

WisDOT: Frozen road law takes effect Thursday in northern Wisconsin

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Law affects log haulers, transport of road salt/sand in Zone 1

Wisconsin's frozen road law takes effect Thursday, December 30 at 12:01 a.m. for the region designated by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) as Zone 1 which includes US 8 along with numbered state and federal highways north of US 8. The frozen road determination for other areas of the state will be made when conditions warrant.

The frozen road law allows vehicles hauling abrasives or salt for highway winter maintenance and certain forest products to carry more weight. The seasonal weight restriction program is one way to protect Wisconsin's investments in roads.

An interactive map showing the [Seasonal weight restrictions](#) and load limit boundaries is available on the [WisDOT Maps and GIS](#) and weight restriction pages. Layers on this GIS map show the frozen roads boundaries, Class II roads and posted roads for easy reference.

Behind the declaration

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, however, 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.