

Title 23: Highways

PART 657—CERTIFICATION OF SIZE AND WEIGHT ENFORCEMENT

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Appendix to Part 657—Guidelines To Be Used in Developing Enforcement Plans and Certification Evaluation

Authority: Sec. 123, Pub. L. 95-599, 92 Stat. 2689; 23 U.S.C. 127, 141, and 315; 49 U.S.C. 31111, 31113, and 31114; sec. 1023, Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914; and 49 CFR 1.48(b)(19), (b)(23), (c)(1), and (c)(19).

Source: 45 FR 52368, Aug. 7, 1980; 62 FR 62261, Nov. 21, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

Note: The recordkeeping requirements contained in this part have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 2125-0034.

§ 657.1 Purpose.

To prescribe requirements for administering a program of vehicle size and weight enforcement on Federal-aid (FA) highways, including the required annual certification by the State.

§ 657.3 Definition.

Enforcing or enforcement means all actions by the State to obtain compliance with size and weight requirements by all vehicles operating on the FA Interstate, primary, urban, and secondary systems.

§ 657.5 Policy.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) policy is that each State enforce vehicle size and weight laws to assure that violations are discouraged and that vehicles traversing the highway system do not exceed the limits specified by law. These size and weight limits are based upon design specifications and safety considerations, and enforcement shall be developed and maintained both to prevent premature deterioration of the highway pavement and structures and to provide a safe driving environment.

§ 657.7 Objective.

The objective of this regulation is the development and operation by each State of an enforcement process which identifies vehicles of excessive size and weight and provides a systematic approach to eliminate violations and thus improve conditions.

§ 657.9 Formulation of a plan for enforcement.

(a) Each State shall develop a plan for the maintenance of an effective enforcement process. The plan shall describe the procedures, resources, and facilities which the State intends to devote to the enforcement of its vehicle size and weight laws. Each State plan must be accepted by the FHWA and will then serve as a basis by which the annual certification of enforcement will be judged for adequacy.

(b) The plan shall discuss the following subjects:

(1) Facilities and resources. (i) No program shall be approved which does not utilize a combination of at least two of the following listed devices to deter evasion of size and weight measurement in sufficient quantity to cover the FA system: fixed platform scales; portable wheel weigher scales; semiportable or ramp scales; WIM equipment.

(ii) Staff assigned to the program, identified by specific agency. Where more than one State agency has weight enforcement responsibility, the lead agency should be indicated.

(2) Practices and procedures. (i) Proposed plan of operation, including geographical coverage and hours of operation in general terms.

(ii) Policy and practices with respect to overweight violators, including off-loading requirements for divisible loads. In those States in which off-loading is mandatory by law, an administrative variance from the legal requirement shall be fully explained. In those States in which off-loading is permissive administrative guidelines shall be included.

(iii) Policy and practices with respect to penalties, including those for repeated violations. Administrative directives, booklets or other written criteria shall be made part of the plan submission.

(iv) Policy and practices with respect to special permits for overweight. Administrative directives, booklets or other written criteria shall be made part of the plan submission.

(3) Updating. Modification and/or additions to the plan based on

experience and new developments in the enforcement program. It is recognized that the plan is not static and that changes may be required to meet changing needs.

§ 657.11 Evaluation of operations.

(a) The State shall submit its enforcement plan or annual update to the Office of Motor Carriers in the FHWA division office by July 1 of each year. However, if a State's legislative or budgetary cycle is not consonant with that date, the FHWA and the State may jointly select an alternate date. In any event, a State must have an approved plan in effect by October 1 of each year. Failure of a State to submit or update a plan will result in the State being unable to certify in accordance with §657.13 for the period to be covered by the plan.

(b) The Office of Motor Carriers in the FHWA division office shall review the State's operation under the accepted plan on a continuing basis and shall prepare an evaluation report annually. The State will be advised of the results of the evaluation and of any needed changes either in the plan itself or in its implementation. Copies of the evaluation report and subsequent modifications resulting from the evaluation shall be forwarded through the Regional Director of Motor Carriers to the Washington, D.C., Headquarters office.

