



Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

(Draft December 17, 2008)

Date: November 25, 2008
Location: Intercontinental Hotel, Toronto
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: (See Attachment 1)

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He noted the meeting provides an open forum for government and industry representatives to discuss issues pertaining to vehicle weight and dimension limits in Canada. He reminded participants that a report on the meeting's discussions would be provided to the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. 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 before being reflected in the national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on interprovincial vehicle weights and dimensions.

2. Round Table Introductions and Adoption of the Agenda

Following round table introductions, Mr. Pearson drew attention to the agenda that had been circulated prior to the meeting. He noted that the agenda had been organized in two parts, with the second focused on special permit conditions for longer combination vehicles (LCVs). He added that both parts of the meeting are open to all interested participants.

Mr. Robert suggested that another item of business for the agenda should be harmonization of regulations and the interpretation of regulations between the federal and provincial jurisdictions.

There were no other additions suggested and the agenda was adopted as amended.

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

a) Status of National MOU on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions

Mr. Pearson provided a presentation (Attachment 2) summarizing the harmonization priorities that were identified during the Task Force meetings held in 2006 and 2007, reviewed changes made to the national MOU which were approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2008. He noted these changes:

- Increased weight limits for new generation wide base single tires to 7700 kg per axle on single and tandem groups;
- Reduced the minimum track width requirement to 2.3 m for existing trailers (pre 2008) retrofitted with wide single tires;
- Provided length measurement exemptions for rear-mounted aerodynamic devices, with the specifications proposed by the Canadian Trucking Alliance (ie. rear extension of up to 0.61 m);
- Standardized width allowances for mirrors (30 cm) and other non-cargo carrying equipment on the side of trucks and trailer (10 cm).

b) Provincial and Territorial Developments

In round table review the following reports were provided:

British Columbia

Mr. Gilks reported that BC is implementing amendments made to the national MOU and working towards further harmonization with Alberta under the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).

He reported that BC's LCV program is currently restricted to Rocky Mountain Doubles in the northeast section of the province. He reported that an evaluation of a Rocky Mountain Double pilot program conducted between Vancouver and Kamloops would be completed next spring.

Mr. Gilks acknowledged that winter restrictions are an issue for the industry and he noted that weight and dimension limits are being pushed as far as possible, with the climate change agenda and economic conditions having greater influence on decisions. He reported that a wider bunk width is being allowed in the forestry sector to facilitate the removal of beetle-killed wood, which is lighter density than normal.

Alberta

Mr. Moroz reported that regulations governing vehicle weights and dimensions regulations in Alberta were being revised, with the work expected to be complete in 2009. As an interim measure, he noted that special permits are being issued for vehicles equipped with wide base single tires or aerodynamic devices as per MOU amendments made in April 2008.

He also reported that the Province is working with British Columbia to harmonize regulations under TILMA. He reported that quad axle semi-trailers will be introduced for the forestry sector, with the requirement that the lead axle would have to be self-steering. He noted that the lead axle would also be liftable for use in off-road conditions.

Mr. Robert noted that having the ability to lift the lead axle is also important to gain traction, particularly during the winter with snow and ice conditions. He noted that, while lifting the axle does increase the load carried by other axles, damage to the highway infrastructure is minimal because the ground is frozen. Mr. Moroz noted that bridges do not gain strength when frozen and suggested that a more desirable approach would be use of tridem drive configurations to gain traction.

Saskatchewan

Mr. Cipywnyk reported that vehicle weights and dimensions regulations in the province are being rewritten to include tridem drive configurations, empty assist lift axles, the recent amendments to the MOU, and housekeeping amendments to ensure the regulation is consistent with the language in the national MOU.

He noted that the Province's permitting system is being revamped and should be complete within three years. He also noted it would include an interactive mapping interface that would be able to reroute trips based on loads and weight limits.

Mr. Cipywnyk indicated the Province is working to reduce impediments to interprovincial movement and would be identifying high-clearance corridors as well as overweight corridors. He noted the work was just getting started and there have been some difficulties collecting data.

Finally, he noted that the Province is trying to facilitate the delivery of permits to carriers, recognizing this is particularly important for over-size permits.

Manitoba

Ms. McKee reported that Manitoba had hosted a very successful meeting of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance in September.

She reported that the Motor Carrier Division of Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation was being reorganized to deliver its programs more effectively.

She noted that the Department is working with other western provinces to harmonize the movement of LCVs in the region.

