

Jefferson County
Board of Commissioners
Agenda Request

To: Board of Commissioners
Mark McCauley, County Administrator

From: Monte Reinders, Public Works Director/County Engineer 

Agenda Date: December 11, 2023

Subject: Resolution Pertaining to Emergency Load Limitations on County Roads
2023-2024 Winter Season

Statement of Issue:

The Board is asked to review and approve a resolution establishing the procedure for implementing emergency load limitations on various County roads during periods of inclement weather.

Analysis/Strategic Goals/Pro's & Con's:

In accordance with the provisions of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 46.44.080 of the State of Washington, any or all of the County roads in Jefferson County, Washington, may be closed to travel by all vehicles, or by any class of vehicles as described in the attached resolution, whenever by reason of rain, snow, frost or other condition it becomes necessary to do so to prevent serious damage or destruction to County roads. This resolution authorizes the restriction of County roads during the 2023-2024 winter season at periods and locations recommended by the County Engineer according to the provisions attached. The County Engineer will notify the Board through the County Administrator of the specific road locations and durations prior to implementing any restriction and will post the roads accordingly and place notice in appropriate newspapers and on the County internet site.

Fiscal Impact/Cost Benefit Analysis:

This action is intended to provide cost savings to the County by allowing temporary load limitations when necessary to prevent damage to certain County roadways.

Recommendation:

The Board is requested to sign the Resolution where indicated and return a copy to Public Works.

Department Contact:

Monte Reinders, County Engineer

Reviewed By:


Mark McCauley, County Administrator

12/5/23
Date

In the matter of	x
Imposing Emergency Load	x
Limits on County Roads	x

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING EMERGENCY LOAD LIMITATIONS on various County roads during periods of inclement weather, providing for special permit, allowances, and maximum speeds.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Greg Brotherton, District 3

Clerk of the Board

STATEMENT OF PROVISIONS

These provisions are hereby adopted by the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners; said provisions set forth the criteria for the implementation and enforcement of posting emergency load limitations on all or any County roads.

The provisions shall include the following sections:

1. Declaration of purpose
2. Scope and construction of terms
3. Definitions
4. Emergency load limitations
5. Special allowance for authorized vehicles
6. Special Permits for authorized vehicles
7. Vehicle combinations
8. Maximum speed permitted on posted roads
9. Action for damage
10. Savings

EMERGENCY LOAD LIMITATIONS ON COUNTY ROADS

SECTION 1: DECLARATION OF PURPOSE

It is hereby declared to be policy of the Board of County Commissioners, recognizing the close relation between climatic and other conditions and damage or destruction to County roads, to establish emergency load limitation upon County roads to become effective during such periods of inclement weather, and to establish special load limitations for school buses, motor trucks transporting perishable commodities or commodities necessary to the health and welfare of County residents and motor vehicles providing services necessary to the health and welfare of County residents when such emergency load limitations are in effect.

SECTION 2. SCOPE AND CONSTRUCTION OF TERMS

Terms used in this resolution shall have that meaning given to them in this resolution and where not defined herein shall have that meaning clearly indicated by the context in which such term is used.

SECTION 3. DEFINITION

- (1) "Authorized emergency vehicle" means any vehicle of any fire department, sheriff's office, coroner, prosecuting attorney, Washington State Patrol, ambulance service, public or private, which need not be classified, registered, or authorized by the State Commission on Equipment, including any other vehicle authorized in writing by the State Commission on Equipment, or deemed by the above named department, offices and agencies as necessary to assist in the handling of any such emergency.
- (2) "Commodity necessary for health and welfare" means a product of agriculture or manufacture which is necessary to provide essential shelter, food and fuel to people and animals.

- (3) “Service necessary to the health and welfare” means any service provided to the public which is necessary to maintain essential power, gas, communications, garbage, sewer, and water services for the community at large.
- (4) “County Road” means every public highway or part thereof, maintained by the County Road Division, lying outside the limits of incorporated cities and towns, and which has not been designated as a state highway as that term is defined in R.C.W. 47.04.01 (36) as now or hereafter amended.
- (5) “Motor truck” means any motor vehicle designed or used for the transportation or commodities, merchandise, produce, freight, animals, or other materials.
- (6) “Motor vehicle” means every vehicle or vehicle combination which is self-propelled.
- (7) “Gross weight,” means the total vehicle weight including load.
- (8) “Perishable commodity” means a product of agriculture, or manufacture, which by its nature is subject to destruction, decay, deterioration or spoilage except under proper conditions.
- (9) “Person” means every natural person, firm co-partnership, corporation, association, or organization.
- (10) “Pneumatic tire” means every tire of rubber or other resilient material designed to be inflated with compressed air to support the load thereon.
- (11) “School bus” means every motor vehicle used regularly to transport children to and from school which is subject to the requirements set forth in the most recent edition of “Specifications for School Buses” published by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, but does not include buses operated by common carriers in urban transportation of school children.
- (12) “Tire width” in case of pneumatic tires shall be the maximum overall normal inflated width as stipulated by the manufacturer when inflated to the pressure specified and without load thereon.
- (13) “Vehicle” means every device capable of being moved upon a public highway, and in, upon or by which any persons or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a public highway.