[59 FR 30418, June 13, 1994]

§ 657.13 Certification requirement.

Each State shall certify to the Federal Highway Administrator, before January 1 of each year, that it is enforcing all State laws respecting maximum vehicle size and weight permitted on what, prior to October 1, 1991, were the Federal-aid Primary, Secondary, and Urban Systems, including the Interstate System, in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 127. The States must also certify that they are enforcing and complying with the ISTEA freeze on the use of LCV's and other multi-unit vehicles. The certification shall be supported by information on activities and results achieved during the preceding 12-month period ending on September 30 of each year.

[59 FR 30418, June 13, 1994]

§ 657.15 Certification content.

The certification shall consist of the following elements and each element shall be addressed even though the response is negative:

(a) A statement by the Governor of the State, or an official designated by the Governor, that the State's vehicle weight laws and regulations governing use of the Interstate System conform to 23 U.S.C. 127.

(b) A statement by the Governor of the State, or an official designated by the Governor, that all State size and weight limits are being enforced on the Interstate System and those routes which prior to October 1, 1991, were designated as part of the Federal-aid Primary, Urban, and Secondary

Systems, and that the State is enforcing and complying with the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 127(d) and 49 U.S.C. 31112 Urbanized areas not subject to State jurisdiction shall be identified. The statement shall include an analysis of enforcement efforts in such areas.

(c) Except for Alaska and Puerto Rico, the certifying statements required by paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section shall be worded as follows (the statements for Alaska and Puerto Rico do not have to reference 23 U.S.C. 127(d) in (c)(2), or include paragraph (c)(3) of this section):

I, (name of certifying official), (position title), of the State of _____ do hereby certify:

(1) That all State laws and regulations governing vehicle size and weight are being enforced on those highways which, prior to October 1, 1991, were designated as part of the Federal-aid Primary, Federal-aid Secondary, or Federal-aid Urban Systems;

(2) That the State is enforcing the freeze provisions of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (23 U.S.C. 127(d) and 49 U.S.C. 31112); and

(3) That all State laws governing vehicle weight on the Interstate System are consistent with 23 U.S.C. 127 (a) and (b).

(d) If this statement is made by an official other than the Governor, a copy of the document designating the official, signed by the Governor, shall also be included in the certification made under this part.

(e) A copy of any State law or regulation pertaining to vehicle sizes and weights adopted since the State's last certification and an analysis of the changes made. Those laws and regulations pertaining to special permits and penalties shall be specifically identified and analyzed in accordance with section 123 of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 (Pub. L. 95-599).

(f) A report of State size and weight enforcement efforts during the period covered by the certification which addresses the following:

(1) Actual operations as compared with those forecast by the plan submitted earlier, with particular attention to changes in or deviations from the operations proposed.

(2) Impacts of the process as actually applied, in terms of changes in the number of oversize and/or overweight vehicles.

(3) Measures of activity—(i) Vehicles weighed. Separate totals shall be reported for the annual number of vehicles weighed on fixed scales, on semiportable scales, on portable scales, and on WIM when used for enforcement.

(ii) Penalties. Penalties reported shall include the number of citations or civil assessments issued for violations of each of the following: Axle, gross and bridge formula weight limits. The number of vehicles whose loads are either shifted or offloaded must also be reported.

(iii) Permits. The number of permits issued for overweight loads shall be reported. The reported numbers shall specify permits for divisible and nondivisible loads and whether issued on a trip or annual basis. Permits

issued for excess height, length, or width need not be reported except where issued for the overwidth movement of a divisible load.

[59 FR 30418, June 13, 1994, as amended at 62 FR 10181, Mar. 5, 1997]

§ 657.17 Certification submittal.

(a) The Governor, or an official designated by the Governor, shall submit the certification to the Office of Motor Carriers in the FHWA division office prior to January 1 of each year.

(b) The Office of Motor Carriers in the FHWA division office shall forward the original certification to the Associate Administrator for Motor Carriers and one copy to the Office of Chief Counsel. Copies of appropriate evaluations and/or comments shall accompany any transmittal.

