



## 1.0 Authority

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) may impose special seasonal weight restrictions on any state trunk highway that, because of weakness of the roadbed due to deteriorating or climatic conditions or other special or temporary conditions, would likely be seriously damaged or destroyed in the absence of such special limitations. Special seasonal weight restrictions are issued in accordance with s. [349.16, Wis. Stats.](#)

Class II road restrictions usually apply only when the roadbed is thawing. During the Class II road restriction, most divisible load multiple trip permits exceeding legal axle weights, or 80,000 pounds, are suspended in accordance with s. [348.17, Wis. Stats.](#)

The department may exempt vehicles carrying certain commodities. These vehicles may be exempted if it is reasonable and necessary to promote the public health, safety, and welfare under s. [349.16\(3\), Wis. Stats.](#)

Exemptions or limitations may also be granted by the department for only emergency or exceptional situations as determined by region maintenance personnel.

## 2.0 Raw Forest (RS) and Potato Seed (PS) Permits Procedure

Vehicles transporting raw forest products under the RS permit (s. [348.27\(9m\)\(c\)](#), Wis. Stats.) or PS (s. [348.27\(9t\)](#), Wis. Stats.) under the PS permit are exempt from Class II road restrictions. However, permit holders may not exceed posted limits on any bridges or culverts on state or US routes or other roadway weight restrictions that are not seasonal posted roads.

Additional RS and PS permit information and restrictions can be found on the [multiple trip permits](#) web page <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/com-driv-vehs/mtr-car-trkr/osow-multiple-trip.aspx>. The following steps are required as part of declaring and ending Class II road restrictions:

1. Prior to the start of the seasonal road postings, but no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>, the Winter Operations Engineer in the Bureau of Highway Maintenance (BHM) contacts the regional maintenance supervisors and requests a listing of the highway sections within each region designated as Class II highways. The list and map shall include the state highway number and the limits of the affected highway section. BHM maintains an [online map](#) showing these highways, as well as a listing of each highway.
2. When temperatures begin to rise, the BHM Meteorologist uses weather forecasts and the Minnesota DOT frost model (displayed on the [Northeast Regional Climate Center website](#) at <https://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/>) to estimate when Class II road restrictions will be implemented.
3. As the estimated date approaches, the BHM Meteorologist reviews Roadway Weather Information System (RWIS) data and the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer or their designee requests frost tube readings from regional maintenance supervisors. Frost tubes should be checked on Mondays and Thursdays, unless otherwise directed, and reported to BHM until each respective zone is declared thawed. The BHM Meteorologist will then notify the appropriate regions when readings are no longer required.
4. Class II restrictions are declared on a zone-by-zone basis when thaw depth reaches six inches (6") below the pavement surface in the zone.
5. When conditions warrant declaring a zone or zones as thawing, the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer or their designee shall publish a declaration of Class II road restrictions. Each declaration shall be given a minimum 24-hour notice prior to becoming effective. Wording is as follows:

"Class II and Posted Road Restrictions begin in Zone X [Day of Week, Date], at 12:01 AM CST. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions will begin in Zones X and X when conditions warrant. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions were already in effect in Zones X and X."

6. Regional maintenance staff monitor roadways weekly for weeping, pumping and other signs of weakness and shall recommend to the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer or their designee the date when Class II restrictions shall end for each zone. When conditions warrant the ending of Class II restrictions, the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer or their designee shall publish a declaration ending Class II restrictions. Each declaration shall be given a minimum 24-hour notice. Seasonal Posted Roads must end before or at the same time as Class II road restrictions are ended. Wording is as follows:

“Class II and Posted Road Restrictions end in Zone X [Day of Week, Date], at 12:01 AM CST. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions will end in Zones X and X when conditions warrant. Class II and Posted Road Restrictions previously ended in Zones X and X.”

7. BHM Communication shall be reviewed by the following persons or entities:
  - a. BHM Meteorologist.
  - b. Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer.
  - c. Chief, Freight Operations.
  - d. DTSD’s Administrator’s Office - Public Affairs.
  - e. State Winter Operations Engineer.

The reviewed declaration shall then be sent to WisDOT’s Office of Public Affairs and relevant WisDOT regions, who will disseminate the posting.

8. All declarations of Class II restrictions are issued as press releases by the department’s Office of Public Affairs and available via a recorded message at (608) 266-8417. Additionally, BHM will compile a list and map of all highway sections with Class II weight restrictions and post notice on the department’s Internet [web site](#).
9. Additional information on this procedure can be found in the [Decision Process](#) document.

### **3.0 Distribution Class II Road Restrictions and Updates**

The following persons/entities shall be notified by the Chief State Highway Maintenance Engineer or their designee of the Class II restrictions start/end on an annual basis:

1. WisDOT’s Office of Public Affairs.
2. Region Operations Chiefs.
3. Region Maintenance Supervisors.
4. Freight Operations Chief and Supervisor.
5. BHM Director.

The Chief of Freight Operations or their designee shall notify the following entities the Class II restrictions start/end on an annual basis:

1. WisDOT Division of Motor Vehicles - Motor Carrier Services Section.
2. WisDOT Division of State Patrol.
3. Great Lakes Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin (GLTPA).
4. Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association.
5. Oversized-Overweight (OSOW) registered permit holders in system database.

### **4.0 Seasonal Posted Roads**

Some roads are posted for less than the legal weight limit. These limitations may apply periodically throughout the year or only during the seasonal thawing period. Refer to [HMM 06-05-15](#), Seasonal Posted Roads.

### **5.0 Local Roads**

Annual (multiple trip) permits are not valid on local roads during the spring thaw period unless the carrier obtains a single trip permit from the local road maintenance authority. Vehicles with RS and PS permits may travel on all public local roads unless posted by the local maintaining authority.