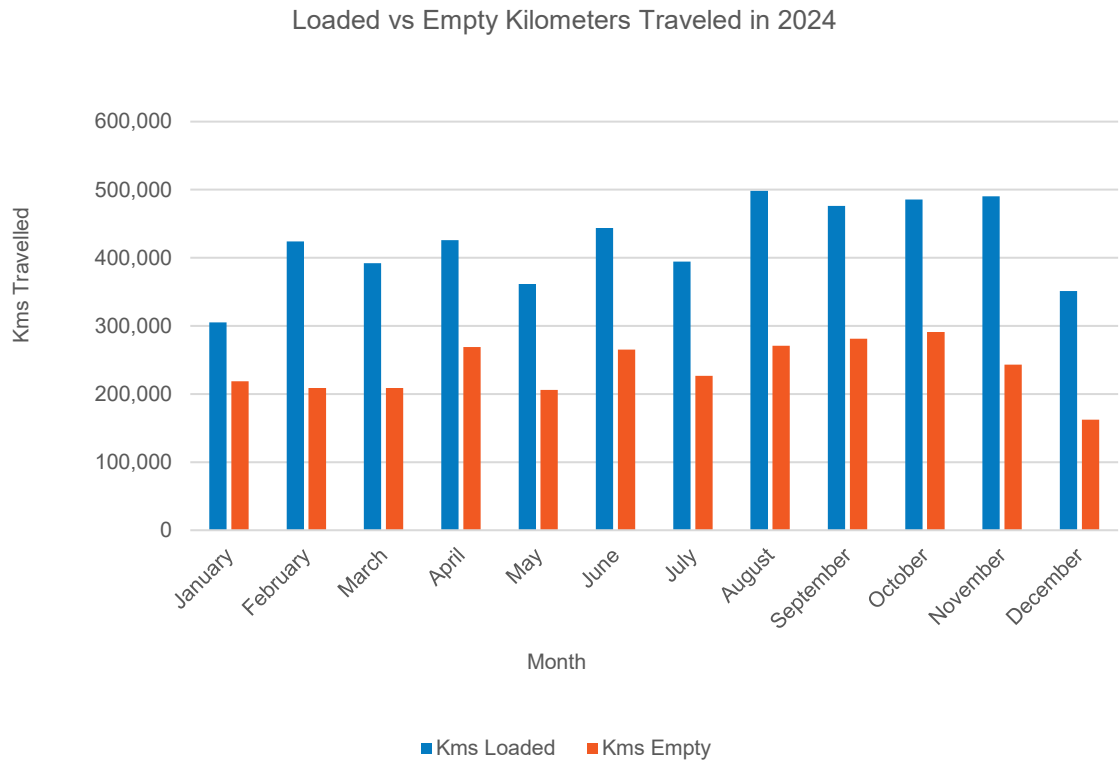
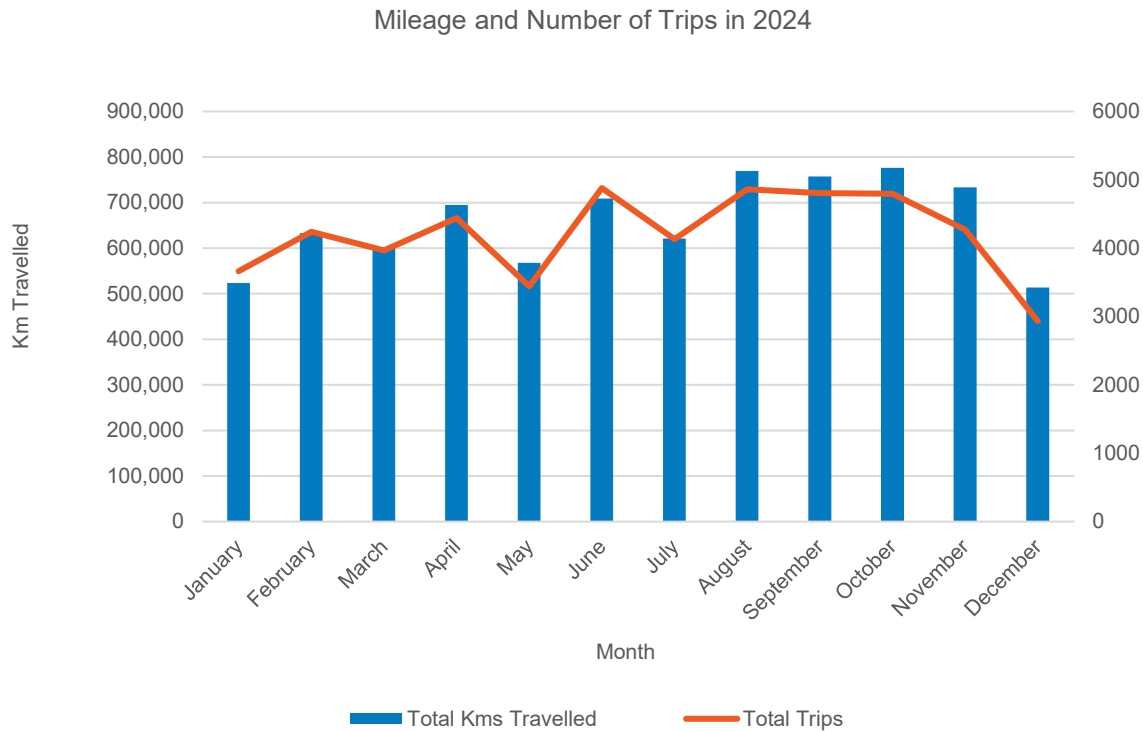
- ON-ESSAC
 - Overall Length = Max. 24.55 m
 - Front Load Overhang = Max. 1.0 m
 - Rear Load Overhang = Max. 1.2 m
 - Tractor Wheelbase = Min. 6.05 m
 - Trailer Length = Not controlled
 - Trailer Wheelbase = 10.75 to 12.5 m



