

Backgrounder – Weight increase to 63,500 kg for B-trains

What is the regulatory change?

The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure is amending *The Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations (1999)*, under the *Highways and Transportation Act (1997)*, to increase the maximum allowable weight at which a B-train truck tractor and semi-trailer combination can operate on the provincial highway system. The change would see an increase in the weight limit of 1,000 kg, from the current 62,500 kg to 63,500 kg.

How will this be implemented?

The increase in weight limit would be done in two phases:

Phase 1, which will be implemented June 1, 2010, would be limited to National Highway System (NHS) highways as well as other select primary weight highways where it is determined that this increase in weight will not have a detrimental effect on bridge structures. In addition, this weight limit increase will be in effect on extensions of these select highways and connections between these select highways in all cities as well as all urban centres located along these routes.

Phase 2 would see the weight increase further expanded to other primary weight highways that are capable of supporting the increased weight. Phase 2 would also extend the weight increase to urban and rural municipalities providing them with the ability to increase primary weight within their respective jurisdictions by bylaw.

As part of phase 1, to ensure that municipalities are given the opportunity to assess their road infrastructure, carriers needing to access sites off the select highway system will require a permit from the municipality they will be operating in. Permits for provincial highways are not available.

What prompted the change?

Industry requested that the Ministry consider increasing the weight for an eight-axle B-train from 62,500 kg to 63,500 kg to increase efficiency and support harmonization within western Canada, namely Alberta and British Columbia which also allow the increased weight.

In October 2009, Alberta and Saskatchewan entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to harmonize policy and regulation for commercial operations. One of the items identified in the MOU is the Harmonization of the Maximum Gross Vehicle Weight for B-trains. The initiative supports the commitment made in the MOU.

On April 30, 2010, Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan launched the New West Partnership, an ambitious agreement that will create Canada's largest interprovincial barrier-free trade and investment market and see the three westernmost provinces work together in unprecedented ways to the benefit of workers, businesses and investors in all three provinces. The initiative supports the goals of the New West Partnership.

What are the implications for the commercial trucking industry?

The largest implication for industry is the ability to operate through the British Columbia-Alberta-Saskatchewan corridor at the higher weight of 63,500 kg without having to reduce the weight to the lowest common denominator of 62,500 kg. For B-trains which maximize their loading, the payload increase will increase productivity by 2.5 per cent (One trip saved every 40 trips).

A more significant side effect of the amendment is that carriers will have more flexibility when loading their vehicles. Carriers hauling dry bulk commodities often have difficulty in properly distributing their loads and are not able to maximize their loading. By increasing the allowable weight by one tonne on the center axle group from 23,000 kg to 24,000 kg, carriers will have more flexibility when loading which has the potential of increasing payload.

Once Phase 2 of this initiative is complete, a significant network would be in place that would enable carriers to operate B-trains at 63,500 kg ensuring provincially based carriers are not placed at a competitive disadvantage with out-of-province carriers.

Where does the increase in weight happen on a truck?

The maximum allowable weight on the centre-tridem axle group is increased from 23,000 kg to 24,000 kg.

What is the weight limit in other provinces?

British Columbia – 63,500 kg

Alberta – 63,500 kg

Manitoba – 62,500 kg

Ontario – 63,500 kg

What is the process for commercial carriers to access this new weight limit increase?

On June 1st and thereafter, a carrier will be able to attend their license issuer's office or one of SGI's branch offices, and increase their registered GVW to 63,500 kg.

What is the cost?

The annual costs to move their RGWV from 62,500 kg to 63,500 kg for the various heavy truck classes are as follows:

Classes A & D - *\$99 registration fee, 0\$ insurance premium, and a \$10 admin fee = \$109

Class C - *\$72 registration fee, 0\$ insurance premium, and a \$10 admin fee = \$82

Class F - *\$36 registration fee, 0\$ insurance premium, and a \$10 admin fee = \$46

* Please note that the registration fees above represent the annual difference in fees between 62,500 kg to 63,500 kg. However, most owners who come in to increase their weights will have these amounts

prorated based on the time left on their registration certificates, but the full \$10 will still apply to each transaction.

How will carriers access sites not on the selected highway system?

Carriers that need to access sites off the selected highway system will need a permit from the municipality they are operating in, whether it is a rural or urban municipality.

The process is in place to give municipalities the opportunity to assess their infrastructure to determine whether their roads are capable of supporting the increased weight.

Does the 15 km rule apply?

No. The weight increase is restricted to the corridors specified and does not extend beyond the highways on the list.

Why not expand the increase to all tridem axle groups on these highways?

The Ministry is using a multi-phased approach to increasing the weight on tridem axle groups. The first two phases will be limited to B-trains. Once there has been an opportunity to assess the impact of the weight increase, the Ministry will explore the potential of increasing the weight to all mid-spread tridem axle groups.