

DEVELOPMENTS IN HEAVY VEHICLE POLICY AND RESEARCH

1. RECENT CHANGES TO THE OVERWEIGHT PERMIT POLICY

1.1 CONTINUOUS PERMITS

These have recently been extended to include movements that require self supervision of bridges. Payloads carried no longer need to be identified in detail on the permit application, provided the operator has documentation covering evidence of weight.

1.2 AREA PERMITS

These are effectively an extension to continuous permits for unlimited travel on an agreed network of roads for a period of two years. Transit New Zealand (TNZ) imposes an additional charge for the extra costs incurred in investigating the routes covered. These permits provide the industry with much more freedom of movement, and are proving quite popular.

1.3 ISO CONTAINERS

This weight limit on this policy has been modified from "legal weight limit plus ten percent" to a maximum vehicle axle index of 1.10. This change allows room for the development of vehicles using the newer tyre sizes. The minimum tyre size has also been amended to include tyres fitted to a 19.5 inch rim.

1.4 SELF SUPERVISION AND INDUSTRY PILOTING

A recent decision will see the extension of bridge engineering supervision by approved operators and firms to include all routine bridge crossings. TNZ has also recognised the ability of the heavy haulage industry to provide adequate warning to motorists, by allowing qualified pilots to accompany overweight vehicles on bridge crossings in future. The role of the engineering consultant will be reduced to instances where the integrity of the bridge structure is threatened.

2. POSSIBLE FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 ALIGNMENT WITH OVERDIMENSION POLICY

There is clearly a need for consistency between the overdimension and overweight policies. This is essential if we are to progress towards providing the transport industry with a single permit administration service (i.e. the "one stop shop").

2.2 FURTHER DELEGATION TO INDUSTRY

With the industry now becoming more responsible for supervision and traffic safety on bridge crossings, there could be an opportunity to delegate permit administration. One possible scenario for a future administration structure is shown in Appendix 1.

3. AN UPDATE ON HEAVY VEHICLE RESEARCH

3.1 OVERDIMENSION VEHICLE ROUTES

The main purpose of this research is to identify and document the existing overdimension vehicle route network. The researcher has collected data for 300 maps, and TNZ is now considering the format for their publication.

3.2 HEAVY TRANSPORT ROUTES

This project set out to complete an economic evaluation of the ability of all or some of our road network to carry heavier vehicles. Stage 1 was reported to this conference in 1994. Stage 2 is well underway, and is due for completion at the beginning of next year. Already the researcher has provided TNZ with an inception report which completes much of the base work required in Stage 2. A range of vehicle configurations has been finalised which will provide the boundaries to be used in the forthcoming economic analysis. These include B-Doubles at 23 m overall length and semi-trailers at 18 m overall length. Weight limits being used in the study include a 9 tonne dual tyred axle, a 17 tonne tandem axle, a 22 tonne triaxle, and gross weights from 55 to 67 tonnes. No changes from the current legal vehicle width and height

SPECIAL PERMIT

Special Payloads (e.g. Transformers)
Carried on Platform Trailers or Transporters
TNZ issues permits and supervises

SPECIFIC PERMIT

Construction Plant and Buildings
Carried on Transporters & Dollies
Self Bridge Supervision
Self Permitting by Industry or Agency

GENERAL PERMIT

Fixed Weight Plant (e.g. Mobile Cranes & ISO
Containers)
May be on Designated Routes
No Permit Application Required

limits have been included in the configurations to be used.

Safety and environmental issues will be considered in a subsequent phase of Stage 2 following the completion of the economic analysis.

I must emphasise the previous position that TNZ wants to examine the productivity issue in detail, without making any commitment to a final recommendation for higher weight limits on any or all roads.

3.3 SMALL DIAMETER TYRES

This research is intended to assess and quantify the increased pavement wear that ensues from the use of small diameter tyres. We are talking here of anything below that fitted to a 19.5 inch rim. This research is partly in response to overseas trends towards fitting smaller tyres to semi-trailers for productivity improvements. The brief has been agreed with the researcher, and the first stage of searching literature on this subject is now underway.

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