



Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

Date: Thursday May 14 and Friday May 15, 1998
Location: Holiday Inn, Calgary
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: (See Attachment 1)

Part 1 - Thursday Morning, May 14: Special Permit Conditions for Longer Combination Vehicles

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He briefly reviewed the proposed agenda, noting that this was the first of three sessions planned over a two day period to address specific compatibility issues related to special permits.

He noted that the issue of harmonizing permit requirements for LCV's had been identified as a priority at the meeting held in Regina in September 1997, and as a result, had been included in the current workplan for the Task Force (approved by the Council of Deputy Ministers in March). He reported that Mr. Oldridge from B.C. was not able to participate in the LCV discussions, but would be available for the discussions of other issues.

A round table of introductions was conducted.

2. Review of Issues - Permit Conditions for LCV's

a) Update on Driver Training and Qualification Harmonization Initiatives

Mr. Smythe provided a brief status report on the joint effort between Alberta and Saskatchewan to develop common driver training and certification procedures for LCV drivers. He noted that while significant progress had been made, not all issues had been resolved.

Mr. Smith reported that STA had completed a "train the trainer" program for LCV driver training, which had been provided to ATA for review. He also noted that a committee of 5 carriers in Saskatchewan had been formed to review a proposal to increase the overall length limit for Rocky Mountain Doubles to 31 metres, under the Partnership Program.

Mr. Catteeuw indicated that Manitoba was interested in participating in these discussions, but recognized that the primary focus had been on resolution of the differences in driver training/certification requirements between Alberta and Saskatchewan. Mr. Smythe indicated that he would be pleased to include Manitoba in future discussions of the project group.

Action: Smythe

Mr. Smythe reported that there was considerable interest in improving the compatibility of technical requirements which apply to LCV operations in western Canada, including weight and dimension limits and route restrictions. He suggested that work on these issues could not be lead by the existing

project committee on driver training/qualifications, and that a leadership role by the Task Force would be welcomed.

b) General Discussion

A general discussion of existing weight, dimension and routing requirements for LCV's occurred. A number of points respecting the need for improved compatibility of permit requirements emerged:

- Adoption of common overall length limits for Turnpike and Rocky Mountain Doubles
- Box length and overall length limits - whether controls on both are needed
- Coordination of polices on route restrictions for different LCV types
- Speed limit restrictions
- Policies on movement of converter dollies without trailers
- Hitch offset limits
- Hours of operation, highway types, road condition and visibility restrictions

It was also suggested that the results of past research and testing of LCV's be reviewed in the context of ensuring that the findings were based on current industry practice and experience with loading and equipment specification.

In addition, the issue of safety experience, accident data and monitoring of LCV permit operations was discussed. Concern was expressed that governments were not able to provide good information on the safety record of trucks in general, and LCV's in particular. In the face of criticism and allegations of safety problems from groups such as CRASH, it was agreed that both government and industry need better information to accurately represent the on-road safety experience.

3. Conclusions

- **It was agreed** that efforts should be directed towards harmonization of special permit requirements for LCV operations within western Canada.
- **It was agreed** that a discussion paper containing draft proposals for standardized permit requirements would be prepared for review and comment by government, carrier and shipper representatives.

Action: Secretary

- **It was agreed** that this proposal should be comprehensive in its coverage, including weight and dimension limits, route restrictions, hours of operation, and other conditions commonly included in special permit authorities.
- **It was agreed** that the discussion paper would be completed by the end of June, and that comments would be provided by all parties no later than the end of September.

Action: All members

- It was suggested that a report be provided to the western Premiers and Ministers of Transportation on the work which is being carried out, accompanied by a request that no further changes in LCV permit conditions be introduced by provinces while agreement is being sought on permit standardization.

4. Other Business

There being no further business, discussion under Part 1 was concluded at 12:00 noon.

