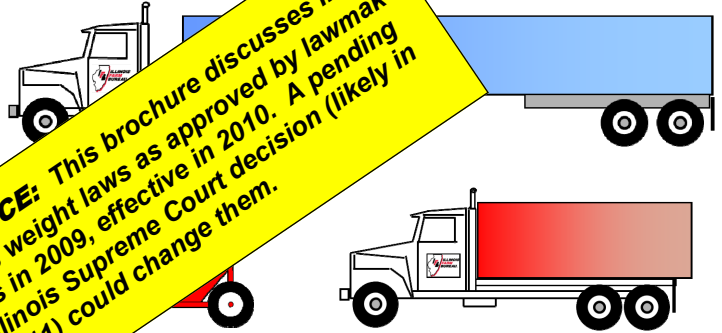


# TRUCK & TRAILER SIZE & WEIGHT

FOR ILLINOIS FARMERS

**NOTICE:** This brochure discusses Illinois weight laws as approved by lawmakers in 2009, effective in 2010. A pending Illinois Supreme Court decision (likely in 2011) could change them.



## New Weight Law Began in 2010

After nearly three decades of operating under dual weight limit formulas, Illinois truckers now have what truckers in the other 49 states have enjoyed for decades—a single, standardized formula for establishing default truck weight limits on all roads statewide, known as the *Federal Bridge Formula*.

However, as of January, 2011, that law is in jeopardy. An Illinois Appellate court has ruled that the package of laws, including the 80,000 pound provision, was passed by the General Assembly in violation of the Illinois Constitution. The question is now awaiting a decision by the Illinois Supreme Court.

## Size & Weight Limits [\[625 ILCS 5/15-111\]](#)

- The allowable width, height and weight of trucks and trailers operating in Illinois is based on uniform standards, but can vary by road system if restrictions are posted. Allowable lengths vary.
- **Federal bridge formula** allows 20,000# per single axle, 34,000# per tandem axle, and 80,000# maximum GVW.
- The **number** of axles and their **spacing** determines the allowable weight.
- **Width** limit is 102 inches on all roads unless a narrower restriction is posted.
- **Length (semi)**
  - ◆ Class I & II routes: overall unlimited; trailer 53'
  - ◆ Other State Highways: overall 65'; trailer 53'
  - ◆ Local Class III routes: overall 65'; trailer 53'
  - ◆ Other Local Roads: overall 55'; length of trailer not specified. (See "Access")
- A **tandem axle** is defined as any two or more single axles whose centers are more than 40 inches and not more than 96 inches apart (*on-centers*).
- The **registered** (*licensed*) weight of the vehicle also imposes an enforceable weight restriction.

For information on the allowable dimension and weight of trucks and trailers operating on state and local roads in Illinois check the IDOT website at

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/road/bt753.pdf>

## License Plates

Single trucks must be registered (*licensed*) to cover the gross weight of vehicle and its load.

When trucks and trailers are used in combination, it is not necessary to have the license plate on each vehicle cover the weight carried by that individual vehicle. Illinois' "marriage of licenses" provision means that when two licensed vehicles are used in combination, the sum of their licensed weights must meet or exceed the sum of their gross weights.

## Designated Routes

There are three classes of designated routes:

- **Class I** – Interstate-type routes, allows some vehicles longer than on Class II routes;
- **Class II** – Generally, major state highways, allows some vehicles longer than on Class III or on non-designated routes;
- **Class III** – [Local roads only] Allows longer combination vehicles than otherwise allowed.

The State no longer uses a "Class III" designation, but local jurisdictions may choose to. For that local designation to be effective, signs must be posted showing the route to be Class II or Class III.

## Access [\[625 ILCS 5/15-111\]](#)

Technically, Illinois still has three forms of truck access, however only two of them are effective:

- The heavy-truck 5-mile access provision in Illinois law (*allowing Federal Bridge formula weights*) is no longer relevant. [\[625 ILCS 5/15-111\(f-2\)\]](#)
- The state law granting farmers and others a 5-mile access onto local roads with longer trucks is still applicable and helpful. [\[625 ILCS 5/15-111\(f-1\)\]](#)
- All vehicles are afforded a 1-mile access for length from interstate-style routes onto any road (unless otherwise posted.) [\[625 ILCS 5/15-111\(f-1\)\]](#)

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## Scale Program

- The Illinois State Police and IDOT jointly operate semi-portable scales among 21 state police districts.
- Many state troopers carry portable (“pancake” or “wheel load weigher”) scales in their squad cars.
- There are 32 [permanent scale sites](#) operated by the State of Illinois across the state.
- An IDOT team is generally assigned to a state police district for five days per week and assists officers by setting up the scale. The officer-in-charge determines a scale's location, and the police enforce weight regulations, not IDOT staff.
- IDOT's portable and semi-portable scales are re-calibrated by IDOA two times each year – twice as often as required of commercial scales.