[59 FR 30418, June 13, 1994]

§ 657.19 Effect of failure to certify or to enforce State laws adequately.

Beginning January 1, 1981, if a State fails to certify as required by this regulation or if the Secretary determines that a State is not adequately enforcing all State laws respecting maximum vehicle sizes and weights on FA highways notwithstanding the State's certification, the FA highway funds apportioned to the State for the next fiscal year shall be reduced by an amount equal to 10 percent of the amount which would otherwise be apportioned to the State under 23 U.S.C. 104, and/or by the amount required pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 127.

§ 657.21 Procedure for reduction of funds.

(a) If it appears to the Federal Highway Administrator that a State has not submitted a certification conforming to the requirements of this regulation, or that the State is not adequately enforcing State laws respecting maximum vehicle size and weight, including laws applicable to vehicles using the Interstate System with weights or widths in excess of those provided under 23 U.S.C. 127, the Federal Highway Administrator shall make in writing a proposed determination of nonconformity, and shall notify the Governor of the State of the proposed determination by certified mail. The notice shall state the reasons for the proposed determination and inform the State that it may, within 30 days from the date of the notice, request a hearing to show cause why it should not be found in nonconformity. If the State informs the Administrator before the end of this 30-day period that it wishes to attempt to resolve the matter informally, the Administrator may extend the time for requesting a hearing. In the event of a request for informal resolution, the State and the Administrator (or designee) shall promptly schedule a meeting to resolve the matter.

(b) In all instances where the State proceeds on the basis of informal resolution, a transcript of the conference will be made and furnished to the State by the FHWA.

(1) The State may offer any information which it considers helpful to a resolution of the matter, and the scope of review at the conference will include, but not be limited to, legislative actions, including those

proposed to remedy deficiencies, budgetary considerations, judicial actions, and proposals for specific actions which will be implemented to bring the State into compliance.

(2) The information produced at the conference may constitute an explanation and offer of settlement and the Administrator will make a determination on the basis of the certification, record of the conference, and other information submitted by the State. The Administrator's final decision together with a copy of the transcript of the conference will be furnished to the State.

(3) If the Administrator does not accept an offer of settlement made pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the State retains the right to request a hearing on the record pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section, except in the case of a violation of section 127.

(c) If the State does not request a hearing in a timely fashion as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, the Federal Highway Administrator shall forward the proposed determination of nonconformity to the Secretary. Upon approval of the proposed determination by the Secretary, the fund reduction specified by §657.19 shall be effected.

(d) If the State requests a hearing, the Secretary shall expeditiously convene a hearing on the record, which shall be conducted according to the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 555 et seq. Based on the record of the proceeding, the Secretary shall determine whether the State is in nonconformity with this regulation. If the Secretary determines that the State is in nonconformity, the fund reduction specified by section 567.19 shall be effected.

(e) The Secretary may reserve 10 percent of a State's apportionment of funds under 23 U.S.C. 104 pending a final administrative determination under this regulation to prevent the apportionment to the State of funds which would be affected by a determination of nonconformity.

(f) Funds withheld pursuant to a final administrative determination under this regulation shall be reapportioned to all other eligible States one year from the date of this determination, unless before this time the Secretary determines, on the basis of information submitted by the State and the FHWA, that the State has come into conformity with this regulation. If the Secretary determines that the State has come into conformity, the withheld funds shall be released to the State.

(g) The reapportionment of funds under paragraph (e) of this section shall be stayed during the pendency of any judicial review of the Secretary's final administrative determination of nonconformity.

