

Regulation and Taxation
of
Highway Transportation

RECOMMENDATIONS OF
JOINT COMMITTEE OF RAILROADS AND HIGHWAY USERS
January 30, 1933

JOINT COMMITTEE OF RAILROADS AND HIGHWAY USERS

Room 381, 380 Seventh Avenue, New York City

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January 30, 1933

THE following statement is the result of three months' intensive study and discussion of the rail and highway transportation problem by members of the Joint Committee of Railroad Executives and Highway Users. It contains the Committee's recommendations on principles to govern the regulation and taxation of highway transportation. Those principles on which differences in opinion have not been reconciled are shown in parallel columns.

The report is in three parts of which two parts are published herewith. The first part contains the recommendations. The second part contains a series of notes which explain the reasons for differences where separate recommendations are made in Part I. In every case of that kind a footnote under the recommendation gives reference to the pertinent section of explanation in Part II. The third part, to be made public later, is a summary of the historical factors with an objective discussion of the issues and their significance from the broad viewpoint of public interest.

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APPENDIX A

(Approval of entire code recommended by Highway Users)

GROSS WEIGHT, DIMENSIONS AND SPEED FOR VEHICLES OPERATING ON THE HIGHWAYS

**Adopted by the American Association of State Highway Officials in
Convention at Washington, D. C., November 17, 1932 and
recommended for adoption by all States**

It is the opinion of the Association that the adoption of a uniform standard to govern gross weight, dimensions, and speeds for motor vehicles operating on the highways is a fundamental necessity for the following reasons:

- (a) To establish one of the fundamental prerequisites of highway design.
- (b) To promote efficiency in the interstate operation of the motor vehicle.
- (c) To secure safety in highway operation.
- (d) To remove from the highways undesirable equipment and operations.
- (e) To stabilize on a definite basis the many relationships between the highway and the motor vehicle.

These conclusions have been reached after many years of consideration on the part of the Highway Transport Committee of the Association, supplemented by painstaking research by a number of the State Highway Departments and the Bureau of Public Roads.

The Association therefore makes the following recommendations to the proper State authorities having control of traffic on the highways:

(1) WIDTH

No vehicle shall exceed a total outside width, including any load thereon, of 8 feet, except vehicles now in operation which, by reason of the substitution of pneumatic tires for other types of tires, exceed the above limit.

(2) HEIGHT

No vehicle unladen or with load shall exceed a height of 12 feet 6 inches.

(3) LENGTH

(a) No vehicle shall exceed a length of 35 feet extreme over-all dimension, inclusive of front and rear bumpers.

(b) Combinations of vehicles shall consist of not more than two units, and, when so combined, shall not exceed a total length of 45 feet.

(c) The truck tractor and semi-trailer shall be construed to be one vehicle for the purpose of determining lengths.

(d) For occasional movements of materials or objects of dimensions which exceed the limits herein provided, a special permit shall be required.

(4) SPEED

(a) Minimum speed. No motor vehicle shall be unnecessarily driven at such a slow speed as to impede or block the normal and reasonable movement of traffic, except when reduced speed is necessary for safe operation or when a vehicle or a combination of vehicles is necessarily, or in compliance with law, proceeding at reduced speed.

(b) Maximum speed. No bus or truck shall be operated at a speed greater than 45 miles per hour. Passenger automobiles may be operated at such speeds as shall be consistent at all times with safety and the proper use of the roads.

(c) Vehicles equipped with solid rubber or cushion tires shall be operated at a speed not in excess of 10 miles per hour.

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(5) AXLE LOAD

(a) The wheels of all vehicles, including trailers, except those operated at 10 miles per hour or less, shall be equipped with pneumatic tires.

(b) No wheel equipped with high-pressure, pneumatic, solid rubber or cushion tires shall carry a load in excess of 8,000 pounds, or any axle load in excess of 16,000 pounds.

Research indicates that low-pressure pneumatic tires can carry 9,000 pounds per wheel without increasing pavement slab stresses.

An axle load shall be defined as the total load on all wheels whose centers may be included between two parallel transverse vertical planes 40 inches apart.

(c) These limitations are recommended for all main rural and intercity roads, but should not be construed as inhibiting heavier axle loads in metropolitan areas if any State desires.

(d) These weight specifications for wheel and axle loads may be restricted by the State Highway Department for a reasonable period where road sub-grades are materially weakened from thawing after deep frost, or from a continued saturated condition of the soil.

(6) GROSS WEIGHTS

Subject to the limitation imposed by the recommended axle loads, no vehicle shall be operated whose total gross weight, with load, exceeds that given by the formula $W=c(L \text{ plus } 40)$ where:

W —total gross weight, with load, in pounds;

c —a coefficient to be determined by the individual States;

L —the distance between the first and last axles of a vehicle or combination of vehicles, in feet.

A value of 700 is recommended for “ c ” as the lowest which should be imposed, but this should not be construed as inhibiting greater values.

NOTE: This gross weight recommendation is particularly applicable to bridges, since axle loads and length limitations are determinative in their practical application.