The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) recently issued a new load posting for the MT 200 Drainage Bridge, 14 miles west of Brockway in McCone County. The posting is part of a multi-year effort to update load ratings and postings on Montana bridges as mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The FHWA mandate is in response to changes in the trucking industry over the last decade. Truck manufacturers are building specialized hauling vehicles (SHVs) capable of legally carrying heavier loads than typical vehicles have in the past. SHVs are single-unit, short-wheelbase, multiple-axle trucks commonly used in the construction, waste management, bulk cargo, and commodities hauling industries. Often one or more axles can be raised or lowered as needed to comply with statutory weight limitations.

These SHV configurations concentrate heavy loads over a short length. They have been found to overstress bridges beyond what was previously modeled by standard commercial vehicles. To account for their increasing presence and ensure safe operation, FHWA has determined that all states must include these new, short, heavy vehicles when evaluating the safe limits of bridge capacity.

To comply with the mandate, MDT is currently updating load ratings for 4,500 public bridges across the state, including approximately 2,500 owned and maintained by MDT. This effort is expected to take about four years to complete.

Bridge weight restrictions are required when the engineering analysis of a bridge, known as a load rating, indicates that it cannot carry standard, legal loads. Load ratings provide information about how much distributed weight can safely pass over a bridge. Load posting signs show maximum weight limits for different vehicle types, depending on their axle configuration. A posted bridge is safe to use, but the weight of certain vehicles must be limited accordingly.

The new posting on the MT 200 Drainage Bridge applies to SHVs; it limits the maximum gross vehicle weight of single-unit vehicles with 5, 6, or 7 axles to 19 tons. Further information on understanding and interpreting Montana’s weight limit signs and silhouettes can be found in MDT’s load posting brochure, located here: http://bit.ly/mtbridgebrochure.
The MT 200 Drainage Bridge has been nominated for replacement with a construction year to be determined. The new structure will be designed per current FHWA requirements that incorporate SHVs, eliminating the need for the SHV load posting.

Visit the Bridge Posting Website

Stay up-to-date!

Text 'mtbridges'

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Bridge Locations

The exact location of the MT 200 Drainage Bridge is pictured to the right and viewable on Google Maps here: http://bit.ly/MT200DrainageBridge.

To assist with public outreach and education about the bridge load posting program, MDT has created an interactive map with statewide load posted bridge locations available here: http://bit.ly/mtbridgemap. This map will allow you to map an appropriate route for your vehicle.

More Information

For the most up-to-date information and additional resources, visit MDT’s Bridge Load Posting Program website at http://bit.ly/bridgeload.

For questions about the program or specific bridges, please call the project hotline at 1-888-824-8445, or email MDTbridgeloadposting@mt.gov.

The MDT Bridge Bureau is available to meet if you would like to learn more about this bridge posting or the load posting program. Please email Aly Russell at alyr@strategies360.com or call her at 406-223-5058 if you are interested in a virtual meeting or phone call to learn more.

Questions? Comments? Contact Us!

1 (888) 824-8445
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