



## Considerations for Increasing Freight Loadsize to 95,000 Pounds

Prepared for  
Division of Transportation System Development  
Bureau of Highway Operations/Division of Motor Vehicles

Prepared by  
CTC & Associates LLC  
WisDOT Research & Library Unit

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*Transportation Literature Searches are prepared for WisDOT staff and investigators to identify completed research and other authoritative information in an area of interest. The citations below are representative, rather than exhaustive, of available English-language studies on the topic. Primary online resources for the literature searches are OCLC's [WorldCat](#) and [TLCat](#), U.S. DOT's [TRIS Online](#), the National Transportation Library ([NTL](#)), TRB's Research in Progress ([RiP](#)) database, and other academic, engineering and scientific databases as appropriate.*

*To request a literature search, contact the WisDOT Library at [library@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:library@dot.state.wi.us) or (608) 264-8142, or WisDOT Research at [research@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:research@dot.state.wi.us) or (608) 261-8198.*

**Topic/Problem Statement:** Identify and Quantify the Impacts, Costs and Benefits of Increasing Freight Loadsize in Wisconsin to 95,000 Pounds Gross Vehicle Weight for Certain Intermodal Cargo.

**Keywords:** freight load 95,000, gross vehicle weight 95,000, increase freight loadsize 95,000.

### Summary

We located three citations, including a U.S. DOT study, that discuss the impacts of heavier gross vehicle weights.

### Citations

*Links to online copies of cited literature are provided when available. Contact the WisDOT Library to obtain hard copies of citations.*

**Title:** Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Study: Final Report

**Author(s):** U.S. Department of Transportation

**Date:** 2002

**Source/URL:** <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/otps/truck/finalreport.htm>

**Description:** Four volumes.

**Contents:** To understand the views of many groups with an interest in TSW limits, extensive outreach was conducted and included public meetings, focus groups with various interested parties, workshops to review data and analytical methods used in the study, requests for comments on study plans, working papers, and drafts of key parts of the report, and video conferences with state representatives. These activities confirmed the complexity and degree of concern surrounding many TSW issues. Significant productivity benefits are estimated for each illustrative scenario that allows heavier vehicle weights, but these benefits are derived primarily from the use of longer combination vehicles (LCVs) even under the North American Trade Scenarios. Nationwide use of LCVs would entail significant infrastructure costs, adverse impacts on railroads, and potentially negative safety impacts. Further, officials in many states that currently do not allow LCVs oppose policies that would relax restrictions on LCV use. In addition to concerns about infrastructure costs and safety risks, their opposition likely reflects apprehension about larger trucks by motorist and other interest groups in their states.

**Title: Justification Review: Motor Carrier Compliance Program, Florida Department of Transportation**

**Author(s):** Florida Legislature, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

**Date:** June 1999

**Source/URL:** <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/reports/pdf/9886rpt.pdf>

**Description:** 32 pp. and appendices.

**Contents:** This is the second of two reports presenting the results of OPPAGA's evaluation and justification review of Florida DOT's Motor Carrier Compliance Program. In addition to evaluating program performance, the report identifies alternatives for improving services and reducing costs. Points of interest include the following discussion of weight enforcement located on page 15 of the PDF:

- Trucks that exceed road weight limits cause roads and bridges to deteriorate prematurely and increase the possibility of bridge stress and fatigue. The road damage caused by overweight vehicles increases exponentially at higher vehicle weights. For example, a legally loaded (80,000 pound gross weight) semitrailer truck places a load on the road equal to about 9,600 cars. If this truck is loaded to 95,000 pounds -- 15,000 pounds overweight -- its pavement damaging impact can double. This damage increases the cost to taxpayers for maintaining roads and structures. The department spends approximately \$200 million annually for roadway resurfacing. Pavement damage from overweight vehicles would likely increase if the Motor Carrier Compliance Program were abolished. Department weigh-in-motion sensors showed that 6% of the truck traffic crossing the sensors during 1998 exceeded the state's 80,000-pound gross vehicle weight limits. Our research led us to conclude that these percentages would be even higher in the absence of a state weight enforcement program. For example, a department study showed an increase in the number and degree of weight violations in areas where enforcement was discontinued. Florida could also lose 10%, or approximately \$120 million annually, of its federal highway funding if the Motor Carrier Compliance Program were abolished. Like all states, Florida implements federal weight laws to preserve federal highway infrastructure investments. Each state vehicle weight and size enforcement program must submit an annual certification to FHWA. Federal rules provide that if FHWA is not satisfied with the level of a state's enforcement as evidenced by the annual certification, the state may lose 10% of its federal highway funding.

**Title: Port Struggles to Deal With Weight Problem**

**Author(s):** S. Harrison, the Miami Herald

**Source/URL:** [http://freight.transportation.org/doc/highway/weight\\_truck\\_article.pdf](http://freight.transportation.org/doc/highway/weight_truck_article.pdf)

**Description:** 3 pp.

**Contents:** This article, recently posted on the AASHTO Freight Network Web site, reports on the difficulty Port of Miami-Dade has experienced in trying to prevent overweight trucks from leaving the port. At the heart of the matter, according to the article, are minimal enforcement by Florida DOT and the fact that trucking companies aren't buying the permits required to haul overweight containers. Many trucks flagged would have been legal with an annual permit for \$500 allowing a load of 95,000 pounds -- which truckers say many companies don't want to pay. However, 18 trucks flagged last year weighed more than 95,000 pounds, illegal under any conditions.