Snapshot –2024 Data Tracking

ESSAC Program

- Collectively, active carriers traveled **7,901,829 kilometers** and completed **50,423 trips**.



Extended Stinger-Steer Auto Carrier (ESSAC) Program

- On Monday, November 24th, 2025 the Ministry announced amendments to the ESSAC Program.
- The changes focus on program amendments policy changes:
 1. Removal of the conditions related to permit distribution, which previously focused on a slow-measured approach toward adoption of ESSAC configurations.
 - Amendments aligns with typical Special Vehicle Configuration (SVC) permit regimes, allotted 4 permits per carrier for their first year of operation, and unlimited permits after a year of safe and successful operations within the Program.
 2. Removal of the Transitional ESSAC configuration, a configuration that modifies existing regulated vehicles with extended overhangs, as there currently no carriers seeking to operate such configuration.
 3. Relaxing of Driver Experience requirements from 5 years to 2 years, based on requests from industry.
 4. Increased oversight of driver training to correspond with relaxing of rules around driver experience.
 5. Changes in policy around the intake of monthly trip reports, whereby data and information around the Ontario-ESSAC configuration is reduced as the risks to road safety are not as great as that of the Full-ESSAC.
 - Full-ESSAC configurations must only operate on the Authorized Network for Travel, thus it is imperative that monthly trip reports reflect all routings, so to properly monitor and enforce the operations of these more-risky configuration types.
 - ON-ESSAC configurations may operate on all-roads in the province, putting the onus on carriers to properly route safe-passage of these less-risky configuration types.

Heavy Tow Truck Program

- Available to any tow truck operator with a valid CVOR.
- Purpose is to allow Heavy Tow Trucks to operate above legislated/regulatory weight limits, whether it be allowable axle weights or allowable gross weights, while empty/unladen.
- Vehicles can be SPIF-compliant or non-SPIF/non-compliant.
- Permit does not allow for the operator to exceed GAWR, GVWR, Tire Load Limits, or any other capacity limits of the vehicle.
- Permit allows for the operator to travel to/from incidents or otherwise, while operating empty. Once the vehicle is completing a tow operation, Oversize/Overweight Permit (Disabled Vehicle Towing) is utilized.
- The application must be accompanied by a valid Vehicle Configuration Evaluation (VCE) number issued to the same applicant and approved by the MTO Weight and Load Engineer.
- The permit does not grant the vehicle to be used as a Mobile Crane.
- Tow Truck Carriers have begun to invest in heavier tow equipment and have been begun operating within this permit regime.

Heavy Tow Truck Program

- Current permits are toward allowing 65- and 75-ton rotator style tow trucks, with permit applications and discussions around some heavier equipment (up to 100-ton).
- Thus far, we have no reported incidents involving a tow vehicle permitted under this regime.
- It is expected that in the coming year, there will be changes to the current Oversized/Overweight Commercial Motor Vehicle tow permit regime.
 - This could include maintaining the current regime while also opening a regime to carriers with satisfactory or better carrier ratings, to operate in a more refined regime.
 - Discussions and consultation with the tow industry are still on-going.



Thank you

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