

# Transporting Oversized Loads Meeting Kit

## **DEFINITION – OVERSIZED LOAD**

In road transport, an oversize load (or overweight load) is a load that exceeds the standard or ordinary legal size and/or weight limits for a specified portion of road or highway.

## **REQUIREMENTS OF OVERSIZED LOADS FOR OPERATORS :**

(1) ensuring that the load can be moved safely and legally from its point of origin to its destination, and (2) obtaining the necessary permits to move the load.

For larger oversize loads, such as widths up to 15 feet or heights exceeding 13.5 feet, a route survey may be required prior to the haul. It must be determined that overhead utility lines, bridges and overpasses, overhead signs, etc., do not pose a contact hazard. For overweight loads, it must be determined that trucks do not overstress bridges and overpasses, and that weight is properly distributed across the axels to protect roadways.

## **TYPICAL OVERSIZE LOAD DETAILS**

- Generally, a maximum legal load is 8.5 feet for both height and width.
- Most oversize loads exceeding 12 feet require an escort or pilot car for safe travel.
- Permitted travel times for oversize loads vary by jurisdictions. For instance, some mandates restrict oversize load transport during holidays and weekends. Others only allow for transport during certain hours of the day.

# SAFETY TIPS FOR TRANSPORTING OVERSIZED LOADS

**1. Take Time to Plan Your Route:** Routes you have used in the past may not be applicable for oversized loads. Check ahead to see if the route you want to use accommodates oversized loads or if routes allow such loads. Construction is also another factor when planning a route.

Whether it's the primary choice or an alternative, every route plan should include information about travel times, delays, fueling locations, and break spots. It's important to think about every possible factor when planning the route. Not having a stringent refueling plan in place can balloon transportation costs, as drivers are forced to go out of their way or choose fueling stations that are less than ideal or overpriced.

**2. Check the Weather Forecast:** Check the 10-day weather forecast affecting the route you plan to take. You may need to allow yourself more time to safely transport an oversized load or find another route if the forecast calls for severe weather. Weather conditions may also change the way you protect your load from inclement weather.

Hauling oversized loads should never happen in extreme weather conditions, except in rare circumstances, such as a major emergency. If possible, find a rest stop to wait out the storm and hit the road when it's safe to travel again.

**3. Reference the Laws:** There are rules and regulations about hauling oversized loads or items. Drivers must abide by those laws at all times.

Hauling oversized loads requires a permit, which details the origin of the shipment and its destination. Driving without one can result in severe fines and sometimes other penalties and may even come with a license suspension for the driver. It's important to keep all documentation updated before, during and after a haul.

**4. Use the Right Securement:** When hauling loads of any size, it's

critical to keep the pieces, items or components locked down and secured. There are many different types of fastening devices, from ropes and straps to friction mats and binders. They're not always interchangeable, and sometimes devices are not ideal for certain loads or gear. It's up to the drivers to know which securement tools are best for a particular load. Using the wrong devices can have major repercussions and may or may not lead to the heavy load falling off the trailer or transport.

Devices should be inspected regularly to ensure they're in proper working order and have not been damaged in any way. This should be done before and after a haul, and any broken or failing items should be replaced right away.

**5. Drive Defensively and Watch Your Speed:** It's easy to be driving for long periods of time, on a straight stretch of highway, and not realize how fast you are going. While hauling an oversized load on interstates, remember to look down at the speedometer every 10 minutes.

Maintain adequate distance from vehicles in front and beside you. Driving at night, in hilly areas, on curvy roads, and on secondary/poorly kept roads always demands assuring there is enough room for you to make sudden stops.

**6. Proactive Maintenance:** It's important to carry out proactive maintenance on a vehicle or fleet before a big trip to prevent incidents from happening. Fluids should be topped up and monitored, the tires should be checked, spare parts and gear should be added to the truck.

## FINAL WORD

While many oversize loads do reach their destination point safely, even one accident involving one of these monster vehicles is one too many. Serious injury and even fatalities can be the end result when carriers are not operating safely according to the rules of the road.