Ontario

Mr. Madill provided an update on developments in Ontario, noting that the province will be allowing axles fitted with new generation wide base single tires to carry a maximum weight of 9,000 kgs. He also noted that the track width requirements for trailers built prior to 2010 and fitted with wide tires would be relaxed to 2.3 m.

He reported that Ontario is working with Québec on LCV permit conditions. He added that the Province will limit the number of LCVs that can operate on the highway network in the inaugural year(s), noting that no more than 100 permits will be issued during the first year, starting next spring.

Mr. Madill also reported that Phase 4 of the vehicle weights and dimensions reform project was underway. He explained that the work is intended to cause a migration to safe, productive, infrastructure-friendly trucks and truck-trailer combinations operating on the Province's highways. Mr. Madill noted that another major initiative of Phase 4 is to simplify the calculation of gross vehicle weight for all heavy vehicles.

Québec:

Mr. Janelle reported on developments, noting that:

- Québec is working to harmonize LCV operations with neighbouring jurisdictions;
- Requirements for truck speed limiters will be enforced beginning in January 2009;
- Québec is studying issues pertaining to the crossing of over-size and overweight vehicle at railroad tracks;
- In 2009, some modifications will be proposed for over-size and overweight vehicle regulations.

New Brunswick

Ms. Lynch reported that the Minister had signed the Atlantic Memorandum of Understanding on special permit conditions for over-dimensional vehicles and the ministry is preparing the regulatory mechanisms to be implemented in January 2009.

She noted that, following its pilot project, the Province had developed guidelines for the operation of LCVs on four-lane highways in the province.

She indicated that the Province will issue permits for use of quad-axle semi-trailers at weights previously available only to the forestry sector.

She reported that 25 m long double trailer combinations are acceptable on the Province's secondary highway system.

Ms. Lynch also reported that the New Brunswick Department of Transportation had recently completed ten-year multi-modal and ITS strategic plans.

Nova Scotia

Mr. Stonehouse reported that a pilot test of LCV operations was being planned for the province in conjunction with the program being launched by New Brunswick.

He reported that quad axle semi trailers and tridem drive tractors were being assessed.

He noted that the province had also recently completed a stakeholder consultation process on the regulatory burden faced by industry. He reported that the review had shown that while the regulations themselves are not seen as a major burden, a better understanding of the regulations and requirements was needed, possibly through provision of information sessions and guide books. He also reported that stakeholders had identified the need for better access to services and information.

Finally, Mr. Stonehouse reported that the Atlantic MOU on special permit conditions for over-dimensional vehicles is currently before the Minister for signature.

Prince Edward Island

Mr. MacEwen reported that the PEI Minister had signed the Atlantic MOU on Overdimensional Special Permits. He noted that wide-base single tires can now be used in PEI under special permit.

Northwest Territories

Mr. Bonnetrouge reported that the Territory is reviewing proposals for a permitting centre to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

He noted that a weigh-in-motion scale had been installed and that it is equipped with a camera to take a photograph of each configuration. He also noted that two self-weigh scales had been installed outside Hay River and Fort Simpson.

He also reported that construction of the Deh Cho Bridge near Fort Providence had begun and was expected to be complete by 2010. He added that some income will be generated by tolls on commercial traffic.

4. Council of the Federation Regulatory Harmonization Initiative

Mr. Pearson provided a presentation (Attachment 3) about this initiative and drew attention to the report that had been prepared for the Council of the Federation (CoF) and circulated to participants in advance of the meeting. He noted that the national MOU on interprovincial vehicle weights and dimensions is now over 20 years old and, because of processes and mechanisms in place to address harmonization needs, it has evolved over time. However, he noted that the CoF has directed that a more aggressive harmonization program be pursued. In order to do so, Mr. Pearson suggested governments need to understand what industry sees as outstanding barriers and key harmonization priorities.

Mr. Robert suggested that stakeholders need to:

- Consider how technology will change vehicles of the future;
- Implement technologies that improve safety and fuel efficiency;
- Implement LCVs more broadly in order to compensate for a shortage of drivers;

- Eliminate barriers within Canada as NAFTA aims to eliminate barriers between North American countries.
- Consider and address the changing nature of intermodal freight and the implications for highway transport. The weight of intermodal containers has been increasing, with larger cranes being installed at ports to carry heavier loads

Mr. Billing observed that the capacity of infrastructure to carry weight and accommodate dimensions has been pushed to its limit and it cannot increase further without rebuilding the infrastructure. He also noted that the Australian approach of using performance-based standards should be considered in Canada. He remarked that it would be helpful if the US adopted Canada's national MOU.

