

Bridge load posting means restricting vehicle weight on Montana's bridges

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. Bridge load posting signs show the weight restrictions, indicating maximum weights for different vehicle types.

Weight restrictions are required and important for Montana's bridges

Not all bridges were designed to carry today's standard legal loads, and some bridges have deteriorated over time. Bridge weight restriction signs are posted to keep motorists and their vehicles safe. They are also posted to prevent certain loads from crossing and overstressing the bridge, which could lead to both visible and hidden damage, and eventual closure or failure of the bridge. **A posted bridge is safe to use**, but the weight of certain vehicles must be limited accordingly.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) needs your help to prevent overload and damage, maintain the integrity of the bridge, and safeguard bridge longevity.

Evolution of the trucking industry means changes to weight restrictions

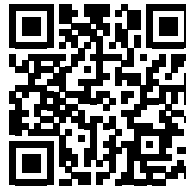
In the last decade, manufacturers have developed specialized hauling vehicles (SHVs) that are capable of legally carrying heavy, concentrated loads. These vehicles have been found to overstress bridges more than standard vehicle types of the past. To account for their increasing presence and ensure safe operation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) designated SHVs as standard, legal loads that all States are required to use in bridge analysis and posting.

Specialized Hauling Vehicles (SHVs)

SHVs are single-unit vehicles with multiple, closely spaced axles. Examples of SHVs include construction vehicles, dump trucks, solid waste trucks and other hauling trucks.



MONTANA
Department of
Transportation



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Bridge Load Posting Program



How to understand and interpret Montana's bridge weight restrictions and signs.





Load Posting Signs

Load posting, or “Weight Limit”, signs indicate the maximum gross vehicle weight (GVW) that can safely cross a bridge. GVW includes equipment or loads that are towed by a vehicle. Weight limit signs cannot show every possible vehicle on the road, so three standard silhouettes are used to communicate the GVW for common truck configurations. Some operators mistakenly count axles on the silhouettes to determine which one applies to their vehicle. Axles on the silhouettes are shown as examples only. **Operators should use vehicle type to determine applicability.** Descriptions are provided to help interpret the vehicle types represented by each silhouette.

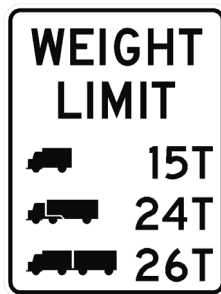
Single Limit Sign

The GVW for any vehicle (including cars, trucks and agricultural vehicles) is limited regardless of its number of axles or axle configuration. The gross weight of the vehicle including its separate trailers must be less than or equal to the limit on the sign.



Three Silhouette Sign

The weight that corresponds to each silhouette is the maximum GVW allowed to cross the bridge for each truck type. These signs apply to single-unit and combination vehicles, including: box trucks, moving trucks, dump and concrete trucks, buses, tractor-trailers/semitrailers, flatbed trucks with trailers, etc.



Single Silhouette Sign

Maximum GVW is based on the vehicle's number of axles. Lift axles that are in contact with the ground are counted towards the number of axles. Axle numbers may vary from bridge to bridge. **These signs only apply to single-unit vehicles**, such as: straight trucks, box trucks, moving trucks, dump and concrete trucks, buses, etc.



Vehicle Types

Truck

The first silhouette represents a single-unit vehicle, designed to carry a load, regardless of the number of tires, axles or axle configuration.

Tractor + Trailer

The second silhouette represents a two-unit vehicle, which is any combination of tractor and trailer that can be easily separated. These vehicles are sometimes referred to as semi-trucks.



Truck + Trailer Combination

The third silhouette represents a two or three-unit vehicle with two cargo areas. These may include tractor-trailer-trailer or truck-trailer combinations.

