



Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety

Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy

Minutes

(Draft December 9, 2015)

Date: December 3, 2015
Location: Hotel Omni Mont-Royal, Montreal
Chair: John Pearson
In Attendance: 65 participants, see Attachment 1

1. Welcome and Opening

Mr. Pearson opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

2. Roundtable Introductions and Adoption of the Agenda

Following roundtable introductions, Mr. Pearson drew attention to the agenda and invited additions; none were proposed and the agenda was adopted as circulated.

3. Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations in Canada – Update on issues and Developments a) National Development and MOU Amendments

Mr. Pearson provided a presentation (Attachment 2), noting that the Task Force on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions Policy provides a national focus for coordination and harmonization of provincial and territorial regulations, policies and practices. He said that regular reports are provided by the Task Force to the Council of Deputy Ministers in order to advance recommendations on regulatory harmonization priorities and amendments to the standards contained in the National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Vehicle Weights and Dimensions.

Mr. Pearson noted that, in October 2014, the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety had approved amendments to the MOU pertaining to:

- Addition of a tridem drive tractor-semitrailer configuration as a new category;
- The allowable size of aerodynamic devices on the rear of trucks and trailers (increased to 1.52 m/5 ft.);
- The overall length limit for B-trains (increased to 27.5 m from 25 m).

Mr. Pearson noted that each of the amendments had originated from proposals presented at annual meetings of the Task Force. He observed that amendments to the MOU have no immediate effect; implementation may require time for regulatory or policy changes to be made in each jurisdiction.

b) Provincial/Territorial Developments – Roundtable reports by jurisdiction

In roundtable review the following reports were provided:

Prince Edward Island

Mr. MacEwen reported:

- The Province has adopted a new policy requiring police escorts when moving buildings over 24 ft. wide;

- A phase of the TransCanada Highway upgrade has been completed, addressing the alignment near Tryon;
- Two new roundabouts have been built;
- The penalty for distracted driving has been increased;
- Self-steer quad axle trailer configurations are allowed by permit;
- Vehicles fitted with wide base single tires are allowed by permit at a weight limit of 7700 kg per axle;
- B-trains are allowed on all routes in the province;
- All MOU amendments were implemented by enforcement order as of January 2015;
- The weigh scale at Wood Islands has been closed and replaced with a mobile scale service.

Ms. Ritchie (OBAC) inquired if a noticeable decrease in offences had occurred as a result of the increased penalty for distracted driving. Mr. MacEwen noted that the increase had taken effect very recently and there was not enough data to assess the impact.

Ms. Murray (Sparrow Piloting Service) asked if there is a variance for pilot car drivers with respect to the distracted driving legislation, given their need to use hand-held CB radios. Mr. MacEwen confirmed that the law does not apply to two-way radio communication devices.

Mr. Millian (Private Motor Truck Council of Canada) asked if an increase can be foreseen in weight limits for vehicles fitted with wide base single tires. Mr. MacEwen explained that the pavement structures in Prince Edward Island do not have as strong a base as in some other jurisdictions where weight limits have been increased, and there are concerns about the damage that would be caused by vehicles fitted with wide base single tires carrying heavier weights. He said the Province will retain a weight limit of 7700 kg per axle at this time.

Nova Scotia

Mr. Balsom reported that the 2014 MOU amendments had recently been signed and he confirmed the regulatory amendment had been completed to be compliant with the MOU.

He also noted that the Province has expanded the network which can be used by quad axle trailer configurations.

He said a review of the Province's permitting system will be conducted in the next six months to facilitate permitting without sacrificing the engineering analysis needed to support permits.

Mr. Balsom reported that the roll-coupled hitch pilot program had been completed. He said there had been moderate uptake but overwhelmingly positive feedback from drivers. He confirmed the Province now permits roll-coupled hitches following the completion of the pilot program.

With respect to wide base single tires, Mr. Balsom said the Province is still reviewing the matter and a decision about increasing weight limits has not been made. Mr. Picard (APTA) noted that a lot of research has been conducted about wide base single tires but there has been no change made to weight limits. Mr. Balsom remarked that the issue is with respect to potential pavement damage and will require a decision by the Province's pavement engineers rather than those responsible for vehicle weights and dimensions.