Ms. Ritchie concurred with Mr. Billing's remark about the state of infrastructure and suggested it would be appropriate to advise the Premiers that significant investment in infrastructure is needed. She also suggested that harmonization is needed with regard to the interpretation of regulations and that guidance and better training is needed at the enforcement level.

Mr. Seeley noted that more rest areas are needed in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as drivers cannot find safe places to stop.

Mr. Bond suggested that the regulatory system needs to be more responsive and react more quickly to innovation by the industry.

Mr. Gilks further suggested that regulations should not only react to, but facilitate and encourage, innovation in the sector.

Mr. Overing observed that manufacturers may not wish to reveal innovative products too early in the development process and suggested that governments should allow a certain amount of testing outside of the regulations in order to facilitate development.

Mr. Delaney observed that the vehicle and equipment design process ought to take transportation needs and constraints into consideration, noting that drilling rigs are often designed without considering how they will be delivered to their destination.

Mr. Church suggested information sharing is helpful, noting that where a technology or an approach has worked in one jurisdiction it may be easier to implement it in others. He also suggested it would be helpful if disharmony in regulations could be clearly identified.

Mme Lessard suggested it would be helpful if more detailed information on special permit conditions was readily available on provincial and territorial websites, noting that while manufacturers are anxious to comply with regulations and specifications, there are challenges faced in following and obtaining information on different regulations in different jurisdictions.

In summary, participants discussed the value of fora such as the Task Force that provide opportunities for governments, manufacturers, shippers and carriers to work together to improve productivity and noted the importance of speeding up the regulatory process and being proactive rather than reactive.

5. Submission from Canadian Trucking Alliance

Mr. Wood provided a presentation (Attachment 4) and reviewed a number of issues deserving attention in the MOU, including:

- weight allowances for auxiliary power units and particulate traps in new engines;

- extended length boat tails;
- weight limits for axles fitted with wide-based single tires;
- weight and length exemptions to accommodate moose bumpers;
- weight exemptions for trailer skirts on tractor semi-trailers.

Mr. Smith provided a presentation (Attachment 5) on the federal regulations regarding use of “boat tails” in the United States and research by ATDynamics on extended length boat tails. He noted that seven US fleets are operating with ATDynamics trailer tails approximately four feet in length. He reported that fuel efficiency is improved when compared to shorter tails and that there are also improved safety benefits.

Mr. Madill suggested Ontario would be receptive to longer boat tails but would need individual designs to be certified with respect to safety, especially when operating under snow and ice conditions. He suggested leadership from the federal government may be needed in this area.

Participants enquired if fuel savings had been estimated when multiple technologies, such as boat tails, wide tires and trailer skirts, are used together. It was suggested the savings would not be strictly additive but nearly so.

Mr. Park observed that disc brakes enhance safety but are heavier than drum brakes, which has prevented greater market penetration. He suggested that consideration be given to making a weight allowance for disc brakes to encourage their adoption by the industry.

At the conclusion of discussion of these matters, Mr. Wood urged that the recommended amendments be made to the MOU as soon as possible to assist the struggling industry. He asked that Mr. Pearson provide a formal consolidated response to CTA following the meeting.

6. Stability and Control – Roll Coupled Trailers

a) Research on Truck/Full-Trailer Dynamic Performance

Mr. Sinett provided a presentation (Attachment 6) regarding FP Innovations planned research to improve the dynamic performance of truck/full trailers. He noted that Phase 2 of the project is in progress and a prototype roll-coupling device has been built. He invited feedback from participants, adding that the testing procedure is being developed and will be conducted soon.

b) Double Pintle Hook Pony Trailers

Mr. Wulff introduced a video that demonstrated roll-coupled pintle hook trailers and requested an amendment to accommodate them in the national MOU.

Mr. Gilks reported that BC is working with Mr. Wulff and FP Innovations on this project and would report back to the Task Force on developments. Mr. Madill expressed interest in working with BC on the matter and noted it is timely given Ontario’s vehicle reform project. He also suggested that Transport Canada be involved in the process so that work towards a standard could begin.