**Part 2 - Thursday Afternoon, May 14:
Western Regional Harmonization/Specialized Equipment Issues**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Pearson called the meeting to order, welcomed new participants, and called for round table introductions.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was briefly reviewed and was adopted with the addition of two items:

- correspondence from United Van Lines and Atlas Van Lines regarding length limits applicable to movement of household goods containers
- weight limits and configurations for aggregate hauling (Alberta Construction Trucking Association)

3. Regulatory Harmonization Updates

a) National Standards

Mr. Pearson provided a brief overview of the work of the national Task Force over the past year, and reviewed the changes in MOU standards which had been endorsed by the Council of Ministers in June 1997. He noted that nine changes had been approved for implementation by the provinces and territories no later than July 1, 1998 (Attachment 2).

b) Status Reports

Mr. Oldridge reported that BC had already introduced the nine changes in regulations effective January 1998.

Mr. Catteeuw reported that Manitoba was currently prepared to issue special permits for the nine changes in MOU standards, and that these would be included in changes in the regulations by the fall.

Mr. Moroz reported that Alberta's regulations would be changed by July 1 to accommodate the MOU amendments, and that permits were currently available for vehicles which comply with the changes in dimension limits.

Mr. Gilks noted that the changes would be introduced in Saskatchewan by July 1.

The seven recommendations which have not yet been addressed were reviewed (Attachment 3). It was noted that national consensus had not yet been achieved on any of these issues.

Mr. Moroz reported that Alberta had already introduced the proposed increase in box length on A Trains (to 20 metres), and was prepared to support the proposed increases in tandem and tridem axle weights as either western regional or national standards. Mr. Catteeuw noted that Manitoba was prepared to support greater uniformity in weight and dimension regulations, and had originally indicated that tandem and tridem axle weight increases could be supported as regional or national standards. He noted however, that concerns had recently been expressed by the bridge engineers in Manitoba with the proposed changes, and that further study was underway.

Mr. Gilks reported that Saskatchewan had difficulty supporting any increases in axle weight limits because of the implications for its already deteriorating highway infrastructure. Mr. Oldridge noted that BC supported the proposed increase in A Train Box Length and had adopted a 24,000 kg limit on

medium spread tridems in 1988. He noted, however, that BC was not prepared to support the proposed increase in weight limit on tandem axle groups because of the implications for pavements.

In discussion it was generally agreed that the issues are complex and the potential consequences not clearly understood. **It was proposed, and agreed, by motion** (Baird/Sokil) that the secretary prepare a "primer" on the outstanding recommended changes to the MOU in plain language, with an explanation of the technical and economic issues for each.

Action: Secretary

Mr. Pearson noted that discussions had also been underway since 1995 with the US and Mexico under NAFTA in pursuit of improving the compatibility of weight and dimension regulations. He noted that a major review of size and weight issues had been commissioned by the US Federal Highway Administration for completion later in 1998. He commented that while no specific proposals for harmonization were under consideration, priority had been accorded to pursuit of greater compatibility of dimension limits. He noted that some of the changes being considered could result in equipment being used in Canada which would not be widely accepted in the US.

c) Proposed Change in A Train Box Length Limit

Mr. Baird provided copies of a report on the implications of the proposal to increase the box length limit from 18.5 m to 20 m, which had been prepared by Mr. Pearson. He noted that this was an important issue, and expressed the hope that adoption of this proposal would occur in the near future on either a national or western regional basis.

d) Proposed Change in Box Length Limit for B Trains

Mr. Pearson reported that a proposal to change two of the MOU dimension limits had been advanced at the Task Force meeting in Montreal in February. He noted that it had been agreed that the implications of the proposed changes should be studied before further action was taken.

Mr. Pettit provided a brief overview of the proposal and the underlying operational considerations. He reported that CF was interested in employing slightly longer trailers in a B Train configuration, provided the performance of the vehicle remained within acceptable limits.

Copies of a report which contained an analysis of the consequences of the proposal were distributed, and Mr. Pearson provided a brief overview of the findings. He noted that, while the specific proposal advanced by CF remained within the performance limits of the MOU, the proposed changes in box length and sum of trailer wheelbases could allow other configurations to be developed which would not meet the performance criteria.

