

80,000# Weight Limit

Illinois' 2009 Legislation Frequently Asked Questions



Autumn 2009

After nearly three decades of operating under dual weight limit formulas, Illinois truckers are about to experience what truckers in the other 49 states have enjoyed for decades—a single standardized formula for establishing default truck weight limits on all roads statewide.

On July 13, 2009, Governor Quinn signed House Bill 0255--part of the State's capital funding package--establishing the *Federal Bridge Formula* as the default weight limit formula for state and local road systems. This formula is the national standard, topping out at 80,000# GVW.

The weight limit change does not take effect until January 1, 2010.

During the 2009 fall harvest, local roads and non-designated highways will still be restricted to the current *State Bridge Formula* weights. That formula tops out at 73,280# GVW.

1. **Will 80,000# be allowed on every road?**
No. State and local road jurisdictions retain the authority to temporarily and/or permanently post roads and bridges with a lower weight limit. Some roads will be posted; many bridges already have been.
2. **How am I to know what limit applies?**
The default weight limit will be that set by the Federal Bridge Formula.¹ If any other weight limit is to be substituted, it will need to be posted on signs along that road.
3. **What is a "Bridge Formula"?**
It is an engineering equation used to calculate maximum gross and axle weights for trucks and trailers. The calculated weight limits apply to both bridges and pavements.²
4. **Does this mean that all roads have to be rebuilt to handle 80,000# trucks?**
No. There is no mandate to re-engineer road systems. Many local roads, when dry or frozen, can easily accommodate the heavier trucks.
5. **Does the 80,000# apply only if a road has been re-build to State specifications for that weight?**
No. 80,000# will be the default maximum gross weight limit on all roads, regardless of design.
6. **What about Width?**
A separate piece of legislation established a uniform truck width restriction of 102" on all roads beginning January 1, 2010.³
7. **What about Length?**
Allowable lengths for truck and trailer combinations were not changed. Combinations on non-designated local roads are still limited to 55' overall length.⁴
8. **Will this change affect axle weights, too?**
Yes. Under the Federal Bridge Formula, single axles are limited to 20,000#; tandem axles are limited to 34,000#. The State Bridge Formula had set those limits at 18,000# and 32,000# respectively.
9. **If (after January 1, 2010) a road is posted at a maximum of 73,280# GVW, will the lower axle weight limits apply?**
No. The the 2009 legislation will eliminate the old State Bridge Formula. Unless reduced axle weight limits are posted, the Federal Bridge Formula limits for axles will apply, regardless of a posted maximum gross weight limit.
10. **Is "Access" still a concept that is needed?**
For weight or width, no. But for length, yes. Default limits for both weight and width are established in State law as being uniform on all roads beginning in 2010. Variations must be posted. However, length differences will still exist in State law, making an "access" provision for length still necessary.⁵
11. **Will overweight permits still be available?**
Yes. However, they can be issued only for non-divisible loads⁶ and they are not typically issued for roads that have a weight limit posting.

12. Will Harvest Season Permits still be available?

Yes. These can be issued for loads of grain. Keep in mind, however, that they provide only for increased axle weights, not gross weights,⁷ and they must be obtained from each (road) jurisdiction on whose roads you will be operating.

13. Will bridges and pavements be treated uniformly or differently?

While the default weight limit on bridges and pavements is the same (80,000#), they can be independently posted for reduced weight limits. The limit posted for a pavement might be higher or lower than the limit posted on a bridge along that same route. On State routes, drivers should see advance warnings of bridge weight limits ahead, giving them a chance to reroute. Local systems are not required to provide advance notice of bridge postings so drivers will need to scout local routes in advance to know what weights are allowed.

14. How will overweight violations be treated under the new limits?

The 2,000# "tolerance" provision will remain in effect, but the fines for overweight will double beginning in 2010.

15. Will weight limits change for farm equipment?

No. Implements of husbandry (other than cargo units) generally remain exempt from standard weight limits. Farm wagons will retain their current limit of 36,000# GVW. Fertilizer buggies, sprayers, nurse tanks and the like are also generally limited to 36,000# GVW. Respect bridge weight limit postings and spring thaw postings.

16. Will truck registration fees (license plate) be increased?

No. Truck and trailer registration fees are unchanged by this 2009 legislation.

Additional information on the Web:

- Visit the Illinois Farm Bureau website www.ilfb.org
- Bridge Formula explained http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/size_weight_bklt.pdf
- Overweight & over-dimension permit information from IDOT <http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/trckpmts.html>
- HB0255 language (280 pages) <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/96/HB/PDF/09600HB0255enr.pdf>
- USDOT# & UCR registration information <http://www.ilfb.org/viewdocument.asp?did=14032>
- Illinois Vehicle Code [\[click here\]](#)

Endnotes:

¹ For a technical explanation of both the State and Federal Bridge Formulas, weight limits, dimensions, and axle spacing, visit the Web at http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/size_weight_bklt.pdf

² (See the note immediately above.)

³ On non-designated roads, trucks had been allowed only up to 96" wide.

⁴ Over-length "access" provisions for non-designated roads were mistakenly eliminated in the 2009 legislation; they are targeted for restoration in the November veto session.

⁵ (See the note immediately above.)

⁶ Most agricultural loads are "divisible" (a portion of the load can be reasonably removed) making them ineligible for overweight permits, except for the Harvest Season Permit.

⁷ For a copy of the State's permit form, visit the Web at <http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/trckpmts.html> and look for the "Grain Permit Application." Local jurisdictions will use their own forms.

Contacts:

- Illinois Farm Bureau® 309-557-3274
<http://www.ilfb.org>
- Illinois State Police 217-782-6267
<http://www.isp.state.il.us/>
- Illinois Dept. of Transportation 217-782-6271
<http://www.dot.state.il.us/tpublic.html#Truckers>
- Secretary of State 217-785-1801
<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/>