



## WASHBURN COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

**Brian Danielsen P.E., Commissioner**

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 (715) 635-4480 Fax (715) 388-7945

Chair Tim Kessler      Hank Graber, Vice Chair  
 Sandy Johnson      Clint Stariha      Brian Melton

### Washburn County Highway Department Policy –SEASONAL WEIGHT LIMITS

The goal of the Washburn County Highway Department is to provide a safe and economical transportation system for the traveling public and the taxpayers of Washburn County. In order to accomplish this goal, seasonal weight restrictions need to be imposed on select roads each year to prevent damage to County Highways. Seasonal weight limits are implemented when the frost begins to leave the roadbed in the spring. During this time, the roadbed soils are saturated and are not stable enough to handle heavy loads. Hauling on roads during the spring thaw will likely seriously damage or destroy the infrastructure. Seasonal postings are understandably an inconvenience, but necessary to prevent damage to the infrastructure.

The Washburn County Highway Commissioner has the authority to impose special weight restrictions on any County Trunk Highway that has the potential for damage or deterioration due to hauling during the freeze thaw timeframe each spring. Wisconsin Statute section 349.16 authorizes the posting of Washburn County Highways. Washburn County works closely with neighboring Counties to be consistent with seasonal weight postings each year. For all posted Washburn County Highways, vehicle weight will be restricted to 6 tons per axle and 10 tons per tandem axle less than 8' apart.

<b>Spring Posting Weight Limit *</b>	<b>Normal Seasonal Weight Limit</b>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Single Axle</b></p> <p>24,000 Lbs. (12 Ton)</p> </div> </div>	<p>34,000 Lbs. (17 Ton)</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Tandem Axle</b></p> <p>32,000 Lbs. (16 Ton)</p> </div> </div>	<p>46,000 Lbs. (23 Ton)</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Tri Axle</b></p> <p>44,000 Lbs. (22 Ton)</p> </div> </div>	<p>58,000 Lbs. (29 Ton)</p>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Quad Axle</b></p> <p>56,000 Lbs. (28 Ton)</p> </div> </div>	<p>73,000 Lbs. (36.5 Ton)</p>

\* Based on 6 Ton per Axle and 10 Ton per Tandem Axle.



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At the beginning of each spring weight restriction period, the start date of the seasonal weight restrictions will be posted by the Highway Commissioner on the Highway Department Website ([www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/highway](http://www.co.washburn.wi.us/departments/highway)) and the Highway Department Facebook page. A press release will also be sent to local media outlets. Every effort will be made to provide as much advanced warning for spring weight restrictions, but unexpected weather changes may require quick implementation of weight restrictions. Signs will be placed at each end of roadway that will be posted at locations that will allow vehicles to choose an alternate route without having to perform a U-turn.

Postings will be removed each spring after the road beds have dried out and stabilized. The Highway Commissioner will notify the public that road bans are to be removed in the same manner as when they are started.

Highway maintenance vehicles, school buses, emergency public utility vehicles, and vehicles hauling bulk milk products are exempt from seasonal weight restrictions on Washburn County Trunk Highways.

Propane haulers are exempt from seasonal weight restrictions if the tank is filled to no more than 50% of its capacity and the gross weight imposed on the highway by the vehicle doesn't exceed 30,000 pounds (single rear axle) or 40,000 pounds (tandem rear axle). Each propane truck shall have a gauge to measure the volume of propane in the vehicle.

The Highway Commissioner has the authority to grant a variance permit for certain situations. The Highway Commissioner recommends that all drivers haul loads meeting seasonal weight restrictions if at all possible. Variance permits are not guaranteed and may be revoked at any time due to weather and road conditions.

The following will be taken into consideration before approving a weight variance permit:

- The operator shall provide a reasonable explanation for the need for hauling.
- Permits will be only issued to the person hauling material.
- Operators shall provide truck identification numbers/license plate numbers for each haul vehicle.
- Any divisible loads should be separated into cargo units of legal weight.
- Approval of non-divisible loads will be for emergency use only.
- Further restrictions may be imposed for each permit by the Highway Commissioner. Ex. Specifying a date range, specifying that loads must be hauled prior to 8 AM to take advantage of frozen grade to minimize damage to the roadway, and specifying an alternate route.
- Consideration may be made for special deliveries of services that may impact business.
- The Highway Commissioner has the authority to approve and issue permits in cases of public health emergencies and emergency utility repairs.

Permits will only be valid if signed by the Washburn County Highway Commissioner. Verbal approval will not be granted for any permit. Each truck will need to have a signed hard copy of the permit in the vehicle. Permits will only be valid for Washburn County Highways. Any weight restrictions on State, City, Village, or Townships are the authority of each individual entity.

***POLICY APPROVED BY THE WASHBURN COUNTY HIGHWAY AND DAM COMMITTEE, MARCH 20, 2023.***