

INFORMATION RELEASE



Office of the Director

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COMMERCIAL VEHICLE REGULATIONS TAKE EFFECT IN ARKANSAS AT THE END OF JULY

LITTLE ROCK (7-13) – The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) wants to remind the users of Arkansas highways, especially commercial vehicle operators, that several new 2007 Legislative Acts will become law at the end of July. The acts can be reviewed for specific applicability at the Arkansas General Assembly website at www.arkleg.state.ar.us. Summaries of the more significant changes are below.

“No Parking” Laws Clarified Act 997 of 2007

This act eliminates all parking along fully controlled access highways in Arkansas, including shoulders, medians, and on- and off-ramps, unless the area is marked as a designated parking area. “No Parking” signs were previously in place to enforce no parking provisions on Arkansas’ Interstates or other fully controlled access routes. The new law states that parking is not allowed along these routes, whether signs are in place or not, unless it is brief in nature and due to an emergency, vehicle disablement, or to correct or avert an unsafe condition. Arkansas Highway Police officers will conduct informational enforcement for a period of 60 days beginning July 31, 2007, except in cases of egregious or hazardous violations.

Changes in Permit Fees Act 639 of 2007

This act sets a base permit cost for oversize/overweight loads, as well as the permit fee for the movement of manufactured housing, at \$17.00. The base permit fee for an oversize/overweight load was previously \$12.00 and had been in effect since 1991. The previous fee for a manufactured housing permit was \$10.00 and had been in place since 1985.

Act 639 also establishes new fees for two types of special use vehicles. Pursuant to the act, the Arkansas Highway Commission has established a \$250.00 analysis fee for Superloads (loads of 180,000 pounds or greater). In 2006, AHTD engineers had to conduct detailed bridge analyses before granting access to approximately 600 Superloads. The fee will allow the AHTD to recoup engineering costs associated with the additional analyses. Act 639 also creates an annual over-length permit for specialty equipment used exclusively for loading and unloading agricultural aircraft. An annual permit fee of \$100.00 will be assessed for trips that do not exceed 35 miles from the point of origin. The annual permit will cost \$300.00 for trips exceeding 35 miles.

Changes in Weight Regulations
Act 640 of 2007

Act 640 makes several changes to weight regulations for vehicles traveling on Arkansas highways. First, the maximum weight allowed on the front steering axle for vehicles traveling on Interstate and non-Interstate routes has been increased from 12,000 to 20,000 pounds, or to the manufacturer's axle weight rating, whichever is less. If the front steering axle does not have a manufacturer's axle weight rating plate attached, the maximum weight allowed is 12,000 pounds. The act also places a maximum weight of 20,000 on a tandem front steering axle group and eliminates free special permits for front steering axle weights.

With the additional weight now being allowed on the front steering axle, this act also clarifies the maximum gross weight allowed for five-axle, tractor/semi-trailer combinations. Those vehicles carrying rock, sand, gravel or crushed stone on state highways will have a maximum weight allowance of 80,000 pounds, while vehicles carrying unprocessed farm products, forest products, or other products of the soil will be allowed 85,000 pounds.

Act 640 also eliminates an exemption from the federal bridge formula for five-axle, single unit vehicles (typically a dump truck) carrying rock, sand, gravel or crushed stone. This means those vehicles can no longer carry 80,000 pounds and must comply with all provisions of the federal bridge formula unless the formula calculation is less than the "grandfathered" five-axle limitation of 73,280 pounds. Arkansas Highway Police officers will conduct informational enforcement for a period of 60 days beginning July 31, 2007, with the exception of egregious violations.

Earthmoving Equipment Permits
Act 241 of 2007

For years, Arkansas law has allowed the movement of earthmoving equipment (typically a tractor with a dirt pan in tow) when the equipment was primarily used for farming operations. No permit is required for trips of less than fifty miles, but for distances exceeding fifty miles, a permit must be obtained. Under Act 241, owners of vehicles who are engaged in commercial earthmoving operations are now entitled to obtain a permit for all their movement on state highways, regardless of the distance. The movement of earthmoving equipment is still prohibited on the Interstate System and other fully controlled access highways.

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