With respect to distracted driving legislation, Mr. Balsom confirmed that two-way radios are exempt. He said he would follow up with Ms. Ritchie when he had more data regarding the impact of legislation on offences.

Newfoundland and Labrador

Mr. Murray said:

- There is not yet enough data to show the effectiveness of penalties in reducing distracted driving,
- Two-way radios are excluded from distracted driving legislation, and
- No change is currently planned regarding the weight limits on axles fitted with wide base single tires.

Mr. Murray reported that an amendment to the Province's regulations had been made to address the 2014 MOU amendments.

He also said that retired and active members with Department of National Defence (DND) 404 permits will be granted equivalent classes of license upon presentation of signed forms.

He added that NL amended its Highway Traffic Act in 2014 to permit the use of the eight way flashing lamp system on school buses.

Saskatchewan

Mr. Cipywnyk said that, with respect to distracted driving legislation, use of two-way radios is exempted. He said his department does not have information on the effectiveness of penalties in reducing offences; he noted that Saskatchewan Government Insurance would keep such data.

With respect to wide base single tires, Mr. Cipywnyk noted that research conducted to date had not studied pavements as thin as those in Saskatchewan. He said that a project to look at the impacts of the new generation tires on Saskatchewan's pavements is being conducted by the University of Saskatchewan using Virginia Tech modelling.

Mr. Cipywnyk said the 2014 amendments to the national MOU had been included in the Province's regulation. He also noted:

- The Province's permitting system is being updated to including mapping. The bridge system will be pre-rated for typical heavy-haul configurations;
- The high load corridor is being expanded and efforts are being made to identify projects in high-demand areas to further expand the network;
- The western provinces are working to harmonize conditions for the operation of saddlemount configurations;
- Western regional agreements have been reached on turnpike doubles and Rocky Mountain Doubles;
- The Province has updated its policy regarding the movement of manufactured homes.

Alberta

Ms. Durdle said she did not have information available to answer the questions raised with respect to distracted driving legislation.

She reported that the weight restriction for axles fitted with wide base single tires is under review. She acknowledged the benefits that research has shown can be achieved but emphasized that the potential for pavement damage is a real concern for the Province.

Ms. Durdle noted that the Province is compliant with the 2014 national MOU amendments.

Ms. Durdle also reported on recent experience with operation of an extended length trailer between Calgary and Red Deer; she said no concerns had been raised by the driver. She explained that a

permit similar to those issued for long combination vehicle (LCV) operations had been issued for the trailer, with the box length limit removed but all other restrictions maintained.

Manitoba

Ms. Miller reported that the province has updated its regulations to be compliant with the 2014 MOU amendments.

She noted that the Province's weight limits on wide base single tires have also been updated in regulation. She said on RTAC routes wide base single tires now have weight parity with axles fitted with dual tires.

Ms. Miller said the department has established an internal steering committee to improve its processes with respect to vehicle weights and dimensions requests. She noted that issues being addressed include:

- Tandem axle spreads
- Longer wheelbase tractors on B-trains
- Wider B-trains
- Requests for other configurations.

Ms. Miller also reported that a significant project to update the Province's online permitting system is underway.

With respect to the questions raised about distracted driving, Ms. Miller indicated she would need to gather information before responding.

Mr. Shaw (Manitoba Trucking Association) inquired about work underway regarding requirements for pilot car driver training. Ms. Miller noted the work is being led by British Columbia. Ms. Lansing said final draft guidelines are expected to be released soon.

New Brunswick

Mr. White indicated that a different provincial department is responsible for distracted driving legislation.

He said that terms of reference have been developed for research to yield a true data-based decision with respect to weight limits for wide base single tires. He indicated that other research to date had not been specific to New Brunswick's pavements.

Mr. White reported that the three 2014 MOU amendments are being accommodated by permit or, in the case of the longer boat tails, by enforcement deferral.

