

Oversize/Overweight Vehicle Permitting

Project Status Update
February 14, 2017



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Who We Are

- **Ron Schaefer**

Program Manager Leidos

schaeferl@leidos.com

618.567.0309

- **Steven Todd**

Vice President, Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association

stodd@scrnet.org

703.207.3585



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Project Objective

- **GAO Report on the Skagit River Bridge accident:**
 - To improve stewardship over the nation's highways and bridges, we recommend that the Secretary of Transportation direct the FHWA Administrator to take the following action:
 - Conduct a study on state oversize- and overweight-permitting practices, including automated vehicle routing and escort driver certification, to identify areas of best practice and share the results with states.
- Source:
 - GAO Report / "TRANSPORTATION SAFETY: Federal Highway Administration Should Conduct Research to Determine Best Practices in Permitting Oversize Vehicles", p. 24 February 2015
<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/668711.pdf>



GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-15-236](#), a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

In May 2013, a truck carrying an oversize load crashed into an interstate bridge in Washington state causing it to collapse. This crash raised issues about oversize vehicles and public safety. DOT develops regulations on vehicle size and weight, and states enforce these standards with some oversight from DOT. States also issue their own regulations on vehicle size and weight and issue permits for oversize and overweight vehicles.

The Joint Explanatory Statement of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014 required GAO to review the role of federal and state agencies in overseeing oversize vehicles. This report discusses (1) how DOT regulates and provides oversight of oversize vehicles and (2) how states regulate oversize vehicles.

GAO collected information from 50 states and the District of Columbia about their permitting practices; reviewed relevant federal legislation and DOT regulations and documents; and interviewed DOT and state officials from a non-generalizable sample of 10 states, chosen based on a variety of considerations, including geographic diversity and types of permitting requirements.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOT conduct a study on states' oversize- and overweight-permitting practices, including automated vehicle routing and escort driver certification, to identify areas of best practice and

February 2015

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Federal Highway Administration Should Conduct Research to Determine Best Practices in Permitting Oversize Vehicles

What GAO Found

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has established some federal vehicle size and weight requirements and oversees some state activities. Based on current legislation, FHWA has established rules and regulations for vehicle width, truck trailer length, and vehicle weight standards for certain federal-aid highways aimed at protecting highways and bridges from damage while providing a safe and efficient highway network. FHWA does not, however, have the authority to establish a height requirement, a decision that goes back to the Interstate System's construction in the 1950's, when height clearances already varied from state to state. FHWA also oversees states' processes for enforcing these standards by reviewing states' documentation of enforcement operations. However, FHWA has more limited involvement in individual states' permitting processes and requirements, which the agency considers largely a state matter. For example, it does not provide technical assistance on permitting to states.

Federal Vehicle Size and Weight Standards



Source: GAO. | GAO-15-236

State laws and regulations set varying size and weight limits and permitting requirements for vehicles that exceed these limits and that operate on highways and bridges. Specifically, GAO found that the vehicle size and weight limits set by state laws and regulations vary by state, although they are within the parameters of federal requirements. For example, states' length standards vary between the minimum federal standard of 48 feet and 65 feet for a semitrailer. GAO also found that permitting practices for oversize vehicles often vary by state. In some cases, states follow similar practices; for example, most states make use of online permitting systems and escort vehicles that travel with an oversize or overweight vehicle. However, other permitting practices vary by state—such as states' use of automated routing systems to provide a route for oversize vehicles. A National Transportation Safety Board investigation reported that differences among states on the various aspects of truck permitting could be a safety concern. State officials GAO interviewed did not always agree on the benefits of the various permitting practices, and some spoke of the need for more

OS/OW Vehicle Permitting Project Kickoff 9/22/16

- Task 1
 - Project Management
- Task 2
 - Conduct literature review of available OS/OW permitting
 - Develop criteria for OS/OW permitting best practices
- Task 3
 - Create inventory of State OS/OW permitting practices
 - Develop Best Practices Report: Draft and Final
- Task 4
 - Share the Results: Two Webinars



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- The environmental scan was completed as follows:
 - Comprehensive web search to identify documents and other relevant information sources
 - Meeting with the FHWA Office of Bridges and Structures to identify National Bridge Inventory data of relevance to the research
 - Interviews with select states currently using automated OS/OW permitting systems
 - Interviews with select vendors who currently offer OS/OW permitting systems



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Literature Review
 - AASHTO Subcommittee on Highway Transportation's OS/OW Permit Harmonization Resolutions
 - Transportation Research Board Ongoing NCHRP 08-97 "Finding and Using Data to Identify and Evaluate Corridors for Transporting Multi-State, Multi-Modal Oversize/Overweight Freight"
 - Pilot Escort Vehicle Training Materials and State Certification Harmonization Project, In Particular the Research Conducted On State Certification And Training Programs
 - GAO
 - Annual State Size and Weight Enforcement Certification Reports



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- State OS/OW Permitting System Information Scan
 - 9 States were interviewed
 - Type of Permitting System
 - Manual or Automated
 - Route Identification
 - Load Height, Width, Length and Weight Thresholds
 - Application Process
 - Library: Inventory of Equipment and Previous Permits/Routes
 - Issuance of Permits When Thresholds Are Exceeded
 - Time & Cost Savings
 - Permit Accuracy
 - System Operation



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Review of OS/OW Permitting Vendor Systems
 - Bentley Systems
 - SUPERLOAD - OS/OW permitting software package
 - GotPermits – enables carrier to submit permit app for multi-state route
 - ProMiles
 - primary vendor providing states with automated permitting and routing system
 - Oxcart Permits System
 - Web based system links local permitting agencies with carriers