## Tolerance [\[625 ILCS 5/15-112\(e\)\]](#)

- State law provides a “tolerance” for vehicle overweight to accommodate uncertainties in loading.
- Vehicles registered for **73,280# or less** are allowed a 2,000# tolerance for axle weight and a 2,000# tolerance for gross weight.
- Vehicles registered for **more than 73,280#** are allowed a 2,000# tolerance for axle weight but only 1,000# for gross weight. The gross weight tolerance jumps to 2,000# when weighed on portable scales.
- Tolerance does **not** apply to the registered (*licensed*) weight of the vehicle.
- If overweight but within the tolerance, the vehicle must be parked so the weight can be shifted or removed. Once within legal limits, the vehicle will be allowed to proceed and no overweight ticket will be issued.

## Drivers' Rights

- A police officer checking a truck's weight may direct the driver to the nearest available scale certified by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. [\[625 ILCS 5/15-112\]](#)
- State Police generally favor using state-owned scales. The driver may request, but not demand, an alternate location.
- Portable and semi-portable scales should be placed in a location that does not present a traffic hazard and that is relatively level and firm. Up to a 3% grade is generally within the scale's tolerance but in no case should the vehicle roll due to the slope of the scale.
- The vehicle's brakes should not be applied and no on-board mixing equipment should be operating while being weighed.
- Accumulations of mud, snow and ice generally may be removed from the outside of the vehicle before it is weighed, but not once on the scale.

## Fines [\[625 ILCS 5/15-113\]](#)

- When police issue an overweight citation, the driver generally will not be allowed to move the vehicle until bond is posted in the amount of the fine (perishable loads may be excepted.)
- The circuit clerk in each county usually determines the form of acceptable bond. Most accept some form of certified check or money order, but not all accept personal checks or even cash.
- Generally, fines start at about \$70 per 500# overweight

**As a tradeoff for 80,000#, overweight fines have doubled.**

for lesser violations and incrementally increase. For overweight violations of 5,001# or more, the fine is \$1,500 plus \$150 for each additional 500# or portion thereof.

- These fines are double what they were prior to 2010.

## Permits [\[625 ILCS 5/15-301\]](#)

- All permits for overweight or over-dimension should be obtained in writing.
- Each road jurisdiction issues its own permits – no jurisdiction may issue permits for another without prior intergovernmental agreement.
- Over-weight permits for gross weights are generally available only for “non-divisible” loads, (*ie: large equipment or construction components than cannot readily be disassembled.*) State law generally does not allow road officials to issue permits for “divisible” loads such as grain or livestock.
- Over-weight axle permits are available to farmers operating trucks hauling grain, livestock, fruits and vegetables, or ensilage. This allows the axle(s) to exceed standard weight limits by:
  - ◆ 2-axle truck = 35%
  - ◆ 3-axle truck = 20%
  - ◆ 4-axle truck = 20%
  - ◆ 5-axle truck = 10%

It does **not** allow additional **gross** weight and it does **not** allow weights in excess of the registered (*licensed*) weight. This permit is not available for Interstate highways. [\[625 ILCS 5/15-301\(e\)\]](#)

The State's permit form for hauling ag products is available at: <http://www.dot.state.il.us/forms/oper757.pdf>.

