

# Truck & Trailer Size & Weight



## Size & Weight Limits [625 ILCS 5/15-111]

- The allowable dimension and weight of trucks and trailers operating in Illinois varies by road system.
- **Federal bridge formula** (designated) routes allow 20,000# per single axle, 34,000# per tandem axle, and 80,000# maximum GVW.
- **State bridge formula** (non-designated) routes allow 18,000# per single axle, 32,000# per tandem axle, and 73,280# maximum GVW.
- The **number** of axles and their **spacing** determines the allowable weight.
- **Width** limit is 96 inches on non-designated routes and on Class III routes, 102 inches where designated (Class I or Class II routes.)
- **Length** limit varies on designated, maximum of 53 feet on non-designated.
- A **tandem axle** is defined as any two or more single axles whose centers are more than 40 inches and not more than 96 inches apart.
- The **registered** (licensed) weight of the vehicle also imposes an enforceable weight restriction.

For information on the allowable dimension and weight of trucks and trailers operating on state and local roads in Illinois check the IDOT website at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/bt753.pdf>

## Licensing Weights

- Single trucks must be registered (licensed) to cover the gross weight of vehicle and its load.
- When used in combination, it is not necessary to have the license plate on each vehicle (truck or trailer) to cover the weight carried by that individual vehicle. Illinois' "marriage of licenses" provision means that the combined licensed weights of two vehicles used in combination needs to cover the combined weight of the two vehicles.

## Designated Routes

- About 75% of state highways allow **federal bridge formula** weights. The remaining 25% – along with virtually all county & township roads and city streets—allow only **state bridge formula** weights.
- For a map of state highways in Illinois that have

been designated to carry the heavier truck weights, check the IDOT website at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/destruckroute.html>.

There are three classes of designated routes:

- **Class I** – Interstate-type routes, allow heavier, longer and wider vehicles;
- **Class II** – Generally, major state highways, allow heavier and wider vehicles
- **Class III** – Others, allow heavier vehicles (not extra width or length.)

Local roads may be designated at local option. If they have been designated, they will have signs posted showing them to be Class II or Class III routes.

## Access [625 ILCS 5/15-111]

Contrary to popular belief, there is no state law allowing farmers to access their farms and fields (along non-designated roads) at federal bridge formula weights. Illinois has three forms of truck access:

- The heavy truck 5-mile access provision in Illinois law applies only to non-designated **State highways**, not to local road systems. [625 ILCS 5/15-111(f-2)]
- State law grants farmers and others a 5-mile access onto local roads with the larger dimension vehicles, but not the heavier vehicles. [625 ILCS 5/15-111(f-1)]
- All vehicles are afforded a 1-mile access for weight and dimension from interstate-style routes onto any road (unless otherwise posted.) [625 ILCS 5/15-111(f-1)]

## Scale Program

- The Illinois State Police and IDOT operate 12 sets of semi-portable scales among 22 state police districts.
- Many state troopers carry portable ("pancake" or "wheel load weigher") scales in their squad cars.
- There are 35 [permanent scale sites](#) operated by the State of Illinois across the state.
- An IDOT team is assigned to a state police district

for five days per week and assists officers by setting up the scale. The officer-in-charge determines a scale's location, and the police enforce weight regulations.

- IDOT's portable and semi-portable scales are recalibrated by IDOA two times each year – twice as often as required of commercial scales.

#### **Tolerance** [625 ILCS 5/15-112(e)]

- State law provides a "tolerance" for vehicle overweight to accommodate uncertainties in loading.
- Vehicles registered for **73,280# or less** are allowed a 2,000# tolerance for axle weight and a 2,000# tolerance for gross weight.
- Vehicles registered for **more than 73,280#** are allowed a 2,000# tolerance for axle weight but only 1,000# for gross weight. The gross weight tolerance jumps to 2,000# when weighed on portable scales (wheel load weighers.)
- Tolerance does **not** apply to the registered (licensed) weight of the vehicle.
- If overweight but within the tolerance, the vehicle must be parked so the weight can be shifted or removed. Once within limits, the vehicle will be allowed to proceed and no overweight ticket will be issued.

#### **Drivers' Rights**

- A police officer checking a truck's weight may direct the driver to the nearest available scale certified by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. [625 ILCS 5/15-112]
- State Police generally favor using state-owned scales. The driver may request, but not demand, an alternate location.
- Portable and semi-portable scales should be placed in a location that does not present a traffic hazard and that is relatively level and firm.
- Up to a 3% grade is generally within the scale's tolerance but in no case should the vehicle roll due to the slope of the scale.
- The vehicle's brakes should not be applied and no on-board mixing equipment should be operating while being weighed.
- Accumulations of mud, snow and ice generally may be removed from the outside of the vehicle before it is weighed, but not once on the scale.

#### **Fines** [625 ILCS 5/15-113]

- When police issue an overweight citation, the driver generally will not be allowed to move the vehicle until bond is posted in the amount of the fine (perishable loads may be excepted.)
- The circuit clerk in each county usually determines the form of acceptable bond. Most accept some form of certified check or money order, but

not all accept personal checks or even cash.

- Generally, fines start at about \$35 per 500# overweight for lesser violations and incrementally increase. For overweight violations of 5,001# or more, the fine is \$750 plus \$75 for each additional 500# or portion thereof.

#### **Permits** [625 ILCS 5/15-301]

- All permits for overweight or over-dimension should be obtained in writing.
- Each road jurisdiction must issue its own permits – no other jurisdiction may issue permits for another without prior intergovernmental agreement.
- Over-weight permits are generally available only for "non-divisible" loads, (ie: large equipment or construction components that cannot readily be disassembled.) With one exception\*, state law does not allow road officials to issue permits for "divisible" loads such as grain or livestock.
- **Over-Axle Weight Permits** are available to farmers operating trucks hauling grain, livestock, fruits and vegetables, or ensilage. This allows the axle(s) to exceed standard weight limits by:
  - ◆ 2-axle truck = 35%
  - ◆ 3-axle truck = 20%
  - ◆ 4-axle truck = 20%
  - ◆ 5-axle truck = 10%

It does **not** allow additional gross weight and it does **not** allow weights in excess of the registered (licensed) weight. This permit is not available for Interstate highways. [625 ILCS 5/15-301(e)]

For the State's permit application form and additional limitations visit:

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/bt757.pdf>

#### **More Information**

- Illinois Farm Bureau®  
309-557-3274  
[www.ilfb.org](http://www.ilfb.org)
- Illinois State Police  
217-782-6267  
<http://www.isp.state.il.us/>
- Illinois Department of Transportation  
217-782-6271  
<http://www.dot.state.il.us/dobuisns.html>
- Secretary of State  
217-785-1801  
<http://www.sos.state.il.us/>