

New Jersey Department of Transportation
Bureau of Research

Technical Brief



Oversize/Overweight Permitting Practices Review

This report explores the experiences and best practices of oversize/overweight (OS/OW) permitting agencies in the United States and offers insight into potential opportunities available to improve OS/OW permitting in the State of New Jersey. The study provides a cursory review of OS/OW permitting practices for the lead permitting agencies in all 50 states and a detailed review of OS/OW activities within Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and relates these experiences to New Jersey's existing practices.

Background

Across the United States, states have implemented oversize/overweight (OS/OW) permitting practices that enable them to address issues such as the growing number of OS/OW loads, larger load sizes and weights, routing challenges, and road damage. Some practices among states are variable, while some practices are consistent.

Over the years, the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has applied programs, technologies, and processes to improve the movement of vehicles, travelers, and goods on the transportation infrastructure. To further the advancement of New Jersey's oversize/overweight (OS/OW) program, NJDOT commissioned this study to examine and better understand industry best practices and the experiences of other states to provide insight into opportunities to improve permitting in New Jersey.

Research Objectives and Approach

This study researched the experiences and best practices of oversize/overweight (OS/OW) permitting agencies in the United States and offers insight into potential opportunities available to improve OS/OW permitting in the State of New Jersey.

The study was rooted in a literature review and interview program that reached out to seven permitting agencies that border or have similar freight characteristics or jurisdictional and/or operational responsibilities to the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT). The literature review collected and organized information from studies, reports, and web sites that describe the key topics across the United States for oversize and overweight permitting. The interview program was designed to enhance and clarify the OS/OW permitting practices of state agencies within close proximity to New Jersey and/or with similar freight movements and characteristics. All collected information was cataloged within an electronic OS/OW Permitting Resource Database that NJDOT personnel can use to query OS/OW best practices.

Upon completion of the literature review and interview program, the research team identified key lessons learned that relate to topic areas of particular interest to NJDOT. The study identified national OS/OW permitting issues, notable regional topics, and findings that may provide a basis for further investigation by NJDOT as it considers potential enhancements to its existing permitting processes.

Findings

The research team identified key national over-dimensional permitting issues as well as notable regional topics which emerged from the synthesis of state findings. Nationally, NJDOT is on par with most states by automating most aspects of their permitting system. While there are variations on permit limits and permit types among the states, New Jersey falls in line with the Nation’s median with both 10 permit limits and 5 permit types.

Lessons learned and best practices may be transportable among states and may foster continued improvement of operations at the agency level and for carriers. Better understanding of key issues identified as impediments; such as institutional variations (administrative and organizational), a variety of permitting policies and processes that exists among the jurisdictions, and a disparity in implementation (and plans) of automating permitting systems among and within the jurisdictions; may assist in identifying discrete areas for improvement. Key takeaways which may be of interest for further investigation by NJDOT include exploring new permits that address industry specific movements frequently occurring within New Jersey or new permit fee structures that relates fees to infrastructure damage cost. Additionally, New Jersey is at the crux of mid-Atlantic truck activity and enhanced coordination and cooperation with neighboring agencies may offer New Jersey opportunities to streamline OS/OW permitting processes and movements.

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A final report is available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/research/>. If you would like a copy of the full report, send an e-mail to: Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us.

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