Each local jurisdiction will supply its' own form. A sample form for townships is available on the *Township Officials of Illinois* website at: <http://www.toi.org/information/wloadforms.asp?cat=Highway%20Commissioner%20Forms>

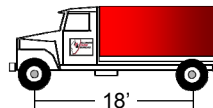
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## Federal Bridge Formula in Illinois

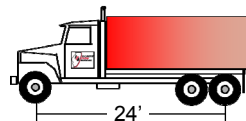
| Distance Between Axles <sup>①</sup> | Maximum load in pounds carried on any group of 2 or more consecutive axles |                     |                        |         |         |         |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                     | Feet   | 2 axles             | 3 axles                | 4 axles | 5 axles | 6 axles |
| 4                                   |  | 34,000              |                        |         |         |         |
| 5                                   |  | 34,000              |                        |         | ②       | ②       |
| 6                                   |  | 34,000              |                        |         |         |         |
| 7                                   |  | 34,000              |                        |         |         |         |
| 8                                   |  | 38,000 <sup>④</sup> | 42,000                 |         |         |         |
| 9                                   |  | 39,000              | 42,500                 |         |         |         |
| 10                                  |  | 40,000              | 43,500                 |         |         |         |
| 11                                  |  |                     | 44,000                 |         |         |         |
| 12                                  |  |                     | 45,000                 | 50,000  |         |         |
| 13                                  |  |                     | 45,500                 | 50,500  |         |         |
| 14                                  |  |                     | 46,500                 | 51,500  |         |         |
| 15                                  |  |                     | 47,000                 | 52,000  |         |         |
| 16                                  |  |                     | 48,000                 | 52,500  | 58,000  |         |
| 17                                  |  |                     | 48,500                 | 53,500  | 58,500  |         |
| 18                                  |  |                     | 49,500                 | 54,000  | 59,000  |         |
| 19                                  |  |                     | 50,000                 | 54,500  | 60,000  |         |
| 20                                  |  |                     | 51,000                 | 55,500  | 60,500  | 66,000  |
| 21                                  |  |                     | 51,500                 | 56,000  | 61,000  | 66,500  |
| 22                                  |  |                     | 52,500                 | 56,500  | 61,500  | 67,000  |
| 23                                  |  |                     | 53,000                 | 57,500  | 62,500  | 68,000  |
| 24                                  |  |                     | 54,000                 | 58,000  | 63,000  | 68,500  |
| 25                                  |  |                     | 54,500                 | 58,500  | 63,500  | 69,000  |
| 26                                  |  |                     | 55,500                 | 59,500  | 64,000  | 69,500  |
| 27                                  |  |                     | 56,000                 | 60,000  | 65,000  | 70,000  |
| 28                                  |  |                     | 57,000                 | 60,500  | 65,500  | 71,000  |
| 29                                  |  |                     | 57,500                 | 61,500  | 66,000  | 71,500  |
| 30                                  |  |                     | 58,500                 | 62,000  | 66,500  | 72,000  |
| 31                                  |  |                     | 59,000                 | 62,500  | 67,500  | 72,500  |
| 32                                  |  |                     | 60,000                 | 63,500  | 68,000  | 73,000  |
| 33                                  |  |                     |                        | 64,000  | 68,500  | 74,000  |
| 34                                  |  |                     |                        | 64,500  | 69,000  | 74,500  |
| 35                                  |  |                     |                        | 65,500  | 70,000  | 75,000  |
| 36                                  |  |                     | Exception <sup>③</sup> | 66,000  | 70,500  | 75,500  |
| 37                                  |  |                     |                        | 66,500  | 71,000  | 76,000  |
| 38                                  |  |                     |                        | 67,500  | 72,000  | 77,000  |
| 39                                  |  |                     |                        | 68,000  | 72,500  | 77,500  |
| 40                                  |  |                     |                        | 68,500  | 73,000  | 78,000  |
| 41                                  |  |                     |                        | 69,500  | 73,500  | 78,500  |
| 42                                  |  |                     |                        | 70,000  | 74,000  | 79,000  |
| 43                                  |  |                     |                        | 70,500  | 75,000  | 80,000  |
| 44                                  |  |                     |                        | 71,500  | 75,500  |         |
| 45                                  |  |                     |                        | 72,000  | 76,000  |         |
| 46                                  |  |                     |                        | 72,500  | 76,500  |         |
| 47                                  |  |                     |                        | 73,500  | 77,500  |         |
| 48                                  |  |                     |                        | 74,000  | 78,000  |         |
| 49                                  |  |                     |                        | 74,500  | 78,500  |         |
| 50                                  |  |                     |                        | 75,500  | 79,000  |         |
| 51                                  |  |                     |                        | 76,000  | 80,000  |         |
| 52                                  |  |                     |                        | 76,500  |         |         |
| 53                                  |  |                     |                        | 77,500  |         |         |
| 54                                  |  |                     |                        | 78,000  |         |         |
| 55                                  |  |                     |                        | 78,500  |         |         |
| 56                                  |  |                     |                        | 79,500  |         |         |
| 57                                  |  |                     |                        | 80,000  |         |         |

