



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION**: Load Rating of Specialized Hauling
Vehicles

Date: November 15, 2013

/s/ **Original Signed by**

From: Joseph S. Krolak
Acting Director, Office of Bridge Technology

In Reply Refer To:
HIBT-10

To: Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers
Division Administrators

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify FHWA's position on the analysis of *Specialized Hauling Vehicles* (SHVs) as defined in the AASHTO Manual for Bridge Evaluation (MBE) during bridge load rating and posting to comply with the requirements of the *National Bridge Inspection Standards* (NBIS). The intent of the load rating and posting provisions of the NBIS is to insure that all bridges are appropriately evaluated to determine their safe live load carrying capacity considering all unrestricted legal loads, including State routine permits, and that bridges are appropriately posted if required, in accordance with the MBE.

The SHVs are closely-spaced multi-axle single unit trucks introduced by the trucking industry in the last decade. Examples include dump trucks, construction vehicles, solid waste trucks and other hauling trucks. SHVs generally comply with Bridge Formula B and are for this reason considered legal in all States, if a States' laws do not explicitly exclude the use of such vehicles.

NCHRP Project 12-63 (Report 575, 2007) studied the developments in truck configurations and State legal loads and found that AASHTO Type 3, 3-S2 and 3-3 legal vehicles are not representative of all legal loads, specifically SHVs. As a result, legal load models for SHVs were developed and adopted by AASHTO in 2005, recognizing that there is an immediate need to incorporate SHVs into a State's load rating process, if SHVs operate within a State. The SHV load models in the MBE include SU4, SU5, SU6 and SU7 representing four- to seven-axle SHVs respectively, and a Notional Rating Load (NRL) model that envelopes the four single unit load models and serves as a screening load. If the load rating factor for the NRL model is 1.0 or greater, then there is no need to rate for the single-unit SU4, SU5, SU6 and SU7 loads. However, if the load rating factor for the NRL is less than 1.0, then the single-unit SU4, SU5, SU6 and SU7 loads need to be considered during load rating and posting.

The SHVs create higher force effects, and thus result in lower load ratings for certain bridges, especially those with a shorter span or shorter loading length such as transverse floor beams, when compared to AASHTO Type 3, 3-S2 and 3-3 legal loads and HS20 design load. Therefore, SHVs, i.e., SU4, SU5, SU6 and SU7 or NRL, are to be included in rating and posting analyses in accordance with Article 6A.2.3 and Article 6B.9.2 of the 1st Edition of the MBE (Article 6B.7.2 of the 2nd Edition of the MBE), unless one of the following two conditions is met:

Condition A: The State verifies that State laws preclude SHV use; or

Condition B: The State has its own rating vehicle models for legal loads and verifies that the State legal load models envelope the *applicable* AASHTO SHV loading models specified in Appendix D6A and Figure 6B.9.2-2 of the 1st Edition of the MBE (Figure 6B.7.2-2 of the 2nd Edition of the MBE), and the State legal load models have been included in rating/posting analyses of all bridges. The SHV types, e.g. six- or seven-axle SHVs, precluded by State laws need not be considered.

The SHV load models apply to Allowable Stress Rating, Load Factor Rating, and Load and Resistance Factor Rating in accordance with Section 6A and 6B of the MBE.

The FHWA recognizes that there are bridges in the inventory that have not been rated for SHVs and that it is not feasible to include SHVs in the ratings for the entire inventory at once. FHWA is establishing the following timelines for rating bridges for SHVs, if neither Condition A or B is met:

Group 1: Bridges with the shortest span not greater than 200 feet should be re-rated after their next NBIS inspection, but no later than December 31, 2017, that were last rated by:

- a) either Allowable Stress Rating (ASR) or Load Factor Rating (LFR) method and have an operating rating for the AASHTO Routine Commercial Vehicle either Type 3, Type 3S2, or Type 3-3 less than 33 tons (English), 47 tons (English), or 52 tons (English) respectively; or
- b) Load and Resistance Factor Rating (LRFR) method and have a legal load rating factor for the AASHTO Routine Commercial Vehicle, either Type 3, Type 3S2 or Type 3-3, less than 1.3.

Group 2: Rate those bridges not in Group 1 no later than December 31, 2022.

For either group, if a re-rating is warranted due to changes of structural condition, loadings, or configuration, or other requirements, the re-rating should include SHVs.

The selection of load rating method should comply with FHWA's Policy Memorandum *Bridge Load Ratings for the National Bridge Inventory*, dated October 30, 2006.

A State may utilize an alternative approach in lieu of the above to address the load rating for SHVs for bridges in their inventory; however, the approach must be reviewed and formally accepted by FHWA.

The timeline presented above will be incorporated into the review of Metric 13 under the National Bridge Inspection Program (NBIP); specifically, it is expected that all bridges meeting Group 1 criteria be load rated for SHVs by the end of 2017. Please work with your State to assist them in developing appropriate actions to meet those timelines. If your State is currently developing or implementing a Plan of Corrective Actions (PCA) for load rating bridges, the PCA should be reviewed and modified as necessary to take into account the rating of SHVs for those bridges and these timelines.

We request that you share this memorandum with your State or Federal agency partner. All questions that cannot be resolved at the Division Office level should be directed to Lubin Gao at lubin.gao@dot.gov or at 202-366-4604.