

**EQUIPMENT APPROVAL POLICY**  
**NDHP Motor Carrier Operations**  
**Ref: 9-2 (4-2019)**

**PURPOSE**

To establish guidelines when vehicles can be exempted from weight limitations on highways other than the interstate system.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

As authorized by section 39-12-05.3 NDCC, the North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP) in cooperation with North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), may exempt certain vehicles from axle grouping gross weight limitations and gross vehicle weight limitations. The NDHP and NDDOT may designate routes to be traveled by those vehicles exempted because of bridge or other structure restrictions. The NDHP has the authority to inspect the vehicles and may revoke the certificates when vehicles are not in compliance with requirements.

**PROCEDURE**

A. Vehicle Requirements

1. A single unit truck, with three or four axles in the rear, will be allowed to carry a maximum gross vehicle weight of 64,000 pounds provided it meets the following requirements (see illustrations):
  - a. The distance from the center of the steering axle to the center of the first axle of the 3 or 4-axle grouping must be 14 feet or more. 13 feet 6 inches or more cannot be rounded off to 14 feet. Note: If a fourth axle is added in front of a 3-axle grouping, only for the purpose of traveling on interstate highways, the minimum 14 feet would not apply to the fourth axle. The weight formula would determine the gross weight of the 4-axle grouping. The weight formula would also determine the gross vehicle weight of the vehicle.
  - b. All axles in the 3 or 4-axle grouping must have an equal number of tires, except that a "super single" tire (minimum 14:00 inch or 355 mm) is considered a replacement for duals (not to exceed 550 lbs. per inch width of tire). Example: a truck with a dual-tired tandem could have "super single" tires on the axle in front of and/or in the rear of the dual tired tandem. Note: If a fourth axle is added in front of or in the rear of a 3-axle grouping, only for the purpose of traveling on interstate highways, the fourth axle could have conventional single tires.
  - c. Axles that can be raised or lowered by air, hydraulic, or other pressure cannot be raised if it will cause any other axle to be overloaded when being operated on a public roadway.
  - d. The gross weight of the 3 or 4-axle grouping may not exceed 51,000 pounds. No axle in the grouping may exceed 19,000 pounds gross weight.

- e. The approved gross vehicle weight will be less than 64,000 pounds unless the tires on the steering axle are 12:00 or larger in size. The maximum allowable weight is 550 pounds per inch width of tire.
  - f. The truck must be registered for the actual gross vehicle weight.
  - g. Vehicles equipped with more than four axles, additional axles shall be steerable, castering, or pivoting axles (NDCC 39-21-54).
  - h. Vehicles manufactured after July 31, 2005, with more than one variable load suspension or lift axle, shall have the lock or pressure regulator valve or both located outside the cab and inaccessible from the driver's compartment (NDCC 39-21-53).
2. An end-dump gravel semitrailer, or other short semitrailer, manufactured and registered in North Dakota prior to July 1, 1973, will be allowed to carry a maximum gross vehicle weight of 74,000 pounds when towed by a truck-tractor (see illustration).
- a. The distance from the center of the steering axle to the center of the last axle on the trailer must be 30 feet or more.
    - 1) All axle weights must be legal.

#### B. Travel Restrictions

1. Single unit straight trucks that pull trailers do not qualify for the exemption from the weight formula. When pulling a trailer, the gross vehicle weight of the vehicle combination is determined by the measurement between extreme axle centers. A small fixed load trailer such as a portable welder would not be classified as a trailer.
2. The permit bridge load limitations map issued by NDDOT reduces the rear axle grouping gross weight to 48,000 pounds on Class 3 highways and 34,000 pounds on Class 4 highways.
3. During spring road restrictions or on highways with load limits year round, the weight on the rear axle group will be reduced to 48,000 pounds on highways restricted by legal weight, 42,000 pounds on 8-ton highways, 36,000 pounds on 7-ton highways, and 30,000 pounds on 6-ton highways.
4. Travel is not authorized on the interstate system with axle grouping weights or gross vehicle weight exceeding that as determined by the weight formula.
5. The equipment approval certificate cannot be used in conjunction with the 10 percent weight exemption permit.

