

New Jersey Department of Transportation
Bureau of Research

Technical Brief



Oversize/Overweight Public Documentation Benchmarking

This research benchmarked current practices and tools utilized by State Departments of Transportation or Departments of Motor Vehicles to disseminate commercial oversize/overweight statutes and regulations to commercial carriers and the public in order to assess their effectiveness in increasing regulatory compliance. The research team conducted a literature review, in-depth material analysis, and industry survey to develop recommendations for the New Jersey DOT (NJDOT).

Background

Operating a commercial vehicle in the United States requires an understanding of the many Federal and State rules that govern the industry. Often, this information is provided to the commercial vehicle industry in the form of complex official codes and regulations, making it difficult for industry to clearly understand what is expected of them. The State of New Jersey is an example of a state where commercial vehicle rules are provided to the industry in the form of code and regulatory documents. Of particular concern are the rules and regulations related to the size and weight limitations of commercial vehicles operating in the State. Rules and regulations provided in the form of code and regulatory documents are difficult to comprehend and can create confusion for industry. By better understanding national best practices in information dissemination, New Jersey can create more effective educational material and outreach methods with the goal of increasing compliance in the oversize/overweight (OS/OW) industry.

Research Objectives and Approach

The goal of this research was to benchmark current practices and tools utilized by State Departments of Transportation or Departments of Motor Vehicles to disseminate commercial OS/OW statutes and regulations to commercial carriers and the public, and assess their effectiveness in increasing regulatory compliance. The performed research was designed to provide the NJDOT with an overview of national oversize/overweight information dissemination practices and recommend best-practices that the NJDOT can utilize to guide the development of their own educational material.

The research team accomplished this through:

- A literature review of national state-of-the-practice or synthesis documents and an initial scan of websites and documents from all 50 states;
- An in-depth examination of resources from 10 states;

- Industry outreach and survey to gauge operators' views on outreach material and methods;
- A gap analysis to discover and explain differences between hypothesized best practices and industry preferences; and
- A final report detailing the results of the research activities.

Findings

The research presented in this report appears to be the first national examination of information dissemination practices for OS/OW regulations and policy. The research team determined that there is a need for a multifaceted outreach strategy to provide differing levels of information for various OS/OW operators and has the following recommendations for NJDOT:

- Provide updated OS/OW information on a website that is easily found during both an internet search and within a host DOT or DMV website
- Approach the need to develop outreach material through multiple lenses.
 - Provide in-depth, up-to-date, and specific information through a Trucker Handbook, Guidebook, or Manual for experienced users.
 - Provide summary-level material that addresses unusual rules within a state or municipality, as well as a general comparison between states.
 - Provide short pamphlets or flyers that address particular areas of concern such as uncommon rules or regulations that have recently changed.
- Further explore the development of a smart-phone application.
- Make information such as permits, summary documents, and sections of larger documents digital.

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A final report is available online at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/refdata/research/>.
If you would like a copy of the full report, send an e-mail to: Research.Bureau@dot.state.nj.us.

OSOW Public Documentation Benchmarking
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