



SCAN TEAM REPORT

NCHRP Project 20-68A, Scan 12-01

Advances in State DOT Superload Permit Processes and Practices

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Executive Summary

The development of trucking technology and the increase in demands on freight transportation have led to longer and heavier vehicles traveling on the highway over the past two decades. Furthermore, to incorporate the special needs from industry, vehicles that are more irregular are used to transport heavy loads (e.g., prestressed concrete girder, automotive presses, transformers, and wind turbine components). Since these heavy and irregular vehicles (also known as superloads) have a significant effect on the infrastructure system when compared to regular-permit vehicles, they should be subject to special consideration in the permitting and operation process.

Standard permitting criteria for superloads differ from state to state. Although several regional associations were organized and successful pioneering practices were implemented to improve the efficiency and uniformity among different states (e.g., the New England Transportation Consortium¹, the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials², and the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials³), significant differences in superload permitting processes still exist. Thus, there is a need to better understand the current state-of-practice in different states and to find a more practical way to improve the uniformity in permitting practices in the U.S.

This scan's aim was to gather current practices from different states, identify best practices, and propose an implementation plan to improve the uniformity in superload permitting processes in the near future.

To achieve this goal, this scan consisted of three stages:

- A desk scan
- A comprehensive questionnaire with amplifying questions for various topics
- A workshop with representatives from various states

In the desk scan, a detailed literature review was conducted regarding the superload permitting practices and new developments in these practices. The scan team also reached out to various DOTs to collect information regarding legal limits and superload limits. The desk scan proved that many DOTs can provide meaningful information on superload permit processes and practices. However, due to time constraints, a limited number of DOTs were selected for follow-up and further investigation.

During the organizational meeting, and based on input from the preliminary literature review and discussions with panel members, 18 states were selected for visits:

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| Alabama | Louisiana | Pennsylvania |
| California | Maine | South Dakota |
| Florida | Michigan | Texas |
| Idaho | Minnesota | Virginia |
| Illinois | New York | Washington |
| Indiana | Ohio | Wisconsin |

¹ New England Transportation Consortium, <http://www.netc.umassd.edu/accomplishments.html>

² Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, <http://www.washto.org/>

³ Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, <http://www.sashto.org/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The scan team asked the selected states to complete a comprehensive questionnaire of amplifying questions covering various topics, including their current practices. The team later held a workshop to identify the best practices and propose a future implementation plan.

This scan's findings provided the scan team with a better understanding of the current state-of-practice for superload permitting, allowed it to identify best practices, and enabled it to make recommendations and propose an implementation plan to improve uniformity and automation in superload permitting in the near future.