

Dept. of Transportation: Frozen road law expands Saturday across most of Wisconsin

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Effective Saturday, February 8, 2020, at 12:01 a.m., Wisconsin's frozen road law will expand to include regions designated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) as Zone 3 and 4. The expansion Saturday covers the state except for Zone 5 in southeast Wisconsin. The frozen road determination for Zone 5 will be made once conditions warrant.

The frozen road law allows heavier loads for trucks carrying logs cut crosswise (not including woodchips), and salt and sand for winter maintenance while cold weather allows. WisDOT and county highway personnel monitor temperature forecasts, along with frost tubes — liquid-filled devices under pavement — to help determine when roads are adequately frozen to accommodate heavier loads.

The declaration is issued once the ground under highway pavement is frozen to a depth of at least 18 inches, allowing the maximum gross weight for trucks hauling logs or salt and sand for maintaining roads in winter to go up to 98,000 pounds on vehicles with a minimum of five axles (from the normal 80,000 pounds). Special permits for hauling the increased weights are not required in Zone 1, but vehicles must be legally licensed at 80,000 pounds to handle the increased weights. The higher weight limits do not apply to county or local roads unless authorized by the local agency having maintenance authority. Also, higher weights may not be transported on any highways or bridges specifically posted for lower weight limits.

The [“Motor carrier/trucker” section of the WisDOT website](#) contains comprehensive information impacting commercial motor vehicle operators including [weight restriction programs](#) and [frozen road declaration](#). Customers can also check a

recorded message on the Frozen Road Hotline at 608/266-8417. Haulers with specific questions can contact WisDOT's Oversize/Overweight Permits Unit at (608) 266-7320.