

TRUCK RESTRICTIONS: ACT 31 OF 2018 UPDATES

by Patrick Wright, Traffic Engineer, Pennoni



Act 31 of 2018 allows larger trucks to access certain state and local roads that were not previously open to truck traffic.

Act 31 of 2018 incorporated some important changes affecting how large vehicles regulated under the federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) can access which roads in Pennsylvania. Act 31 amended Section 4921 of the state's Vehicle Code (Title 75), which regulates the width, length, and height of vehicles. First, it increased the maximum width of vehicles from 8 feet to 8 feet 6 inches (102 inches). Second, the act now allows those vehicles to access certain state and local roads that were not previously open as part of the Pennsylvania STAA network.

This change does not affect roads and bridges that are already posted for size and weight restrictions. However, many roads that are not posted are now open to the STAA vehicles. This includes both PennDOT- and municipal-owned roads.

Under Title 75, Section 4902(a-b), municipalities have the authority to restrict vehicles by size and weight based on highway or traffic conditions. Typically, a study must determine if these restrictions are warranted, but Act 31 waived the study requirement for local authorities to restrict STAA vehicles on local roads.

Following the passage of Act 31, PennDOT reviewed certain state routes affected by the legislation to determine if they could safely accommodate these larger vehicles. If warranted, truck restriction signs have been posted, typically restricting trucks with trailers greater than 45 feet. Within the Vehicle Code, exemptions to these restrictions include school buses, emergency vehicles, and construction or maintenance vehicles for government, utilities, and contractors. Since these restrictions are established for safety reasons under Title 75, Section 4902(b), local traffic may request a temporary permit to access the restricted route.

Steps to Restrict Truck Travel

If you are concerned about larger vehicles using some of your local roads, consider the following steps:

1) Identify routes that may be a concern. These could be local roads near manufacturing and shipping facilities or routes that are used as shortcuts to avoid traffic or longer routes.

2) Determine if any of these routes already have restrictions. If the roads are already restricted in some manner (such as weight limits for a road/bridge, height limits, or truck restriction based on traffic conditions), then they will continue to be restricted, and no action is necessary.

3) If there are no existing restrictions, conduct a study to determine if the road should be restricted. Although the law does not require a study, documenting why a restriction was placed is critical if the restriction is ever challenged.

Normally, an engineer must conduct truck restriction studies, but since the study requirement was waived under Act 31, municipal staff or officials can complete the study to restrict STAA vehicles.



A study to restrict STAA vehicles should follow the requirements in Title 67, Chapter 212, Section 212.117, Weight, Size, and Load Restrictions, for assessing traffic conditions. The study can be documented using PennDOT TE Form 109.

A test run with an STAA vehicle can be completed to see if there are any issues with local roads. Some basic factors that could restrict larger vehicles include:

- Lane widths on the road are 10 feet or less.
- Horizontal and vertical curves would require the vehicles to encroach upon the opposing traffic lane.
- The road is a local or neighborhood street not compatible for larger vehicles, and there are nearby schools, parks, or other features that generate traffic incompatible with trucks.
- Certain features, such as a narrow bridge, roadside obstructions, or tight curb radii, create safety hazards.
- Steep grades could affect truck speed and stopping distances.

If the restriction affects access to or from a state route, be sure to coordinate the restriction with your PennDOT district.

4) After the study is conducted, adopt the restriction via ordinance. If a restriction is warranted, the municipality's governing body must pass an ordinance declaring any traffic restrictions on local roads.

5) Post the road. Like with other travel restrictions on local roads, a sign must be posted on any roads restricting larger trucks. The sign must be placed within 25 feet of the intersection on the

TE-109 (11-12)
ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC STUDY FOR RESTRICTIONS AS TO WEIGHT, SIZE, KIND OR CLASS, OR TYPE OF LOAD BASED ON HIGHWAY, BRIDGE, OR TRAFFIC CONDITIONS
 PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION IN BLUE OR BLACK INK



NOTE: TE-109 FORM IS TO BE COMPLETED AND APPROVED BY A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

A - LOCATION INFORMATION			
COUNTY:		MUNICIPALITY:	
STREET NAME:			
LOCAL ROAD #:		STATE ROAD #:	
POSTED SPEED LIMIT (PROVIDE SPEED LIMIT RANGE IF VARIES):		ADT (PROVIDE ADT RANGE IF VARIES):	
RESTRICTED BETWEEN: SEGMENT:	OFFSET:	TO SEGMENT:	OFFSET:
LOCATION:		TO LOCATION:	
B - REFERENCE INFORMATION			
REFERENCE: Chapter 212	SECTION(S):	212.117(a), (b), (c), (d)	
REFERENCE: MUTCD	SECTION(S):	2B.49	
REFERENCE: PUB 46	SECTION(S):	Chapters 2.4, 11.7.2, and 11.7.3	
REFERENCE: Vehicle Code Title 75 Pa. C.S.	SECTION(S):	§ 4902(a), (b) and 6109(a)(7)(13)	
REFERENCE: PA Code Title 67 Pa. C.S.	SECTION(S):	Chapters 189, 191, and 193	
REFERENCE: PUB 23	SECTION(S):	Chapter 15.2	
REFERENCE: PUB 238	SECTION(S):	Chapter 4	

Engineering studies are documented on PennDOT Form 109.

right side of the restricted road. Supplemental signs can be placed on the left and in advance of the intersection, if needed. If the restriction does not begin at an intersection, then advanced information must be placed at the nearest upstream intersection. Sign posting requirements are described in Title 67, Chapter 212, Section 212.117.

For more information on the study requirements, posting, and other details, please contact LTAP or attend the LTAP Engineering and Traffic Studies course.

(d) Weight and size restrictions based on traffic conditions. Traffic on a highway or bridge may be prohibited or restricted by weight or size of vehicle, or kinds or classes of vehicles when, an engineering evaluation of the horizontal and vertical alignment, prevailing traffic speeds, compatibility of the various types of traffic, history of vehicle crashes or vehicular characteristics, indicates that the movement of certain vehicles constitutes a safety hazard. Restrictions may include weight; height, width or length of vehicles or their loads; types of cargo; speed or gearing; stopping requirements; specified travel lanes; and hours of operation.

Per Title 67, municipalities may place weight and size restrictions on trucks based on traffic conditions on local roads.