Mr. Moore noted that Western Star had provided a submission to the Task Force in the late 1980's regarding the impact of shortening tractor wheelbases, and offered to assist in the assessment of the proposed changes.

In concluding the discussion, **it was agreed by motion** (Baird/Dolyniuk) that further study of the proposal be carried out with a view to determining whether the proposed changes could be refined to ensure that any vehicle configurations which meet the dimensional constraints would remain within the desired performance limits.

Action: Secretary

e) Proposed Change in Weight Limits for C Trains

Mr. Gilks reported that he was working with Mr. Albrechtsen in understanding the specific configurations of C train combinations in current usage. He reported that a review of the results of

past research and testing was being carried out to determine, from a technical perspective, whether the performance characteristics of C trains would warrant an increase in GVW to the same level as B Trains. He noted that further work was needed to complete this analysis and that a report would be available for review by the next meeting.

Action: Gilks, Albrechtsen

4. Specialized Equipment - Oilfield Industry

A discussion of the operational and technical issues faced by the oilfield industry ensued, with particular focus on differences in special permitting requirements between provinces. Members provided a number of perspectives on weight and dimension related issues faced by the oilfield servicing industry. It was observed that there has been a steady increase in the size and weight of loads which must be transported, which has required increases in the size and cost of trucks used within the industry.

A number of possible approaches to improving the compatibility of permit conditions within western Canada were discussed. It was suggested that efforts be taken to develop consensus within the industry on priorities for resolution by the Task Force.

In this regard, **it was agreed** that a proposal would be developed by the oilfield industry representatives in the form of a discussion paper for review by the Task Force membership at large.

It was agreed that this proposal would be completed before the end of June, under the leadership of the Petroleum Services Association of Canada, to be chaired by Marlow Rushfelt of Jo-ann Trucking, for review and comment over the summer.

Action: PSAC, All members

Mr. Rushfelt indicated that a meeting would be convened in Red Deer on May 28 to begin work on this proposal. He noted that participation in this work was open to any interested parties.

5. Other Business

a) Correspondence from United Van Lines and Atlas Van Lines

Mr. Pearson reported that correspondence had been received from both household goods moving companies on problems which have arisen in Manitoba with respect to application of the 16.2 metre trailer length limit to flatdeck trailers moving household goods containers. Mr. Baird and Mr. Dolyniuk provided further explanation of the issue and the operational constraints, noting that the arrangement of containers on the flatdeck can result in overhangs of up to 1 foot at the front and/or rear of the trailer.

Mr. Catteuw noted that the trailer length limit regulation applies to this configuration, and that no provision is made for overhangs beyond 16.2 metres for divisible loads. Mr. Moroz and Mr. Gilks indicated that similar regulations exist in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Mr. Oldridge indicated that BC's regulation was consistent with those in other provinces.

It was agreed that a national level review would be conducted of the applicable regulations in each province and territory, and in particular, the acceptability of load overhang beyond the trailer length limit, for review by the Task Force. **It was further agreed** that national consistency was required in this area, and should be discussed by the full national committee at the next opportunity.

Action: Secretary

b) Truck - Full Trailer Weight Limits

Mr. Singer of the Alberta Construction Trucking Association provided a brief presentation on the problems faced within his industry in selecting a vehicle configuration with adequate payload. He indicated that the cap on the GVW of seven axle Truck - Full Trailer configurations was problematic, and asked that consideration be given to increasing the limit to the sum of axle weights. In discussion, it was noted that the GVW had been capped as a result of research and testing on this configuration, and that any consideration of changes in the limits would require assurance that the performance criteria would be respected. It was agreed that a copy of the research reports completed on this configuration would be provided to Mr. Singer.