Appendix to Part 657—Guidelines To Be Used in Developing Enforcement Plans and Certification Evaluation

A. Facilities and Equipment

1. Permanent Scales

a. Number

b. Location (a map appropriately coded is suggested)

c. Public-private (if any)

2. Weigh-in-motion (WIM)

- a. Number
- b. Location (notation on above map is suggested)

3. Semi-portable scales

- a. Type and number
- b. If used in sets, the number comprising a set

4. Portable Scales

- a. Type and number
- b. If used in sets, the number comprising a set

B. Resources

1. Agencies involved (i.e., highway agency, State police, motor vehicle department, etc.)

2. Personnel—numbers from respective agencies assigned to weight enforcement

3. Funding

- a. Facilities
- b. Personnel

C. Practices

1. Proposed schedule of operation of fixed scale locations in general terms

2. Proposed schedule of deployment of portable scale equipment in general terms

3. Proposed schedule of deployment of semi-portable equipment in general terms

4. Strategy for prevention of bypassing of fixed weighing facility

location

5. Proposed action for implementation of off-loading, if applicable

D. Goals

1. Short term—the year beginning

October 1 following submission of a vehicle size and weight enforcement plan

2. Medium term—2–4 years after submission of the enforcement plan

3. Long term—5 years beyond the submission of the enforcement plan

4. Provision for annual review and update of vehicle size and weight enforcement plan

E. Evaluation

The evaluation of an existing plan, in comparison to goals for strengthening the enforcement program, is a difficult task, especially since there is very limited experience nationwide.

The FHWA plans to approach this objective through a continued cooperative effort with State and other enforcement agencies by gathering useful information and experience on elements of enforcement practices that produce positive results.

It is not considered practicable at this time to establish objective minimums, such as the number of vehicles to be weighed by each State, as a requirement for satisfactory compliance. However, the States will want to

know as many specifics as possible about what measuring tools will be used to evaluate their annual certifications for adequacy.

The above discussion goes to the heart of the question concerning numerical criteria. The assumption that a certain number of weighings will provide a maximum or even satisfactory deterrent is not supportable. The enforcement of vehicle size and weight laws requires that vehicles be weighed but it does not logically follow that the more vehicles weighed, the more effective the enforcement program, especially if the vehicles are weighed at a limited number of fixed locations. A "numbers game" does not necessarily provide a deterrent to deliberate overloading. Consistent, vigorous enforcement activities, the certainty of apprehension and of penalty, the adequacy of the penalty, even the publicity given these factors, may be greater deterrents than the number of weighings alone.

In recognizing that all States are unique in character, there are some similarities between certain States and useful perspectives may be obtained by relating their program elements. Some comparative factors are:

1. Truck registration (excluding pickups and panels)
2. Population
3. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for trucks on FA highways
4. Total mileage of Federal-aid highways
5. Geographic location of the State
6. Annual truck miles traveled in State
7. Number of truck terminals (over 6 doors)
8. Vehicle miles of intrastate truck traffic

Quantities relating to the above items can become factors that in the aggregate are descriptive of a State's characteristics and can identify States that are similar from a trucking operation viewpoint. This is especially applicable for States within the same area.

After States with similar truck traffic operations have been identified in a regional area, another important variable must be considered: the type of weighing equipment that has been or is proposed for predominant use in the States. When data become available on the number of trucks weighed by each type of scale (fixed, portable, semi-portable, etc.) some indicators will be developed to relate one State's effort to those of other States.

The measures of activity that are a part of each certification submitted will provide a basis for the development of more precise numerical criteria by which an enforcement plan and its activities can be judged for adequacy.

Previous certifications have provided information from which the following gross scale capabilities have been derived.

Potential Weighing Capacities

1. Permanent scales 60 veh/hr.
2. Weigh-in-motion scales 100 veh/hr.
3. Semi-portable scales 25 veh/hr.
4. Portable scales 3 veh/hr.

To meet the mandates of Federal and other laws regarding truck size and

weight enforcement, the FHWA desires to become a resource for all States in achieving a successful exchange of useful information. Some States are more advanced in their enforcement activities. Some have special experience with portable, semi-portable, fixed, or weighing-in-motion devices. Others have operated permanent scales in combination with concentrated safety inspection programs. The FHWA is interested in information on individual State experiences in these specialized areas as part of initial plan submissions. If such information has recently been furnished to the Washington Headquarters, an appropriate cross reference should be included on the submission.

It is the policy of the FHWA to avoid red tape, and information volunteered by the States will be of assistance in meeting many needs. The ultimate goal in developing information through the evaluation process is to assemble criteria for a model enforcement program.