He noted that New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario are working on harmonizing LCV operations. He also noted that Quebec and Ontario have agreed to a reciprocal recognition arrangement with respect to LCV drivers.

Mr. White also highlighted the Province's strategic corridor program. He explained that specific resource networks are being identified where higher weights can be allowed in exchange for use of the private network of that resource. He remarked that reductions in GHG emissions had been observed as a result of the program.

Finally, Mr. White reported that a web-based portal is being developed for the Province's permitting system.

Northwest Territories

Mr. Beaulieu referenced the two-year trial of special permits to allow eight-axle and nine-axle configurations and noted that no significant pavement damage had been observed. He said the permit period would be extended.

He said that a regulatory amendment is expected to be enacted next year to address the 2014 national MOU amendments. He noted that in the interim special permits would be issued for the three MOU amendments until the legislation is enacted.

Mr. Beaulieu also said that a self-weight scale is being built in the Territory.

In response to the questions already raised, Mr. Beaulieu said:

- The weight limit imposed on wide base single tires is largely due to the chip seal network in the Territory;
- Two way radios are exempted from the distracted driving legislation;
- Data is not available to assess the impact of legislation on distracted driving offences.

British Columbia

Ms. Lansing provided the following updates:

- The province has not yet moved to weight parity for wide base single tires but has not ruled out the possibility if new research were made available showing acceptable infrastructure and safety impacts;
- Two-way radios are not yet exempted from distracted driving legislation but specific exemptions for pilot cars have been requested;
- Project Cargo corridors for moving extraordinary loads are being studied and efforts to streamline the process are being made;
- onRouteBC will be the Province's permitting system – expected release date August 2016;
- Draft Pilot Car Load Movement Guidelines are expected to be released soon;
- Changes to regulations to address the 2014 MOU amendments have been submitted to Cabinet;
- Efforts are being made to establish parameters for the movement of “tiny homes” not built to CSA standards;
- Confusing language in the Province's regulations about steering axle weights for logging configurations is being clarified;
- Work continues on the Province's 10 axle logging routes, reducible load program, wheeler policy.

Quebec

Mr. Janelle provided a presentation (Attachment 3) with Quebec's update on issues and developments. He highlighted the status of the 2014 MOU amendments and said that work is underway to modify three regulations regarding load and size, special permits and LCVs. Mr. Janelle also identified five requests for changes to the regulations with respect to:

- Lifiable or loadable axle: tandem, tridem and quad axles
- Transit bus rear axle limit at 13,500 kg
- Boom truck (length 13.5 m, rear overhang 5 m)

- 10 wheel snow removal trucks (front axle 10,500 kg, total 28,500 kg)
- Log hauling truck (increase the total weight limit by 10% in the frozen period)

Ontario

Mr. Lynch reported that:

- The Highway Traffic Act was amended with respect to overall length limits of double-trailer combinations from 25 to 27.5 metres;
- Regulatory amendments to SPIF laws have been drafted and will go to committee, including longer wheelbase tractors on B-trains with a trade-off in the sum of double-trailer wheelbase, B-trains at overall length limits of 27.5 metres from the current 25 metre limit, longer boat tails, and an amendment to clarify grandfathering of truck-trailer combinations;
- The Extended Semitrailer Trial continues in the Province; there is room for additional carriers to join the trial;
- Last year, the Province removed conditions around winter operations of LCVs; this was seen as a successful measure as carriers adhered to conditions around weather and climate;
- The province has been taking stock of the LCV Program based on its success since beginning as a 'pilot' in 2009. The province expects to see moderate growth in the next five years; policies for administering the Program are being developed toward the future of the Program;
- The Ministry of Transportation is working with other departments to establish a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in goods movement;
- Legislation is expected that will designate tow trucks as commercial vehicles and subject them to weights, dimensions and hours of service rules;
- The definition of road building machines in the Highway Traffic Act is being reviewed whereby some vehicles will be re-classed as commercial motor vehicles.

Yukon Territory

Mr. Pearson conveyed regrets from the Yukon as representatives were unable to attend the meeting.

