



# TOP OSOW ISSUES

## OSOW BEST PRACTICES: PERMITTING, DESIGN, AND CROSS-STATE COORDINATION

MID-AMERICA FREIGHT COALITION ANNUAL MEETING  
APRIL 18, 2012  
5:30-7:00 PM  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

### *Designing the Transportation System with Freight in Mind*

Recognizing that the size (especially length) and weight of OSOW vehicles are increasing, the project-scoping and design process should consider turning radius, weight capacity, and other factors, including the kinds of vehicles that will be using the facility now and in the future, to enhance the efficient movement of goods and to reduce congestion and traffic delays.

1. New intersection designs and OSOW impacts (roundabouts, echelons, DDI/DDW, SPUI).
2. Railroad crossings, quiet zones, bridge clearances, guard rail, and other barriers.
3. Truck parking facilities and OSOW staging areas.

### *Keeping OSOW Freight Moving: More Harmonization and Uniformity among the States*

Each state has their own set of regulations, statutes, and requirements, which increases costs and reduces efficiencies for industry. Carriers often have to stop at state lines to make adjustments in lights, signage, or other requirements to comply. In some instances, they have to completely bypass a state, driving hundreds of extra miles to a state where their load or configuration is accepted. Progress toward OSOW uniformity has been limited primarily among the different AASHTO regions, and while states prefer to protect their autonomy, some federal guidance is needed to establish basic national standards. AASHTO should promote efforts to increase national uniformity.

1. Times of movement and travel (weekend/holiday travel, curfews).
2. Lights and signage.
3. Permit duration (how long permits are valid).
4. Ocean container permits.
5. Inclement weather (how notified and how enforced).
6. Blanket permits for unladen trailers.
7. Permit fees.
8. Insurance requirements.
9. Tandem, tridem, and quad weight allowances and configurations.
10. Pilot car requirements: fully endorse certification and reciprocity.

### *Statute Interpretation, Administrative Actions, and Enforcement: State Permit Offices and Law Enforcement*

OSOW carriers are faced with a confusing and frustrating myriad of differing state statutes, interpretation, penalties, and enforcement. Some states suspend permitting privileges for certain violations, while others may issue a warning. Unfortunately, interpretation and law enforcement actions sometimes are not consistent within a single state. This issue would also benefit from improved uniformity.

### *Superload Guidelines*

The dimensions, weight, and variety of superloads continues to increase. Clarification, uniformity, and the consideration of revised guidelines are needed to provide for efficient movement of freight, reduce congestion, and improve highway safety.

1. Weight categories.
2. Times of movement and travel

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3. Holiday movement and whether the holiday falls on weekend.
4. Routine moves.
5. Escort requirements.
6. Permit duration.
7. Wind components.

## *National Focus*

AASHTO's regional areas (WASHTO, MAASTO, NASTO, and SASHTO) realize the vast majority of state and industry OSOW concerns focus on the need for more harmonization and uniformity. The efficiency of OSOW freight movement will never be optimized if carriers continue to have to play by different rules every time they enter a state. While states must retain the ability to deal with specific issues, a baseline of national standards is needed to start the ball rolling for a more uniform national freight network.

The state permit offices also vary in their structure and location within individual state governments: many are part of the DOT, while some are located within departments of revenue or economic development and other departments. Uniformity efforts are hindered because some states can, for instance, make a flagging requirement change by simply changing a business practice, while in other states it may require a lengthy rule change process or statute revision. AASHTO's regional SCOHT committees would welcome federal guidance to help establish some basic OSOW harmonization for the national freight network.

1. Uniformity among the states through federal guidelines (simple things first such as size and color of signage, lighting, etc.).
2. Federal regulations: definitions, guidance and impact.
3. National size and weight issues.
4. New legislation: interstate implications.
5. CVSA focus and trends.
6. Automation/technology: electronic permitting.
7. AASHTO SCOHT to champion uniformity and harmonization for regions.

## *Contributors*

Material for this handout was based on feedback gathered at recent MAASTO meetings by staff members of the Missouri Department of Transportation, including:

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The Mid-America Freight Coalition (MAFC) is a regional organization that cooperates in the planning, operation, preservation, and improvement of transportation infrastructure in the Midwest. The ten states of the AASHTO Mid-America Association of State Transportation Officials (MAASTO) share key interstate corridors, inland waterways, and the Great Lakes. The MAFC is funded by the National Center for Freight & Infrastructure Research & Education and the DOTs of the ten member states.