



**Highway Maintenance Manual**  
**Chapter 06 Winter Maintenance**  
**Section 05 Road Classifications**  
**Subject 15 Posted Roads**

**Bureau of Highway Maintenance**  
**March 2012**

### **1.0 Authority**

The department may impose special seasonal weight restrictions on any state trunk highway that, because of weakness of the roadbed due to deteriorating or climatic conditions or other special or temporary conditions, would likely be seriously damaged or destroyed in the absence of such special limitations. This is done in accordance with Wis. Stats. Section 349.16.

Seasonal weight restrictions usually apply only during those times when the roadbed is becoming unfrozen. The posted limits normally are six tons gross load for single-axle vehicles and ten tons for tandem-axle vehicles. All annual or single-trip overweight travel is not permitted during this time on posted road sections, in accordance with Wis. Stats. Section 348.17.

The department may exempt vehicles carrying certain commodities. Vehicles carrying these commodities, specified by the department or used to perform certain services specified by the department such as pumping septic or holding tanks, may be exempted from the special seasonal weight limitations stated or may be subject to different weight limitations if such exemption or limitation is reasonable and necessary to promote the public health, safety and welfare according to Wis. Stats. Section 349.16 (3).

Exemptions or limitations may be granted for only emergency or exceptional situations as determined by district operations personnel.

### **2.0 RS Permits**

Only WisDOT may issue the permit authorized by section 348.27(9m)(a)4.- the Raw Forest Permit, also known as the "98k on six axles permit" or the "RS Permit". The commodity authorized for transport is raw forest products (as defined in s.348.01(2)(bt); this is a divisible commodity. RS Permits are valid on public streets and highways except Interstate highways. Permit holders may not exceed posted weight limits on any street or highway except for seasonal postings on marked State or US routes. Permit holders may not exceed posted limits on State or US routes that restrict weights on pertain to bridges, culverts, or restrictions that are not related to the thawing of frozen highways. RS permits do authorize exceeding posted weight limits only on State or US highways that are posted in connection with the thawing of frozen highways.

- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is the only agency that may issue a "Raw Forest Products Permit (RS Permit) per Wis Statute 348.27(9m)(a)4.
- The RS Permit authorizes transport of "raw forest products" up to 98,000 lbs gvw on vehicles or vehicle combinations with six or more axles; no axle may exceed the axle weights set in the statute.
- During the spring thaw period established by WisDOT, the RS Permit allows transport on any highway that is a marked State or US route including those posted to limit weights seasonally in connection with thawing of frozen roads. RS permits also remain valid during spring thaw on all other public roads but are subject to pall posted weight limits, including seasonal limits.
- RS Permits are not valid on Interstate highways.
- RS permits do not authorize exceeding posted weight limits, except for seasonal limits on marked State or US routes in connection with thawing of frozen roads.

### **3.0 Imposition of Special Weight Limitations**

Signs shall be erected on or along the highway section on which special weight limitations are imposed. Reasonable notice that a special weight limitation is in effect and the nature of that limitation shall be given at both ends of the highway section. The limits of posted highway sections should be chosen so as to allow vehicles to choose an alternate route without having to perform a u-turn. All signs and their installation should be in accordance with the rules of the department and should be standard with other weight-limitation signage.

#### **4.0 Procedure**

1. Prior to the start of the spring thaw period, approximately by February 15th of each year, the Region Systems Maintenance Managers shall notify by written list the Bureau Of Highway Maintenance of the highway sections within their respective districts that will be posted for special weight restrictions during the roadbed thawing period. The list and map shall include the state highway number, the limits of the affected highway section, the effective date and, when appropriate, the removal date. The Bureau of Highway Maintenance office will compile a list of all highway sections with special weight restrictions and post notice of the posted road sections by list and map at the department's Internet web site.

[\(<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/truck/postedroads.htm>\).](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/truck/postedroads.htm)

The Bureau of Highway Maintenance based on written reports submitted by Region Systems Maintenance Managers will update the list and map as necessary.

2. The lifting of posted road restrictions in late April to early May, depending on roadway temperature and road conditions, will be publicized by notice at the department's Internet web site and a telephone recorded message at (608) 266-8417.