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Key Criteria for Assessing Best Practices
 - Do permitting processes promote operating efficiencies?
 - Do permitting processes enhance safety?
 - Do permitting processes promote harmonization?
- Process
 - Analyzed Research Results and Link to Key Criteria
 - Route Identification, Threshold Limits, Auto-issuance of Permits, Time/Cost Savings, Permit Accuracy, System Operations
 - Identify Key Elements That Can Be Used to Identify Best Practices



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Process
 - Identify Common Characteristics Between States
 - Regional, Geographic, Economic, Load Type
 - Cross-reference Best Practice Criteria with Geographic and Demographic Data Analysis Results
 - Develop Criteria For Assessing Best Practices
 - Linked to Key Criteria – Efficiency and Safety
 - Cross Referenced by Research Topic
 - Cross Referenced by Common Geographic/Demographic Characteristics



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- High Level Criteria – Safety and Efficiency
 - Enhancing the safe movement of OS/OW loads through:
 - Improved data quality and information exchange
 - Enhanced infrastructure protection through automated identification of permanent and temporary route restrictions
 - Enhanced highway safety through notification to open permit holders of changes in permit status



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- High Level Criteria – Safety and Efficiency
 - Reducing permit processing time and improving operational efficiencies:
 - Automating route selection and auto-issuance of permits to reduce permit turnaround time (PTA)
 - Reduced or eliminated backlog
 - One-stop-shopping with either state-issuance of local permits or direct links to local permit agencies



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Best Practices Criteria
 - Automated Route Identification
 - State system has the authority to issue local permits as well as state permits
 - State system's map includes state and local road systems
 - State system's map has embedded links that provide point of contact information for local permit agencies
 - State OS/OW Permitting Webpage has a link that connects to local permitting portals
 - State OS/OW Permitting Webpage has a link that provides point of contact information for local agencies
 - State system enables carriers to generate route maps
 - State system includes and displays permanent and temporary route restrictions
 - State system includes a hyperlink that provides information on the restriction
 - State system will auto-route carriers around restriction



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Best Practices Criteria
 - Thresholds
 - Height restrictions
 - The state system contains information on all bridge and other height restrictions.
 - The state system automatically routes carriers around bridge and height restrictions.
 - The state uses the “minimum or the maximum” criteria for issuing permits on bridges with variations in lane clearance heights.
 - Weight restrictions
 - The state system automatically routes carriers on routes that are approved for state weight thresholds.
 - Length restrictions
 - The state system automatically routes carriers on routes that are approved for state length thresholds.
 - Width restrictions
 - The state system automatically routes carriers on routes that are approved for state width thresholds.



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Best Practices Criteria
 - Application Process
 - State system includes edit check functions that link the requested OS/OW load movement route to the correct permit for the particular load.
 - State system includes a library function that enables carriers to store company data, information on power units and trailer configurations and previously issued permits.
 - State system includes pre-approved routes for the movement of particular OS/OW loads.



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Best Practices Criteria
 - System Operation
 - State system includes electronic payments options
 - Electronic Funds Transfer, credit/debit cards, escrow accounts
 - State system updates route restrictions in a timely manner and tracks all open permits. All open permit holders are notified if a change in a route restriction changes the status of a permit.



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Best Practices Criteria
 - Other
 - State system has authority to issue permits for a port
 - Vendor system has the functionality to issue permits for multiple states for a single OS/OW load. State permits are only issued along a route where the requested permit and proposed route are in compliance with each state's threshold requirements
 - Vendor system has ability to issue local permits for carriers whose OS/OW load includes local as well as state roads



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 2: Research Best Practices Criteria for OS/OW Permitting

- Pilot Car Training and Certification Best Practices Criteria
 - Program Management
 - Training and Certification
 - Reciprocity with Other States
 - Enforcement



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 3: Inventory and Identify State Best Practices

- Use Results of Task 2 to Develop Inventory Database of State OS/OW Permitting Processes
- Identify Best Practices Using Task 2 Criteria
 - Key Criteria: Efficiency and Safety
 - Cross-reference State Best Practices by Research Product
- Develop Best Practices Report Annotated Outline
- Develop Best Practices Report



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting

Task 4: Share the Results with the States

- Develop Presentation Summarizing the Results of Task 3
- Conduct Two Webinars (Talking Freight)
- Work with FHWA and Stakeholder Groups (AAHSTO, SC&RA, CVSA, Pilot Car Industry) to Identify Potential Participants
- Contact Participants and Schedule/Conduct Two Webinars
 - Target Audience of Up to 100 Participants per Webinar
- Document Webinar Results



OS/OW Vehicle Permitting Project Schedule

- Task 2
 - Completed Information Scan and Literature Review on January 31, 2107
 - Developed Draft Criteria for Assessing State Best Practices on January 31, 2017
 - Develop final Review and Criteria by April 2017
 - SC&RA Symposium Workshop in February 2017
- Task 3
 - Complete Annotated Outline of Best Practices Report by July 2017
 - Complete State OS/OW Permitting Process Inventory Data Base by August 2017
 - Complete Draft State Best Practices Report by September 2017
 - Complete Final State Best Practices Report by October 2017
- Task 4
 - Conduct Two Webinars in November 2017
 - PowerPoint and 2-page Summary October 2017



Thank You!

- **Ron Schaefer**

Program Manager Leidos

schaeferl@leidos.com

618.567.0309

- **Steven Todd**

Vice President, Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association

stodd@scrnet.org

703.207.3585

