

SCHNEIDER POSITION: TRUCK SIZE AND WEIGHT

BACKGROUND

Current federal policy prohibits trucks with loads weighing more than 80,000 lbs. from traveling on most U.S. highways. While some states allow heavier loads on state highways (85,000 lbs. in Colorado) and some allow heavier multi-axle loads (105,000 lbs. on interstates in Oregon), the U.S. is one of the few industrialized nations using this lower weight limit. Canada, Mexico and most European countries allow the operation of six-axle trucks in excess of 95,000 lbs. without negatively affecting safety performance. The ultimate goal: create a more efficient vehicle with the ability to deliver the same amount of freight, thus reducing congestion, truck-involved crashes, potential pavement damage and fuel consumption (which ultimately lowers carbon emissions.)

MAP-21 (The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act), which became law in 2012, required that the Department of Transportation (DOT) perform a vehicle size and weight study to understand the pros and cons affiliated with increasing the size and weight of trucks moving on U.S. highways. The study was in response to proposals to increase the maximum weight from its current limit of 80,000 pounds to up to 98,000 pounds for six-axle vehicle combinations.

The two-year study, the Comprehensive Truck Size and Weight Limits Study was released in early 2015 and supports an increase in weight for three axle trailers up to 91,000 pounds.

In September of 2015 Rep. Reid Ribble of Wisconsin introduced the Safe, Flexible and Efficient (SAFE) Trucking Act to move the study into legislation. The proposal would allow individual states to decide if they want to allow commercial trucks to carry of maximum of 91,000 pounds – which would require the addition of a 6th axle to ensure heavier trucks maintain the same or better stopping distance than the current 80,000 pound standard and pavement wear. Ribble's amendment was voted down in Nov. 2015; the future of this matter remains uncertain.

SCHNEIDER'S POSITION

As an innovative leader in the transportation industry, Schneider supports measures to increase productivity and reduce congestion provided such measures do not adversely affect safety. It is Schneider's position that an increase in allowable weights may be appropriate provided such an increase is coupled with vehicle safety enhancements beyond the requirement of a sixth axle to distribute the additional weight. More specifically, Schneider believes that an increase in allowable maximum weight should be conditioned upon a vehicle also having the following safety features as standard: collision warning/avoidance technology, roll stability control measures, air disc brakes, use of electronic logging devices and speed limiters.