

# Highway Department

Brian M. Kelley, PE  
Highway Commissioner



December 20, 2022

Dear Milk Producers & Haulers,

In March of 2021, the County Highway Department was forced to close CTH F (from STH 64 to CTH M) due to damage from unknown heavy loads being transported during the annual Spring road ban period. The financial impact to the County taxpayers for the damages to this 7-mile stretch of pavement has now exceeded \$1.7M. As a result of these damages, the County has undertaken an extensive process to improve enforcement of weight limit laws and also to educate the public on these laws. Pavement is extremely susceptible to damage during the Spring road ban period, which usually averages about 6 weeks in February, March, and/or April.

Working closely with the Wisconsin State Patrol, the County Sheriff's Department trained several deputies on weight limit enforcement. In the spring of 2022, increased enforcement action was taken by the Wisconsin State Patrol and Chippewa County Sheriff's Department. We also utilized social media to promote awareness of the weight limit laws and educate the public.

It became clear that we needed to work with the milk haulers and develop some solutions to the heavy loading that can occur with transporting milk from the farm to the dairy during this critical time period. A work group met at the Chippewa County Highway Department on June 28<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup> to discuss Spring road bans, the impact that heavy loads have on our roads, and especially how all of this affects the very important dairy industry in our County.

One or both of the work group meetings were attended by:

- Highway Department staff
- Sheriff's Department deputies
- WI State Patrol officials
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau
- Organic Valley Co-op
- Caledonia Haulers
- Lemke Brothers Trucking
- Jensen Brothers
- Normandy Transport
- Myren Trucking
- Mahr Farms

All that attended provided valuable input in regards to their respective roles, needs, and limitations. Chippewa County learned a great deal about the challenges of the producers to remain profitable during Spring road bans. Producers must be able to move their milk to the dairies in a cost-effective manner. At the same time, the work group was educated on the need to protect the County's infrastructure during Spring road bans. We agreed that a compromise was necessary.

The work group discussed the following issues:

- Lack of drivers and fewer farms require larger trucks and longer routes
- Hauling partial loads is cost prohibitive and would require multiple trips
- Damage to the roadway structure by heavy loads is extremely costly to the taxpayers

## Truck Axle Configuration Examples w/ Allowable Weights - pg. 2

- Better weight distribution on a truck's axles can be used to help reduce damages
- Milk hauling trucks may need an over-weight permit to haul above the County's Spring road ban limits

At this time, it is important that you are aware of the decision that I have reached based on input from these work group meetings. I have enclosed some of the common truck and axle configurations that we looked at during our discussions, along with the allowable weights that will be permitted on each truck axle this spring. My staff will be reaching out to your milk haulers to work on permitting their trucks in an effort to better utilize their existing equipment, while minimizing the impact on the roads. We understand that there are many types of trucks that may not be shown in these examples. I'm asking for your assistance in making sure all of the County's milk haulers and dairies are aware of the County's plans going forward, beginning with the 2023 Spring road bans.

This January and February, we will host mandatory meetings with the haulers in order to work through the required permitting procedures and issue permits. Permits will be specific to axle loading but will not allow gross vehicle weight to exceed the General Maximum Weight Restrictions per [Wisconsin State Statute 348](#). Permit cost will be \$100 per truck for an annual permit. Hauling above the Spring road ban weight limits without a permit to do so may result in a costly citation, therefore it is very important that milk haulers attend one of the meetings to obtain a permit for each of their trucks.

We ask that haulers contact the Chippewa County Highway Department as soon as possible and provide their contact information so we can contact them directly for one of the mandatory permitting meetings. ***Please share this letter with your milk hauler. We do not have the capability to know who is hauling in Chippewa County.*** If a milk hauler attended either of the 2022 work group meetings, we already have their contact information. Otherwise, those who are not listed in the Work Group should contact the County Highway Department prior to January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to get on our mailing list:

Chippewa County Highway Department  
801 E. Grand Ave.  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
715-726-7914  
Email: [cchighway@co.chippewa.wi.us](mailto:cchighway@co.chippewa.wi.us)

The 2021 pavement damages on CTH F were 100% preventable and served as a costly reminder that we must all work together on a common goal to protect our County's valuable infrastructure. Quality roads are a benefit to all users, including milk haulers. I truly appreciate the cooperation of our County's dairy industry in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Kelley, PE  
Highway Commissioner  
Chippewa County Highway Department  
[bkelly@co.chippewa.wi.us](mailto:bkelly@co.chippewa.wi.us)

Cc: Randy Scholz – County Administrator  
Glen Sikorski – Highway Committee Chairman  
James Kowalczyk – Sheriff  
Chris Elstran – Deputy Highway Commissioner  
Work Group Meeting Attendees

5 Axle Straight Truck - Spring Road Ban **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"**

Please note the permitted **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"** are for optimum weight distribution but do not allow for gross weight to exceed the truck's licensed limits.



7 Axle Straight Truck - Spring Road Ban **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"**

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4 Axle Straight Truck - Spring Road Ban **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"**

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3 Axle Straight Truck- Spring Road Ban **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"**

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6 Axle Semi Tractor Trailer Truck- Spring Road Ban **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"**

Please note the permitted **"Maximum Allowable Axle Weights"** are for optimum weight distribution but do not allow for gross weight to exceed the truck's licensed limits.



Steer Axle - 8 Tons

Rear Drive Tandems - 16 Tons

Rear Trailer Triples - 18 Tons Front & Rear Lift Axles