



# Axle weight restrictions in Russia



Briefing Report

March 2012

# Axle weight restrictions in Russia

## Background

There is an old decree (N211) issued by the Ministry of Transport of Russia relating to the restriction of heavy traffic on Russian roads in the Spring when the thaw after winter causes melt water to destabilise the shoulders of the roads. This is exacerbated by the use of poor quality materials (e.g. use of sand with a high clay content, thin asphalt etc.) in the road building industry.

This law devolves power to the Russian national road agency who act to enforce it. In 2011 they issued an order restricting maximum axle weights to limits which were so low they did not even permit empty car transporters to be moved. This took the transport sector by surprise and the result was that significant financial penalties were levied on those who continued operating.

## 2012 situation

On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012 the national road agency issued Order No.3 which once again restricts traffic based on axle weight limits by “the temporary introduction of traffic restrictions on motorways”. These limits reduce the normal operating axle limit of 10 tonnes to as little as 3 or 4 tonnes.

The order may be found here:

[http://rosavtodor.ru/showdocs/Osnovnye\\_dokumenty/prikazyi\\_rasporyajeniya/1916.html](http://rosavtodor.ru/showdocs/Osnovnye_dokumenty/prikazyi_rasporyajeniya/1916.html)

Annex 1 details the list of motorways affected and the dates when the restrictions may be applied.

Annex 2 details the maximum weights allowed by axle during the restriction.

Both annexes may be downloaded in spreadsheets from this web page.

The effect is to allow the different regions to restrict traffic for a period of up to 30 days between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 25<sup>th</sup> June. Unfortunately since longer routes will cross more than one region they may be affected by restrictions over a period longer than 30 days as they may overlap. e.g. The journey may start in a region applying a restriction between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April. If the journey then enters a region applying restrictions between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May the effect is to restrict movements on that route for a total of 60 days.

The potential cost to the industry is enormous whether one considers trucks being forced to lie idle or the alternative which is to buy permits which are priced at 2,500 Roubles (€64.75) per 100 kilometres. Details can be found here:

<http://www.rg.ru/2007/11/14/dorogi-dok.html> - see Article 52.

The permits are specifically for the carriage of dangerous and high & heavy goods and are governed by Article 31 of Federal Law No. 257-FZ dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007 (amended 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011).

For details see <http://base.consultant.ru/cons/cgi/online.cgi?req=doc;base=LAW;n=72386> .

Unfortunately the process for obtaining the permits from the highways agencies is unworkable as it requires a minimum of 15 days to do this. In the vehicle logistics industry planning and load building for deliveries to dealers is normally carried out no more than 3 days in advance of despatch. If we consider that the space available at vehicle manufacturing plants is limited and typically has a maximum capacity of 5-8 days of production we see that gridlock can be reached quickly and the risk is that production in the plant has to be stopped.

Of course, flouting the law also results in large financial penalties and furthermore increases the incidence of bribery and corruption on the roads.

Bizarrely the law discriminates against national transport as the restrictions are not applied to international movements. In the finished vehicle logistics sector this means that vehicles being imported via non-Russian ports (e.g. Kotka, Finland) may still be freely delivered whilst those being shipped directly into Russia (e.g. Ust-Luga) are restricted. Also affected are those vehicles being built in Russia. This means that those OEMs who have invested in Russian manufacturing plants (many hundreds of millions of Euros) are now facing heavy financial penalties and severe operating restrictions whilst those still importing are not!

At least one OEM has already switched imports from Ust-Luga to Kotka temporarily in order to avoid the restrictions.

Furthermore certain categories of goods are not restricted. These are defined by Decree N211 and include all international cargo as well as passenger transport, animals, foodstuffs, medical supplies, fuel, seeds, fertilizers, postal freight, cargo necessary to alleviate force majeure, road equipment for recovery purposes, and military shipments. It is obvious that these restrictions cause massive logistical issues in the road haulage sector and furthermore they do nothing to encourage the regional authorities to improve the state of the roads.

## Solutions

The expectation of the authorities is that transport companies use smaller vehicles during the period of the restrictions. Clearly this is nonsensical since it would require massive investment and would in any case not allow normal volumes to be transported.

The only practical solution to the problem is to lobby the appropriate authorities for a change in the law. Letters of complaint regarding this situation should be sent immediately to:

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, Prime Minister of Russia

<http://premier.gov.ru/eng/>

Igor Ivanovich Shuvalov, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia

<http://government.ru/eng/persons/3/docs.html>

at this address:

Российская Федерация, г. Москва, 103 274, Краснопресненская набережная, д. 2

English version of the address:

Krasnopresnenskaya naberejnaya, 2, Moscow 103274, Russian Federation

Telephone numbers of the Russian Secretariat:

+7 495 985 47 34

+7 495 605 66 87

+7 495 605 87 34

Alternatively letters can be submitted on line here:

<http://правительство.рф/online/>

The best option, however, if you wish to send a letter, is to submit it to the ECG Secretariat who will arrange for it to be formally delivered in person in Moscow via one of our Russian members.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

Details of the original decree:

<http://www.cardefence.ru/drugie-dokumenty/prikaz-mintransa-rf-n-211-ot-12-avgusta-2011-goda>

For the limitations introduced in 2011:

<http://www.rg.ru/2011/03/18/ogranichenie-dok.html>

Federal road agency:

<http://rosavtodor.ru/>