

Dept. of Transportation: Frozen road law takes effect Wednesday for northern half of Wisconsin

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Wisconsin's frozen road law takes effect Wednesday, December 21 at 12:01 a.m. for the northern half of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) designates the regions as [Zone 1 and Zone 2](#) which includes US 10 near Stevens Point along with numbered state and federal highways north of US 10. 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.

The department maintains an [interactive map for seasonal weight restrictions](#), which shows the frozen roads boundaries, Class II roads and posted roads.

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 and Zone 2;

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.

More information on overweight permits can be found on the WisDOT website by searching for [oversize/overweight permits](#). Haulers with specific questions can contact WisDOT's Oversize/Overweight Permits Unit at (608) 266-7320. A recorded message with general information on road restrictions is available by calling (608) 266-8417.