7. Wide Base Single Tires

a) Update on Research and Regulatory Changes

Mr. Pearson reported that the Engineering and Research Support Committee (ERSC) of the Council of Deputy Ministers had commissioned a study at Université Laval to investigate the impacts of wide base tires on thin asphalt structures. He noted it is hoped the research will help ERSC evaluate the impacts of any further changes to the weight limit on axles fitted with these tires. Mr. Pearson offered to share the research report with the Task Force when it becomes available.

b) Retrofitting – Transition Schedule and Minimum Track Width

Mr. Overing noted that the national MOU had been amended to relax the minimum track width requirement to 2.3 m for existing trailers retrofitted with wide base single tires. He also noted that the amendment requires that 2008 model year vehicles meet the basic requirement of 2.5 m minimum track width. However, Mr. Overing noted that the 2008 vehicles were already delivered in the year the regulations were changed and he said the conversion period should be moved to 2010.

Mr. Madill suggested the date of manufacture, rather than the model year, should be specified.

8. Tractor Wheelbase Limits

Ms. Ritchie inquired which jurisdictions are allowing longer wheel base limits following the Québec model. It was noted that:

- Manitoba allows longer wheel bases by permit
- New Brunswick adopted the Québec model in regulation
- Nova Scotia will do so through regulations and
- PEI accommodates longer tractors under permit, also following the Québec model which requires reduced trailer wheelbase.

Mr. Robert observed that longer tractor wheelbases will increase fuel consumption and the focus should be on bringing the trailer closer to the cab.

Mr. Shupe remarked that, in his sector, a longer wheelbase is necessary to accommodate additional vehicular requirements in the regulations. It was suggested that an additional 26 inches will be needed by 2010.

9. Weight Exemptions for Disc Brakes

It was noted this issue had been addressed earlier under Agenda #5.

10. Liftable Axle Technologies

In the absence of several key representatives, discussion of this issue was deferred until a future meeting.

11. Harmonization of Over-dimensional Permits in Atlantic Canada

It was noted that work is in progress to standardize terms with respect to the movement of six classes of over-dimensional loads in Atlantic Canada. It was further noted that each jurisdiction has identified routes upon which such loads can travel. Finally, it was noted that an Escort Vehicle Drivers' Handbook had been prepared to accompany the Atlantic agreement, based on a model published in Alberta, and would be available shortly.

12. Escort Vehicles and Drivers

Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Services) reported that she is assembling the pilot car/escort vehicle requirements from all jurisdictions, and would have a document for participants at the next meeting.

Mr. Delaney noted that the oil and gas industry has developed a pilot car course and the intention is to make it a requirement for operators. He also suggested there should be a harmonized approach to the rights and responsibilities of escort vehicle drivers.

13. Other Business

Mr. Robert expressed concern about conflicts that exist between federal and provincial regulations and inquired about means to resolve such conflicts. He sought clarification about vehicle importation processes and it was noted that dealers are responsible for ensuring vehicles brought into Canada meet Canadian standards. Mr. Harbour (Transport Canada) agreed to determine who at Transport Canada is responsible for such regulations and to share that information with participants.

Action: Harbour

Mr. Seeley remarked that wheel bearing wear is a safety concern and suggested this be raised as an item for discussion at the next meeting of CCMTA's Periodic Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee. Mr. MacEwen offered to raise this issue with CCMTA.

As an information item, Ms. McKee noted there have been instances of trailers being imported from the US that do not meet MOU requirements for minimum track width. It was noted that the US does not have a regulation regarding track width.

14. Harmonization of LCV Permits in Western Canada

Mr. Pearson drew attention to the draft proposal, which had been circulated in advance, regarding special permit conditions for the operation of Turnpike Doubles and Rocky Mountain Doubles on multi-lane highways in western Canada.

Mr. Gilks provided a status report, noting that work is expected to be completed in the spring of 2009. Mr. Moroz noted that the work has been focused initially on development of common vehicle specifications to facilitate travel through the region.

15. LCV Permits in Eastern Canada: Review of Developments

a) Working Group Progress Report

Mr. Madill drew attention to the document that had been circulated in advance, which identified differences between Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with respect to LCV permit requirements. He reported the provinces are working through the differences in pursuit of harmonization and he suggested some good progress is being made, although some differences remain to be resolved.