Transport Canada

Mr. Oommen highlighted work undertaken by the Department in several areas, including:

- Wind tunnel testing as part of the ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles program,
- Electronic logging devices,
- Electronic stability control systems for certain trucks and buses,
- Connected vehicle technologies for commercial vehicles, and
- In transit trucking.

Mr. Delaney (Petroleum Services Association of Canada) remarked that there are 40,000 users of medical marijuana in Canada and inquired if Transport Canada has considered issues related to drug-impaired driving in this context. He suggested that the federal government and regulators should be prepared to deal with issues that could arise.

Mr. Oommen said he did not have information about work that might be underway within Transport Canada on this matter. He asked if it had been raised at the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA). Mr. MacEwen confirmed that it was under discussion and

that drug-impaired driving is a priority issue for CCMTA. He added that the provinces and territories would likely look to the federal government for leadership on this complex issue.

In general discussion, Mr. Robert (Groupe Robert) remarked that the industry has made considerable investments in technologies that have been added to vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or use alternative fuels. He noted those technologies increase the weight of vehicles and he expressed frustration that governments have not made accommodations for the payload weight penalty this causes.

Mr. Pearson invited Mr. Loy (US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) to provide an update about developments in the US. Mr. Loy reported:

- A new transportation funding bill is expected to be signed very soon;
- The comprehensive truck size and weight study has not yielded the results sought by industry; increases in allowable size and weight are not expected;
- The final rule on Electronic On-Board Recorders should be published soon;
- Commercial vehicle tires are rated for speeds up to 65 mph but may be run at higher speeds; this is an issue that should be studied.

4. Long Combination Vehicle Operations – Updates

Mr. Pearson remarked that the status of harmonization of LCV operations in the western and central/eastern regions had been addressed during the provincial and territorial updates. He invited other comments or questions.

Mr. Park (OBAC) inquired about the legality of parking LCVs on the side of highways. Mr. White indicated that LCV permits in New Brunswick identify areas where LCVs can take emergency refuge.

On another matter, Mr. Millian noted that there is a lot of research being done on wide base single tires and asked if the Task Force provides a forum for provinces and territories to share that information. Mr. Pearson confirmed that research results have been shared at Task Force meetings and with the Engineering and Research Support Committee. He added that several related reports are posted on the website of the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. He noted that provincial and territorial regulations allow wide base tires to be used across Canada at the same weight limits that are allowed in the United States. He said the next debate would be about the possibility of nationally harmonized weight limits.

5. Technical Issues and Presentations

a) New Generation Wide Base Single Tire Study: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Mr. Beauchamp (Michelin Canada) and Mr. Beaulieu (WSP Canada) provided a presentation (Attachment 4) about a study of new generation wide base single tires and a cost-benefit analysis of removing related weight limitations. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Beauchamp said he would provide a copy of the study report for the secretariat to share with participants.

In discussion following the presentation, Mr. Robert sought clarification about the difference on pavement between old and new generation wide base single tires. Mr. Beauchamp explained that the difference is in the construction of the tire and that the new generation tires cause less damage because of the contact footprint.

A question was raised about loss of traction with wide base single tires. Mr. Beauchamp said no specific study had been conducted, Mr. Patten (National Research Council) said that a study had been conducted that showed loss of traction was a property of the tire itself and there was no direct correlation between traction capability and the tire concept. Mr. Klomp (Transport Canada) noted

that a related report had been shared with the Task Force in the past and is available through Transport Canada's website.

b) ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles

Ms. Belluz (Transport Canada) provided a presentation (Attachment 5) about a heavy duty vehicle drag reduction study conducted with the National Research Council as part of the ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles program. She provided an overview of the testing program that included 92 configurations with various tractor, trailer and drag reduction technologies. She summarized the results which showed that:

- Today's drag reduction technologies can improve the aerodynamic performance of dry-van trailers by up to 20%;
- Significant positive interaction effects occur when combining side-skirts and boat tails;
- Drag reductions are influenced by tractor style;
- Flatbeds benefit from side-skirts and a low tractor roof;
- LCV trailer-trailer gaps can be optimized.