Action: Secretary

c) Tandem Steer - Tridem Drive Trucks

Mr. Barclay provided a brief description of the oilfield servicing vehicle which his company had built, using tandem steer and tridem drive. He reported that while the configuration was ideally suited for operation on oilfield sites, it was too heavy to obtain a permit for operation on the highway. He expressed the hope that this configuration would be addressed in the work of the Task Force.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Part 2 of the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

**Part 3 - Friday, May 15:
Special Permit Conditions for Oversize/Overweight Vehicles and Loads &
Agricultural Sector Issues**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Pearson called the meeting to order, welcomed new participants, and called for round table introductions.

2. Review of Current Oversize/Overweight Permit Programs

Copies of a submission prepared by Mr. Ed Boon of Aspen Trailers were distributed. Mr. Oldridge provided a brief overview of the submission, indicating that Mr. Boon had been working with the heavy haul committee of the BC Trucking Association on compatibility issues between BC and Alberta and between BC and the United States.

Mr. Loewen also spoke to this initiative, noting that greater compatibility of permit conditions between Canada and the United States was a high priority. He suggested that efforts be directed to developing an "envelope" vehicle agreement with the western border states.

Mr. Moroz reported that efforts were underway in Alberta to develop a "one window" special permit agreement within Alberta, whereby a single permit would be recognized for travel on both provincial and county roads. He noted that discussions were underway with the county authorities and that a means to distribute the permit fee to counties on the basis of distance traveled was under consideration.

Mr. Gilks noted that similar discussions were underway in Saskatchewan, and that there was a desire to reduce the administrative burden associated with oversize/overweight permits. Mr. Oldridge noted that a review of weigh scale locations and hours of operation was underway in BC from the perspective of providing more readily accessible access to permits and other requirements.

Concern was expressed with the practicality of a regional permitting agreement between the western provinces if additional permits were required, or would not be available from, counties or municipalities.

Mr. Albrechtsen suggested that the feasibility of obtaining special permits over the Internet should be considered.

In concluding this part of the discussion, **it was agreed** that efforts be directed to developing a western regional agreement on oversize/overweight permits in keeping with the envelope vehicle concept developed and used in the western US. **It was further** agreed that this agreement should include both annual and single trip permits.

Mr. Moroz commented that the issues of permit and vehicle compatibility are complicated, and need to be addressed on a staged basis. He suggested that a near term goal should be to seek consensus on a common philosophy on bridge capacity as a foundation to support development of consistency in other areas.

In this regard **it was further agreed** that the group working on a proposal for common treatment of oilfield industry configurations should also be charged with developing proposals for prioritizing and resolving compatibility issues for oversize/overweight permits.

It was agreed that Mr. Rushfelt would include this on the agenda of the meeting scheduled for May 28, and that a draft proposal for a western regional permit agreement would be prepared before the end of June for review and comment by the Task Force.

Action: PSAC, All members

3. Escort Vehicles/Pilot Car Requirements

In discussion a number of concerns were raised with the compatibility of requirements between states and provinces for the use of pilot cars and with marking, signing or lighting of oversize/overweight loads. It was suggested that the use of the "D" sign is confusing to the public, and that the "Oversize Load" sign used in the United States is more widely understood.

In discussion, **it was agreed by motion** (Smith/Moore) that CCMTA's Drivers and Vehicles Committee be asked to consider including more detail on oversize/overweight vehicles, signing, escort vehicles in driver training curricula. It was reported that there are nearly 50% more movements of overdimensional loads than two years ago.

In concluding this discussion, and in light of the work which has been commissioned, **it was agreed** that resolution of the differences in signing, marking and escort vehicle usage be deferred until further progress is made on other issues.

4. Tridem Drive Tractors/Trucks

Mr. Sokil suggested that consideration be given to broader acceptance of tridem drive tractors within western Canada. In discussion a number of perspectives were offered on this issue. It was suggested that tridem drives would reduce the need for tandem steer trucks, which experience has shown to be less stable. A counter opinion was also offered that tandem steer trucks are often better than single steer configurations.