With respect to driver training, it was noted that NB, NS and ON currently require a CTA LCV Driver Certificate but QC requires a "T" endorsement on a driver's license. Mr. Janelle suggested QC may make the "T" endorsement equivalent to CTA certification and it was also noted the jurisdictions may begin to recognize the qualifications granted by each other. It was reported that the certificates would be carrier-issued and would not be transferrable with a driver.

With respect to tractor horsepower, it was noted that it is difficult to monitor torque requirement. It was reported that QC has agreed to match ON's requirement of 425 HP and that NS has agreed to meet NB's requirement of 460 HP.

With respect to electronic stability control, Mr. Madill indicated that ON will require all LCV tractors to be equipped with ESC. In addition, the lead trailer may not be equipped with a roll stability system unless it also controls the dolly and second trailer brakes. Mr. Janelle, Mr. Stonehouse and Ms. Lynch all indicated they would evaluate the issue.

With respect to enhanced braking systems, Mr. Madill indicated ON will have a number of specific requirements and QC, NB and NS have indicated agreement in principle. It was noted that LCV's

will be highly visible vehicles and that all appropriate safety precautions are being taken. It was further noted that enhanced braking systems might become requirements for other truck configurations in the future.

With respect to high-mounted brake lights, it was noted that ON and QC will not require them, but NS and NB will. Ms. Lynch indicated this is based on results of research conducted at the University of New Brunswick, which she offered to share with the other interested jurisdictions.

With respect to container chassis, it was noted that they will be an acceptable LCV configuration in ON and QC. Mr. Stonehouse reported that NS is looking at it favourably. Ms. Lynch indicated the acceptability of this configuration was under review in NB.

With respect to configurations allowed, it was noted that QC and ON will allow A and B trains, with QC eliminating C trains. Ms. Lynch noted that NB would permit both A and C trains. She noted that industry interest in use of C trains was not anticipated, and the Province would be reviewing the acceptability of B trains. Mr. Stonehouse reported that NS would be allowing A Trains, and was giving serious consideration to also allowing B Trains.

With respect to winter operations, it was noted year-round operation will be permitted in ON, NB and NS, although none would not allow LCVs to operate during inclement weather or in slippery conditions. Mr. Janelle indicated QC has not allowed LCV operations during the winter (December, January and February), but was prepared to review this position in the future, based on experience in other jurisdictions.

With respect to dangerous goods, it was noted that QC and NS will not permit the transport of dangerous goods on LCVs. It was also noted that NB does not permit the transport of Class 1 and 7 goods on LCVs. Mr. Madill reported that ON had reviewed its position and will maintain that placardable amounts are not permitted.

With respect to gross vehicle weight limits, disparity was noted between the provinces. Ms. Lynch reported that NB would consider increasing the GVW to 63,500 kgs, consistent with ON, but that the implications for the highway system, which is operated in some places in the province by private companies, would have to be considered. Mr. Stonehouse suggested NS would review the GVW limit at the end of the pilot project.

With respect to carrier's safety performance, it was noted that ON is the only one of the four provinces to have established a "Satisfactory" or better Carrier Safety Rating as a permit requirement. Mr. Janelle indicated QC is consulting on the regulations and would consider ON's approach. It was noted that the matter will be reviewed in NS and NB.

b) Specific Issues

It was noted that issues pertaining to LCVs with intermodal containers are under review.

It was noted that new generation wide base single tires would be allowed on LCV's under the same conditions and limits as for other vehicles.

With respect to accessing LCV corridors, Mr. Madill noted that in ON it will be expected that origin and destination points will generally be within 2 kms of the highway system. He added that carriers will need to prepare an engineering evaluation of the planned off-highway route and submit it to municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation for review and approval. Mr. Madill also noted

that the Ministry will not provide yards where LCVs can be formed or broken up but he suggested shippers and carriers may wish to collaborate to develop such facilities.

16. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should be convened in November 2009 and that consideration be given to scheduling it in conjunction with the Cargo Securement Subcommittee of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance.

17. Adjournment

There being no further business, participants were thanked for their contributions to a productive meeting.

Prepared by: Sarah Wells
Date: December 17, 2008

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1: List of Participants
- Attachment 2: Presentation – National Update
- Attachment 3: Council of the Federation Regulatory Harmonization Initiative
- Attachment 4: Canadian Trucking Alliance Presentation
- Attachment 5: ATDynamics Boat Tail Presentation
- Attachment 6: FP Innovations Truck – Trailer Stability Research

Attachment 1:

**Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy
Meeting – November 25, 2008 Toronto**

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