Ms. Belluz provided a link to the full report as part of her presentation.

c) Long Wheelbase Tractors on B-Trains

Mr. Madill (CTA) provided a presentation (Attachment 6) regarding the Canadian Trucking Alliance's request for an amendment to the national MOU to allow long wheelbase tractors on B-trains. He acknowledged the 2014 amendment that addressed longer B-trains as per CTA's request but noted that the recommendation to allow 6.8m tractor wheelbases with offsets to control offtracking had not been included. Mr. Madill presented an offset table detailing reductions in the sum of trailer wheelbases for longer tractor wheelbases and he conveyed the CTA's request for immediate provisions in the MOU for B-train tractors up to 6.8 m. He asked the Task Force to advise if there are technical issues with the request so that they can be addressed.

Mr. Michaelson (FPInnovations) remarked that the logging industry does not need longer tractors but would benefit from longer box lengths with shorter tractor wheelbases. He suggested that if the MOU is being amended governments should consider longer box lengths with shorter tractors at the same gross vehicle weight.

Mr. Madill clarified that CTA was not making that request. Mr. Michaelson noted that the CTA is not the only organization making requests.

d) Reflex SIM (Suspension Intelligent Management System)

Mr. Sevigny (Cleral Inc.) provided a presentation (Attachment 7) about on-board scales and mechatronic solutions. He suggested that on-board weighing can be affordable, reliable and an effective tool to prevent overloading, offering benefits to the industry, reducing infrastructure damage, and improving road safety. He concluded by recommending that Canadian agencies make on-board weighing mandatory for all new heavy goods vehicles and that after-market obligations be considered as well.

e) Vehicle Turning Performance – Front Swingout

Mr. Billing (Consultant) provided a presentation (Attachment 8) about the front outswing of extended semitrailers. He provided background about semitrailer length limits and noted that analysis has shown that 18.4m semitrailers meet the performance standards and otherwise perform no differently than 16.2m semitrailers. Mr. Billing presented analyses of rear and front outswing, wheelbase lengths and kingpin setbacks. He concluded by saying that front outswing is the

limiting performance measure for 18.4m extended semitrailers. He added that a shorter tractor wheelbase may make a 19.55m semitrailer possible if the semitrailer front corners are chamfered.

f) Tire Loading Limits by Width of tire

Mr. Shaw inquired about steering axle weight limits, questioning if 6000 kg is allowed in every jurisdiction. It was noted that a limit of 5500 kg applies in the Atlantic provinces. It was further noted the weight can go up to 9100 kg with a properly certified axle but the gross vehicle weight limit remains. It was noted that a steering axle weight limit of 5500 kg is provided in the MOU so no amendment is required at this time.

Mr. Shaw also noted that the weight limit is rated as 10 kg per mm of tire width and asked what is the foundation for that standard. Mr. Billing remarked that it is an historical reference that has been used in Canadian and US regulations for a long time. Mr. Shaw asked that consideration be given to allowing 11 kg/mm on steer axles. Mr. Pearson noted that it may be an infrastructure issue and suggested those experts within the jurisdictions should be consulted.

Mr. Madill observed that the CTA sees front axle weight as a priority. He acknowledged it is a complex issue that will take a lot of work to resolve. He said the intention is to develop a CTA position and bring a proposal forward to the Task Force in the future.

g) 6 x 2 Tractors

Mr. Park noted that the upcoming phase of greenhouse gas emission regulations will require ingenuity to meet requirements. He observed that 6 x 2 tractors offer potential benefits in this regard. He acknowledged the traction issues associated with their use in British Columbia but asked what issues prevent their operation in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Pearson noted there is nothing in the national MOU or many provincial regulations to prevent the use of 6 x 2 tractors. He said that some provincial regulations define lift axles in such a way that 6 x 2 tractors would be included.