SECTION 4. EMERGENCY LOAD LIMITATIONS

- (1) When in the opinion of the County Engineer any County road will be seriously damaged or destroyed by reason of freeze and thawing conditions, or other inclement weather unless the operation of vehicles thereon be restricted or the permissible weight thereof be reduced, he/she shall impose emergency load limitations thereon by ordering the erection of signs pursuant to subsection (2) of this section limiting the operation of motor vehicles over such County road by any vehicle with a gross weight upon any tire concentrated upon the surface of the County road in excess of the following load limitations.

RESTRICTIONS

Conventional Tires		Tubeless or Special With .5 Markings	
Size Tire Width	Gross Load Each Tire	Size Tire Width	Gross Load Each Tire
7.00*	1800 Lbs.	8-22.5*	1800 Lbs.
7.50	1800 Lbs.	9-22.5	1900 Lbs.
8.25	1900 Lbs.	10-22.5	2250 Lbs.
9.00	2250 Lbs.	11-22.5	2750 Lbs.
10.00	2750 Lbs.	11-24.5	2750 Lbs.
11.00 **	3000 Lbs.	12-22.5	3000 Lbs.

* And Under

** And Over

- (2) The emergency load limitations imposed by this section shall become effective upon the erection and maintenance by County forces of signs designating such limitations at each end of the affected portion of County road, and shall remain in full force until such signs are removed by County forces at the direction of the County Engineer.
- (3) No person shall operate upon any County road, any vehicle, except an authorized emergency vehicle, with a gross weight upon any tire concentrated upon the surface of the County road in excess of the limitations set forth in subsection (1) of this section while emergency load limitations are in effect.

SECTION 5. SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR AUTHORIZED VEHICLES

When any emergency load limitation as defined in this resolution is in effect as to any County Road, school buses, motor trucks transporting perishable commodities or commodities necessary to the health and welfare of County residents are hereby permitted to exceed the emergency load limitation; provided, that the gross weight of such vehicle shall not exceed that amount determined by multiplying the total number of tires concentrated upon the surface of the road times the maximum allowable gross weight per tire as follows:

Conventional Tires		Tubeless or Special With .5 Markings	
Size Tire Width	Gross Load Each Tire	Size Tire Width	Gross Load Each Tire
7.00*	1800 Lbs.	8-22.5*	1800 Lbs.
7.50	2000 Lbs.	9-22.5	2200 Lbs.
8.25	2200 Lbs.	10-22.5	2600 Lbs.
9.00	2600 Lbs.	11-22.5	3200 Lbs.
10.00	3200 Lbs.	11-24.5	3200 Lbs.
11.00**	3600 Lbs.	12-22.5**	3600 Lbs.

* And Under

** And Over

Providing further, that where circumstances concerning a proposed move would constitute an undue hardship, the County Engineer or his designee is authorized to issue special permits allowing such vehicle to exceed the gross weight limits of this section; such permit to specify, but not be limited to, time of movement and specific route information consistent with protecting the County roads from serious damage.

SECTION 6. SPECIAL PERMITS FOR AUTHORIZED VEHICLES

The County Engineer or his designee is authorized to issue special permits allowing motor vehicles providing services necessary to the health and welfare of County residents to exceed the posted emergency load limitations; provided, that such permits, specify, but not be limited to, time of movement, and specific route information consistent with protecting the County roads from serious damage and be issued only in those instances where an immediate threat to the public health and welfare exists.

SECTION 7. VEHICLE COMBINATIONS

When computing the maximum allowable gross weight of motor vehicles during periods of emergency load limitations as provided for in Section 5, each vehicle, whether solo or part of a vehicle combination, shall be considered separately except for semi and pole trailers which may be considered as part of the towing vehicle if the load being carried by such a combination is supported equally, plus or minus ten percent (10%) of both the trailer and towing vehicle.

SECTION 8. MAXIMUM SPEED PERMITTED ON POSTED ROADS

Except where applicable law or regulation specified a lower speed, no persons shall operate any vehicle at a speed in excess of thirty (30) miles per hour upon any County road posted as to its emergency load limitation.

SECTION 9. ACTION FOR DAMAGE

Any persons operating a motor vehicle upon any County road in violation of any provision of this Resolution shall be liable in a civil action instituted in the name of the County, for any damage occasioned to any County road as the result of disregarding any load limitation and using such County road, or portion thereof, with any vehicle or any class of vehicle to which the same is closed.

SECTION 10. SAVINGS

If any provision of this Resolution or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the Resolution or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.