

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR TRAFFIC CONTROL AT BRIDGES BEING CROSSED BY OVERWEIGHT VEHICLES

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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF GUIDE

To clarify the role and responsibilities of personnel required to control traffic at bridges being crossed by overweight vehicles, where it is a condition of the overweight permit.

To define specifications relating to vehicles, lights and other safety equipment.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

New Zealand Transport Agency's overweight permit policy allows people operating in compliance with this Guide to control traffic when an overweight vehicle is crossing a bridge, where traffic control is a requirement of an overweight permit.

Traffic control is required for safety reasons at some bridges due to the overweight vehicle having to travel at crawl speed within its own lane or along the centreline of the bridge. A Class 1 or Class 2 pilot can also be used subject to compliance with the equipment specifications and traffic control procedures outlined in this Code of Practice.

**For Mobile cranes:** the majority of mobile cranes are 3 metres or less in width and therefore there are very few occasions where overweight cranes have an extreme impact on traffic safety.

Some overweight loads that have bridge crossings that have a risk rating on the permit that is "not significant" or "low risk" do not need people to undertake traffic control, and in this situation, an amber flashing light visible from the rear, along with rear-facing retro-reflective hazard panels will be sufficient to warn other road users of the overweight vehicle.

## 3.0 EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

### 3.1 OVERWEIGHT VEHICLE

- A revolving/flashing amber light on the roof of the cab illuminated while carrying out bridge crossing and visible from the rear.

### 3.2 TRAFFIC CONTROL VEHICLES

- A car, utility, station wagon, van or support truck travelling with the overweight vehicle.
- Any colour permitted.

### **3.3 LIGHTS**

- All vehicles lights to be WOF or COF standard.
- One or more revolving/flashing amber lights mounted on the roof of the vehicle.

### **3.4 COMMUNICATIONS**

Effective radio communication between the driver of the overweight vehicle and traffic control personnel must be maintained. (This must be separate from Channel 11 on CB radio).

### **3.5 MANDATORY SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

- Approved High Visibility Jacket and, if used at night, must be fitted with retroreflective tape.
- Load Pilot STOP paddle or a STOP-GO paddle (standard road works sign).
- Torch fitted with a red cone for night time use.

## **4.0 TRAFFIC CONTROL PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 TRAFFIC CONTROL**

The bridge at which traffic control is required can be located by examining the New Zealand Transport Agency Overweight Permit. Traffic control is required at a rail overbridge only if it is stated on the New Zealand Transport Agency Overweight Permit.

Traffic controllers shall perform their duties in the following manner:

- Be alert at all times.
- Do not stand with a group where you cannot be easily seen by motorists.
- Always stand while waiting for traffic.
- Do not leave your position until it is safe to do so.

### **4.1 TRAFFIC CONTROL VEHICLES**

The vehicles are to be safely positioned to warn traffic of the hazard created by the overweight vehicle crossing the bridge. Revolving/flashing amber lights must be operating at all times when carrying out traffic control duties.

When the bridge is obstructed from the motorists view, by a cutting, hill, hollow, bend or any other obstruction, place the traffic control vehicles in a safe place beside the traffic lane giving

ample room for traffic to stop or pull over and park, with all warning lights operating, including vehicle hazard lights, and headlights on dip.

#### **4.2 STOP or STOP-GO PADDLE**

The STOP face of the paddle may be displayed when the traffic controller considers that this is the most appropriate method to instruct oncoming or following traffic to stop and park due to the road or bridge being blocked by the overweight vehicle. The STOP-GO paddle can confuse motorists if the GO side is displayed inadvertently. The GO side should be covered if such a situation could arise.

#### **4.3 WHERE TO STAND**

In rural or high speed areas traffic controllers should be located at a safe distance before the hazard so traffic will have sufficient time to reduce speed and come to a stop.

- Stand facing traffic, on the edge of the shoulder of the road, just outside the traffic lane, close to your vehicle so that you can hear your radio and instructions from the driver of the overweight vehicle. (Note: Hand held radios are much more effective in these situations).
- Always stand where you can be seen by the traffic.
- Always ensure you have an escape path.