Mr. Lynch confirmed that the definition of liftable axles in the Ontario Highway Traffic Act would encompass 6 x 2 systems. He explained that it would be very challenging to amend the Highway Traffic Act. He added that terms of reference for testing 6 x 2 systems have been drafted by the Province and shared with the Task Force and CTA. He said that there are many considerations but allowing 6 x 2 systems in the future is not completely out of the question.

6. Pilot Car/Escort Vehicles

a) AMTA/PSAC Escort Vehicle Operator Training Course: Update

Mr. Delaney provided an update about work underway between PSAC and the Alberta Motor Transport Administration to develop a training course for pilot car operators in the oil and gas industry. He noted that there have been discussions with Enform, WorkSafeBC and the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding the pilot car load movement guidelines being developed. He said that PSAC and AMTA hope to launch their training course next spring. Mr. Delaney noted that the course is intended just for the oil and gas industry at this time though it could eventually be adopted for other industries. Mr. Delaney said his organization had been pleased with the support from regulators in the four western provinces on this initiative.

Mr. Robert said a higher degree of competency and reliability is needed from pilot car operators. He noted that, in some regions, police escorts are required for oversize loads which can be expensive.

b) Following the Rules: Why Bother?

Ms. Murray provided a presentation (Attachment 9) about the need for mandatory basic training for pilot car drivers. She highlighted the costs of non-enforcement of current rules, lost revenue, risks associated with lack of training and what training can teach operators.

7. Agreement on Internal Trade

Mr. Pearson noted that the Agreement on Internal Trade is being discussed by Canada's Premiers. He remarked that, as in the past, vehicle weights and dimension issues may be identified as requiring action. He observed that progress has been made towards harmonization on some of the bigger issues and he invited stakeholders to identify any critical issues that should be addressed in a renewed work plan.

Mr. Robert made reference to environmental issues and regulations. He remarked that there are many departments involved and suggested it would be helpful to have a lead organization to facilitate stakeholders working together. He observed that Canada is always in a reactive mode, waiting for developments in the US. He said Canada should take the lead, support innovation and make changes so industry can do things better and be more competitive.

Ms. Ritchie suggested there should be more progress towards timely solutions to vehicle weights and dimensions issues raised at these meetings. Mr. Pearson concurred, noting that decision-making on some of the issues can be outside of the responsibility of representatives at these meetings.

Mr. Oommen remarked that it is possible to identify what has been harmonized but it would be helpful to understand clearly on what issues harmonization has not yet been achieved. Mr. Pearson noted that it is a complex regulatory environment. He observed that we can identify where regulations are not harmonized nationally, but regional harmonization may be a more reasonable and appropriate goal in some cases. He added that regional harmonization can undermine national harmonization.

Mr. Kolesniak (BCTA) noted that work should move beyond regulated vehicle weights and dimensions and focus on harmonizing permitted weights and dimensions. He acknowledged it would be challenging to do so, but suggested starting small could lead to success.

Mr. Michaelson observed that sometimes progress is slow because we do not have answers to questions and that research funding is needed to provide data to support decisions.

8. Other Business

No other business was raised by participants.

9. Adjournment

It was noted the next meeting would be convened in the fall of 2016, with dates and location to be confirmed.

In closing, Mr. Pearson acknowledged the time and efforts contributed by presenters and thanked all participants for their contributions to a productive meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Sarah Wells
Date: December 9, 2015

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: List of Participants

Attachment 2: Presentation – National Update

Attachment 3: Presentation – Quebec Update

Attachment 4: Presentation – Wide Base Single Tires: Cost Benefit Analysis (Michelin)

Attachment 5: Presentation – ecoTECHNOLOGY for Vehicles Program (Transport Canada)

Attachment 6: Presentation – Long Wheelbase Tractors on B-Trains (CTA)

Attachment 7: Presentation – On-Board Scales and Mechatronic Solutions (Cleral Inc.)

Attachment 8: Presentation – Front Outswing of Extended Semitrailers (Billing)

Attachment 9: Presentation – Pilot Car/Escort Vehicle Driver Training (Sparrow Piloting Services)



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 3, 2015 Montreal

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