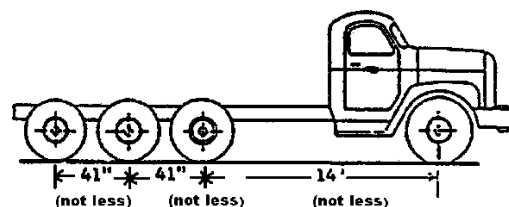
#### C. Application Procedure

1. Approved equipment certificates are available online at [www.nd.gov/ndhp](http://www.nd.gov/ndhp), click on E-permits.
  - a. Applications to the permit office may be made in person, by telephone, by e-mail, or through a permit service company.

- b. Applications may also be made through a trooper or motor carrier inspector, in person or by telephone.
2. Information required to obtain an approved equipment certificate:
  - a. Type of vehicle exempted
  - b. Owner's name, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number
  - c. Vehicle description including year, make, license number and state, and serial number (minimum of 8 digits)
  - d. Axle spacings, number of tires per axle, and tire width
  - e. Approved weight
3. An equipment approval nontransferable certificate can be issued to a vehicle for an annual fee of \$15.
  - a. Certificates are valid for a twelve-month period from the date of issuance.
4. A legible electronic or paper copy of the permit must be in possession prior to entering North Dakota or starting movement.
  - a. The applicant/driver is responsible for complying with the travel restrictions and safety requirements listed on the receipt/permit.
5. Vehicles that are approved for exemption are subject to inspection at the discretion of an NDHP trooper, motor carrier inspector, or the permit section.
6. Any altering of equipment that has been approved for exemption will void the certificate.
7. Applications for the approved equipment certificate can be obtained from the North Dakota Highway Patrol, Permit Office, 600 E Boulevard Avenue Dept. 504, Bismarck, ND 58505-0240. The telephone number is 701-328-2621.

#### D. Illustrations

1. The following illustrations are examples of trucks that can be approved under the Equipment Approval Policy. These vehicles must meet minimum requirements to qualify for equipment approval certificates.



#### **3 Axle Grouping Weights**

51,000 lbs. with approval

48,000 lbs. without approval

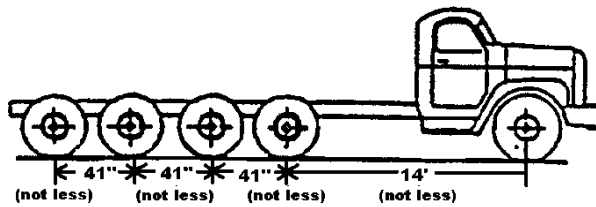
No axle may exceed 19,000 lbs.  
42,000 lbs. on I-29 and I-94

Steering Axle Weight

12-inch tire – 13,200 lbs.  
550 lbs. per inch

Gross Vehicle Weight of Example Vehicle (above)

64,000 lbs. with approval  
56,000 lbs. without approval  
55,200 lbs. on I-29 and I-94



**4 Axle Grouping Weights**

51,000 lbs. with approval  
48,000 lbs. without approval

No axle may exceed 19,000 lbs.  
50,000 lbs. on I-29 and I-94

Steering Axle Weight

12-inch tire – 13,200 lbs.  
550 lbs. per inch

Gross Vehicle Weight of "Example" Vehicle (above)

64,000 lbs. with approval  
61,200 lbs. without approval  
63,000 lbs. on I-29 and I-94

If axle #2 is a lift axle used only when traveling on I-29 or I-94, the minimum 14 feet between axle #1 and axle #2 would not apply. The minimum 14 feet would apply between axle #1 and axle #3 to be approved. If approval is requested on a truck with a 4-axle grouping, the 14-foot minimum would apply between axle #1 and axle #2.

**NOTE:** Bridge load limitation map reduces 3 and 4-axle grouping weights to 48,000 lbs. on class 3 highways and 34,000 lbs. on class 4 highways.

2. The following exemption to the weight formula applies only to those end-dump gravel semitrailers, or other short semitrailers, manufactured and registered in North Dakota prior to July 1, 1973. The exemption does not apply on I-29 or I-94. All axle weights must be legal. The gross vehicle weights **may not** exceed 74,000 lbs.