Mr. Moroz noted that Alberta's use of tridem drive tractors was based on testing and recommendations done by the Forest Engineering Research Institute, and offered to make the results available to interested parties. He noted that permits are only available for the specific configuration tested by FERIC.

5. Agricultural Sector Issues

A discussion of developments which have occurred in the design of agricultural equipment took place. It was noted that some types of farm equipment have increased considerably in size, but still need to be moved on the highway.

Mr. Germain acknowledged that some types and sizes of equipment pose challenges to movement on the highway network. He suggested that the implement manufacturing industry needed to work with, and receive clear guidance from, the highway transport regulators on the weight and dimension limits which can be accommodated on the highway.

In discussion, questions were raised on whether, from a transportation safety perspective, there should be differences in the requirements for movement of agricultural equipment compared to vehicles operated by the oilfield servicing and the heavy haul industry.

In this regard **it was agreed by motion** (Lillemoen/Sokil) that the requirements (signing, marking, pilot cars etc) for movement of agricultural equipment on the highway should be generally the same as for movement of other types of oversize/overweight loads.

6. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

Secretary: John Pearson

Date Distributed: June 15, 1998

Attachment 1: Participants

Part 1: Special Permit Conditions for Longer Combination Vehicles, May 14

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Part 2: Western Regional Harmonization/Specialized Equipment Issues, May 14, 1998

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Part 3: Heavy Haul and Agricultural Industry Issues - May 15, 1998

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Attachment 2

Summary of Changes Which Have Been Included in the June 1997 Amended Memorandum of Understanding

1. The box length limit for truck-pony trailer and truck-full trailer configurations is increased to 20 metres (from 18.5 m).
2. The interaxle spacing between the axle(s) on the lead trailer and the converter dolly of A and C Train Doubles can be less than 3.0 m, but weight limit restrictions will apply.
3. If the interaxle spacing from the axle(s) on the lead trailer to the converter dolly axle of A and C Doubles is less than 3.0 m, the weight limit for a two axle group will be the same as for tandem axle, and for a three axle group, the same as for a tridem with a spread of 3.0 - 3.6 m.
4. The maximum hitch offset is standardized for all configurations at 1.8 meters.
5. The fifth wheel position on the lead trailer of a B Train must not be located more than 0.3 meters behind the center of the last axle on the lead semitrailer.
6. The national standard for steering axle weight limit on straight trucks is increased to 7250 kg.
7. Vehicles which are fitted with lift axles will be recognized as meeting the "national standards", provided that when the lift axles are raised, all other requirements are met. (Note: In accepting this recommendation jurisdictions can chose to eliminate any liftable axles from the determination of axle and/or gross vehicle weight limits for a vehicle)
8. The minimum wheelbase requirement for all semitrailers, pony trailers and full trailers is standardized at 6.25 m.
9. Weight limit caps on the second trailer of A and C train double trailer combinations are removed and replaced by the requirement that the weight of the tractor drive axles + the weight of the lead trailer axles must be greater than the weight of the second trailer.

Attachment 3

Additional Recommendations Proposed by Stakeholders But Not Included in June 1977 MOU Amendment

10. The major interprovincial routes within the designated highway system of the national agreement should not be subject to scheduled weight limit reductions in the spring thaw period.
11. The box length limit for A Train Doubles should be increased to 20 metres (from 18.5 m)
12. The gross weight limit for eight (or nine) axle B Trains should be increased to 63,500 kg.
13. The national standard for the weight limit of all tandem axle configurations with spreads between 1.2 and 1.85 metres should be increased from 17,000 kg to 18,000 kg.
14. The national standard for the weight limit of tridem axle groups with spreads from 3.0 m to < 3.6 m should be increased from 23,000 kg to 24,000 kg.
15. The national standard for the gross vehicle weight limit of 8 axle C Trains should be increased to 60,500 kg.
16. The national standard for the weight limit of tridem axle groups with spreads from 3.6 m to 3.7 m should be increased from 24,000 kg to 26,000 kg.