### Maximum loading for typical vehicles

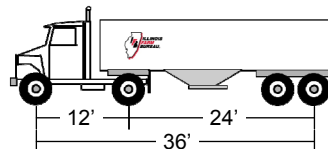
Vehicle or Combination Maximum Weight — Pounds



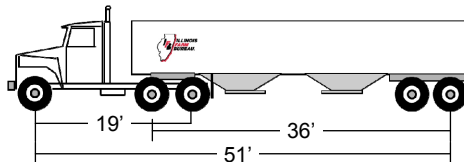
Axle 1                    20,000  
Axle 2                    20,000  
Axles 1, 2                40,000



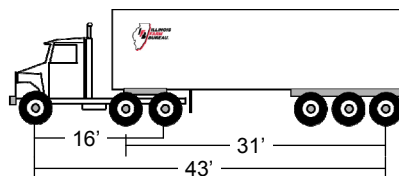
Axle 1                    20,000  
Axles 2, 3                34,000  
Axles 1, 2, 3            54,000



Axle 1                    20,000  
Axles 2                    20,000  
Axles 3, 4                34,000  
Axles 1, 2                40,000  
Axles 2, 3, 4            54,000  
Axles 1, 2, 3, 4        66,000



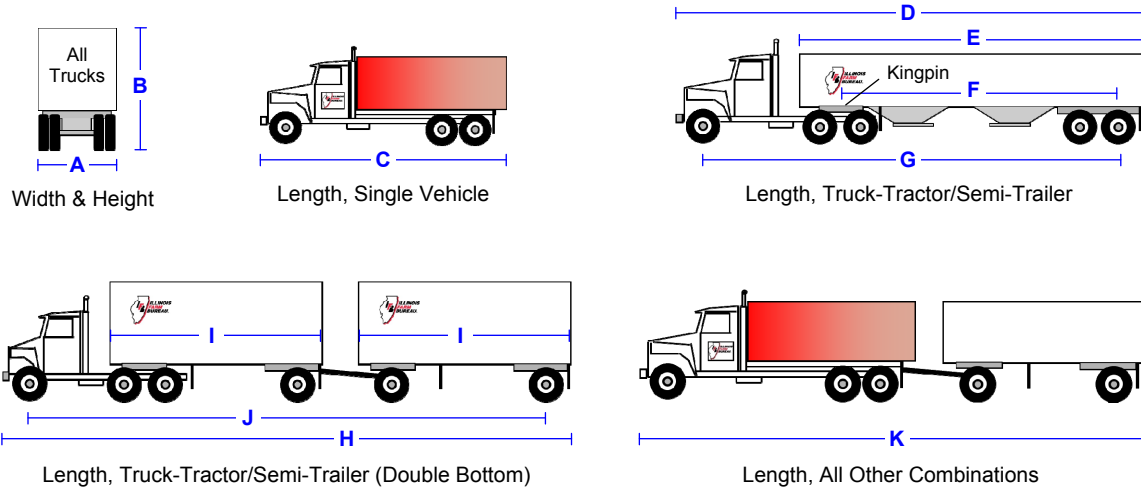
Axle 1                    20,000  
Axles 2, 3                34,000  
Axles 4, 5                34,000  
Axles 1, 2, 3            50,000  
Axles 2, 3, 4, 5        68,000  
Axles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5     80,000



Axle 1                    20,000  
Axles 2, 3                34,000  
Axles 4, 5, 6            42,500  
Axles 1, 2, 3            48,000  
Axles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6     67,500  
Axles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 80,000