#### **4.4 SLOWING TRAFFIC**

- To slow traffic – signal with an up and down motion of an extended arm.

#### **4.5 STOPPING TRAFFIC**

- Stand facing traffic, but clear of traffic lane.
- When about to stop traffic, wait for a suitable break and hold the sign horizontal with STOP facing oncoming traffic. When approaching traffic is slowing, move from the kerb to the centre of the roadway. The free arm should be raised with the palm of the hand toward approaching traffic.

If time permits drivers may be told of the reasons for the delay. Be courteous, be brief. Use for example: “Large vehicle is crossing the bridge”.

#### **4.6 HOW TO MOVE TRAFFIC**

- When signalling traffic to move ahead, signal with free hand, using a sweeping motion in the direction the traffic is to move. Ensure that the STOP sign is not being displayed.

#### 4.7 NEVER WAVE THE SIGN

- Signals must be clear and distinct.
- Do not make drivers guess what they should do.
- Never wave your sign, either to stop or slow traffic or to inform motorists to proceed.

#### 4.8 WITH OPPOSING TRAFFIC (Vehicle in own lane)

If the position is specified as “own lane” and there is sufficient width for vehicles in the opposing direction.

Take up a position behind the overweight vehicle

- to warn vehicles that are travelling in the same direction of the restriction in their lane;  
and
- to prevent heavy vehicles coming closer than 30 metres to the overweight vehicle (cars may be closer if necessary).

The traffic controller shall then:

- Allow all vehicles in the opposing direction to proceed unhindered.
- Advise the driver of the overweight vehicle to travel at a crawl in the left hand lane as far as practicable (providing that it is in accordance with the Overweight Permit).
- Proceed behind the overweight vehicle at the required distance with warning lights operating.

#### 4.9 WITHOUT OPPOSING TRAFFIC (Overweight Vehicle needs ALL bridge traffic stopped)

If “offset”, “central” or “opposite” is specified for position or where there is insufficient width for opposing vehicles, two Traffic Controllers are required. (One of these could be the accompanying load escort pilot).

***The first Controller shall:***

- Prevent all traffic travelling in the opposing direction from crossing the bridge while the overweight vehicle is on it.
- Stop the opposing traffic, (using standard procedures), a sufficient distance before the bridge to allow the crossing manoeuvre to be safely completed.

- This can be achieved by placing the vehicle, with lights displayed, on the side of the road just past the far end of the bridge and physically controlling the traffic using the STOP paddle.
- Advise the driver of the overweight vehicle to proceed only when until all opposing traffic has stopped.

***The second Controller shall:***

- Control following traffic as for overweight vehicle in own lane.

One method of stopping oncoming traffic is to position the traffic control vehicle at the opposite end of the bridge, on the same side of the road (clear of the lane) as the traffic is travelling towards the overweight vehicle. This is safer for the traffic controller who can then stand beside the traffic control vehicle rather than have to cross the road.

Motorists will be attracted in the first instance to the revolving/flashing amber lights. If the traffic control vehicle is parked on the other side of the road they may not see the traffic controller and STOP sign until it is too late.

## **5.0 SAFETY ISSUES**

- If the bridge is long and the overweight vehicle is travelling at crawl speed the numbers of approaching vehicles held prior to the bridge can be large and care must be taken to avoid the situation whereby vehicles are stopping close to a bend (particularly in a 100 km/h area).
- If fog, heavy rain or other factors restrict visibility to less than 500 metres, a bridge crossing should not proceed until visibility has improved.
- If an accident occurs, warn traffic of the problem, contact the emergency services, and assist as required.
- Under no circumstances should the traffic controllers vehicle be used an emergency vehicle.

**6.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

- Own Lane            The overweight vehicle shall travel in its own lane as far as practicable
  - Offset                The overweight vehicle shall travel so that its centre is at the indicated distance from the kerb on the left of the vehicle
  - Central on Beam    The overweight vehicle shall travel centrally on the beam structure of the bridge
  - Opposite Lane     The overweight vehicle shall use the bridge for the opposing traffic direction
  - Crawl                10 km/h
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