



1.0 Authority

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) may impose special seasonal weight restrictions on any state trunk highway that, because of weakness of the roadbed due to deteriorating or climatic conditions or other special or temporary conditions, would likely be seriously damaged or destroyed in the absence of such special limitations. Seasonal weight restrictions are in accordance with s. [349.16, Wis. Stats.](#)

Seasonal road postings usually apply only during those times when the roadbed is becoming unfrozen. The seasonal posted limits normally are six (6) tons per single-axle and ten (10) tons for any two axles less than eight feet (8') apart. The gross weight of a vehicle or vehicle combination, with any combination of axle groups, is 24 tons. All single-trip and most annual overweight travel is not permitted during this time on seasonal posted road sections, in accordance with s. [348.17, Wis. Stats.](#)

The department may exempt vehicles carrying certain commodities. These vehicles may be exempted if such exemption is reasonable and necessary to promote the public health, safety, and welfare according to s. [349.16\(3\), Wis. Stats.](#)

Exemptions or limitations may also be granted for only emergency or exceptional situations, as determined by region maintenance personnel.

2.0 Raw Forest (RS) and Potato Seed (PS) Permits

Vehicles transporting raw forest products under the RS permit (s. [348.27\(9m\)\(c\)](#), Wis. Stats.) or Potato Seeds (s. [348.27\(9t\)](#), Wis. Stats.) under the PS permit are exempt from seasonal posted road restrictions. However, permit holders may not exceed posted limits on any bridges or culverts on state highways or US routes or other roadways with weight restrictions that are not seasonal posted roads.

Additional RS and PS permit information and restrictions can be found on the [multiple trip permits](#) web page.

3.0 Imposition of Special Weight Limitations

Signs shall be erected by midnight or during the first 24 hours of the announced posting time on or along the highway section when seasonal weight restrictions are imposed. Reasonable notice that a special weight limitation is in effect and the nature of that limitation shall be given at both ends of the highway section. The limits of seasonal posted highway sections should be selected to allow vehicles to choose an alternate route without having to perform a U-turn. All signs shall be posted in accordance with the department rules and standard with other weight-limitation signage.

4.0 Procedure

1. Prior to the start of the seasonal road postings, the Bureau of Highway Maintenance's Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer, or their designee, shall contact the DTSD region operations chiefs and maintenance supervisors and request a listing of the highway sections within their respective regions that will be posted for seasonal weight restrictions. The list shall include the state highway number and the limits of the affected highway section.

The Bureau of Highway Maintenance (BHM) will update the list and map as necessary, based on written reports submitted by region maintenance supervisors.

2. When temperatures begin to rise, the BHM meteorologist will use weather forecasts and the Minnesota DOT frost model (displayed on the [Northeast Regional Climate Center website](https://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/) at <https://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/>) to estimate when seasonal posted road restrictions are required.

3. As the estimated date approaches, the BHM Meteorologist will review Roadway Weather Information System data and request frost tube readings from region maintenance supervisors. Frost tubes should be checked on Mondays and Thursdays, unless otherwise directed, and reported to BHM until seasonal posted roads restrictions are declared in each zone.
4. Seasonal posted roads are declared on a zone-by-zone basis when thaw depth reaches six inches (6") below the pavement surface in the zone.
5. When conditions warrant declaring a zone or zones as thawing, the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer, or their designee, shall publish a declaration of Seasonal Posted Roads. Each declaration shall be given a minimum 24-hour notice prior to becoming effective. Seasonal Posted Roads cannot be declared until Class II road restrictions are declared and must be at midnight local time. Wording of the declaration is as follows:

"Class II and Posted Road Restrictions begin in Zone X [Day of Week, Date], at 12:01 AM CST. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions will begin in Zones X and X when conditions warrant. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions were already in effect in Zones X and X."

6. Regional maintenance staff will monitor roadways weekly for weeping, pumping, and other signs of weakness and shall recommend to the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer the date when Seasonal Postings end for each zone. When conditions warrant the end of Seasonal Posted Roads, the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer publishes a declaration ending Seasonal posted roads. Each declaration is given a minimum 24-hour notice. Seasonal Posted Roads must end before or at the same time as Class II Road restrictions are ended. Wording is as follows:

"Class II and Posted Road Restrictions end in Zone X [Day of Week, Date], at 12:01 AM CST. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions will end in Zones X and X when conditions warrant. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions previously ended in Zones X and X."

7. The region shall remove signs: within twelve (12) hours after the midnight removal notice for the posting midnight; or during the first 24 hours of the announced posting time on or along the highway section on which seasonal weight restrictions are being removed.
8. Communication within BHM shall be reviewed by all the following persons/entities:
 - a. BHM Meteorologist
 - b. Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer
 - c. Chief, Freight Operations
 - d. DTSD Administrator's Office - Public Affairs
 - e. State Winter Operations Engineer

The reviewed notice shall then be sent to WisDOT's Office of Public Affairs and affected WisDOT regions, who will disseminate the notice.

9. All declarations to Seasonal Posted Roads shall be issued as a press release by the department's Office of Public Affairs and be available via a recorded message at (608) 266-8147. Additionally, BHM will compile a list and map of all Seasonal Posted Roads and post notice on the department's [website](#).
10. Additional information on this procedure can be found in the [Decision Process](#) document.

5.0 Distribution of the Frozen Road Declarations and Updates

The Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer, or their designee, shall notify the following persons/entities of the declaration/removal on an annual basis:

1. WisDOT's Office of Public Affairs.
2. Region Operations Chiefs.
3. Region Maintenance Supervisors.
4. Freight Operations Chief and Supervisor.

5. BHM Director.

The following entities shall be notified by the Chief of Freight Operations, or their designee, of the declaration/removal on an annual basis:

1. WisDOT's Division of Motor Vehicles - Motor Carrier Services Section.
2. WisDOT's Division of State Patrol.
3. Great Lakes Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin (GLTPA).
4. Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association.
5. Oversized-Overweight (OSOW) registered permit holders in system database.