- ① Measured to the nearest foot between the extremes of any group of two or more consecutive axles.
- ② Gross weights for 5 and 6 axles applicable only to a combination of vehicles.
- ③ Two consecutive sets of tandems may carry 34,000 pounds each providing the overall distance between the first and last axles of such consecutive sets of tandems is 36 feet or more.
- ④ If the distance between 2 axles is 96 inches or less, the 2 axles are tandem axles and the maximum total weight may not exceed 34,000 pounds, notwithstanding the higher limit resulting from the application of the formula.
- ⑤ If the distance between the centers of the first and third axles is a group of consecutive axles does not exceed 96 inches, the group is a tandem.
- ⑥ Maximum single axle 20,000 pounds; maximum tandem 34,000 pounds.
- ⑦ Combinations of vehicles designated as special haul vehicles which include a semitrailer manufactured prior to the model year 2004 and first registered in Illinois prior to January 1, 2005 having five axles with a distance of 42 feet or less between extremes may have a gross weight of 72,000 pounds provided the weight shall not exceed 18,000 pounds on a single axle of 32,000 pounds on a tandem. For such combinations manufactured subsequent to September 9, 1986, the minimum distance between the first and last axles of the two sets of tandems must be 18 feet 6 inches or more.

## Maximum legal dimensions of motor vehicles



**Single Axle**  
**Maximum Weight**  
20,000#

**Tandem Axle**  
**Maximum Weight**  
34,000#

| Type of Highway or Street   | Maximum Legal Dimensions |        |     |                  |      |                     |                  |      |        |      |     |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------|-----|------------------|------|---------------------|------------------|------|--------|------|-----|
|                             | A                        | B      | C   | D                | E    | F                   | G                | H    | I      | J    | K   |
| Class I                     | 8'-6"                    | 13'-6" | 42' | N.S.             | 53'  | 45'-6" <sup>9</sup> | N.S.             | N.S. | 28'-6" | N.S. | 60' |
| Class II                    | 8'-6"                    | 13'-6" | 42' | N.S.             | 53'  | 45'-6"              | N.S.             | N.S. | 28'-6" | 65'  | 60' |
| Other State Highways        | 8'-6"                    | 13'-6" | 42' | 65' <sup>8</sup> | 53'  | 42'-6"              | 55' <sup>8</sup> | 60'  | N.S.   | N.S. | 60' |
| Class III                   | 8'-6"                    | 13'-6" | 42' | 65' <sup>8</sup> | 53'  | 42'-6"              | 55' <sup>8</sup> | 60'  | N.S.   | N.S. | 60' |
| Other Local Roads & Streets | 8'-6"                    | 13'-6" | 42' | 55'              | N.S. | N.S.                | N.S.             | 60'  | N.S.   | N.S. | 60' |

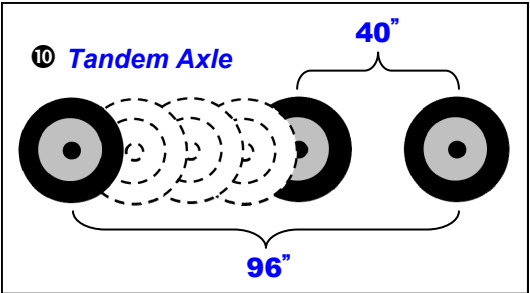
<sup>8</sup> 65 feet overall (bumper-to-bumper) and/or 55 feet from center of front axle to center of rear axle.

<sup>9</sup> Applies on semi-trailers longer than 48 feet.

<sup>10</sup> Tandem is defined as any 2 or more single axles whose centers are more than 40 inches and not more than 96 inches apart, measured to the nearest inch between extreme axles.

A pdf version of this document is available with hyperlinks at the iffb web address.

This document prepared and provided by: **ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU**  
[www.ilfb.org](http://www.ilfb.org)



### Farm Equipment

Implements of husbandry generally enjoy an exemption from most weight limits in Illinois. However, farm wagons are limited to 36,000 pounds GVW. There is no weight restriction on axles and it matters not how many axles the wagon has—the gross weight limit remains at 36,000 pounds.

Farm wagons are limited to a maximum GVW of 36,000#

That 36,000 pound GVW restriction also applies to: fertilizer buggies, sprayers, auger wagons, liquid manure wagons, liquid fertilizer carts, NH<sub>3</sub> nurse tanks (also limited to 3,000 gallons capacity), water wagons, and virtually any other cargo-type farm implement.

- #### More Information
- Illinois Farm Bureau® [General Info]  
309-557-3274  
<http://www.ilfb.org>
  - Illinois State Police [Enforcement]  
217-782-6267  
<http://www.isp.state.il.us/>
  - Illinois Department of Transportation [Weights, Permits & Routes]  
217-782-6271  
<http://www.dot.state.il.us/public.html#Truckers>
  - Secretary of State [License Plates]  
217-785-1801  
<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/>