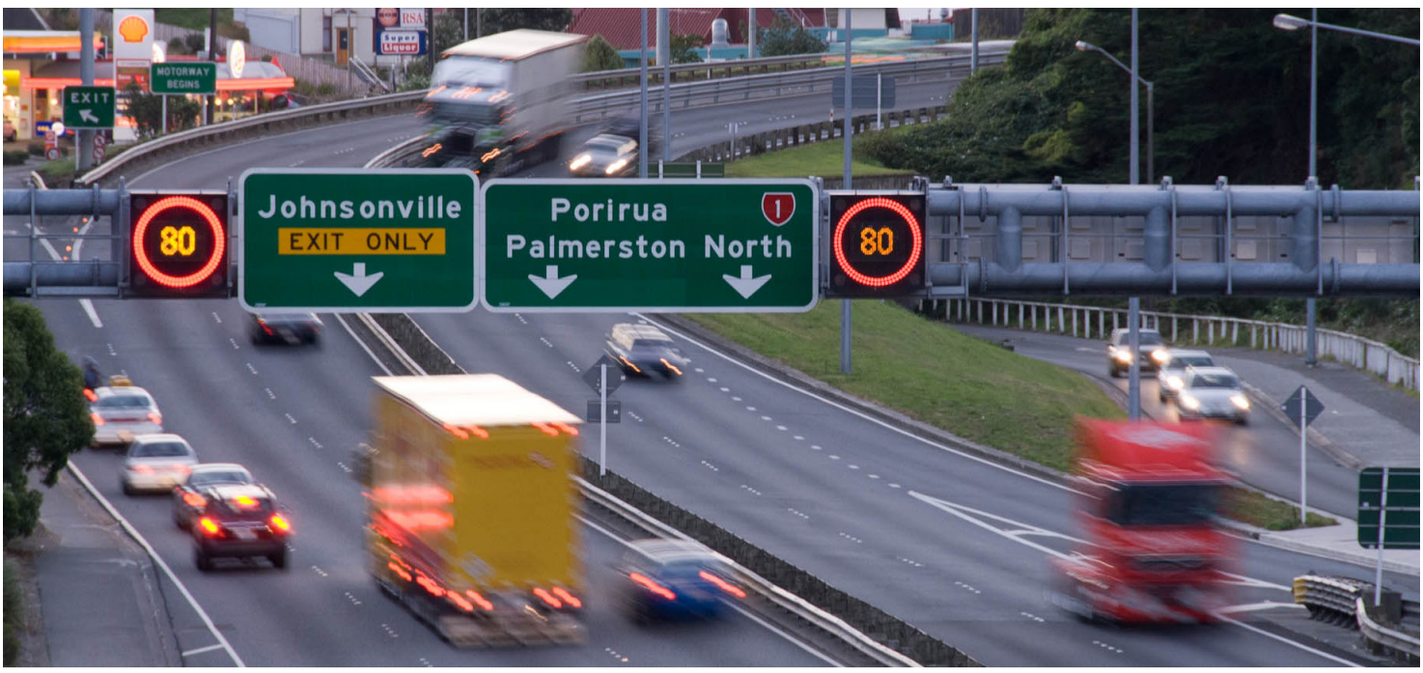
vehicle dimensions & mass

NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHI

December 2012 Issue 11

HPMV penalties and offences: making it clear and fair

The NZ Police, Road Transport Forum, and the NZTA have worked together on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that addresses a number of concerns raised by industry about enforcement of HPMV permit conditions. The changes set out in this MoU take effect from 1 January 2013 and will provide operators with certainty that they can operate their HPMVs without being unfairly penalised for minor permit infringements.



The application of existing enforcement processes to these new type of vehicles created some unforeseen consequences for the industry when the VDM Rule Amendment came into effect on 1 May 2010. In particular, the road transport industry raised concerns around the financial consequences they experienced due to relatively minor breaches of HPMV permit conditions. The significant cost of these breaches created a disincentive for operators to take advantage of the improved freight productivity that HPMVs offer.

Pending a review of the legislation, the changes in the MoU spell out the short-term concessionary weight tolerances to HPMV vehicles.

Working closely with the Commercial Vehicle Investigation Unit of the NZ Police (CVIU), the NZTA has agreed to a revised framework of concessionary axle weight and gross vehicle mass tolerances. These may be applied for enforcement purposes on HPMVs for pavement and bridge preservation.

These revised concessionary axle weight and gross vehicle mass tolerances are designed to compensate for reasonable and unintended differences in loadings, such as minor variations in weighing equipment and position of loads. This reflects the need of operators to load trucks efficiently and in a timely manner, while also recognising the need to preserve New Zealand's valuable roading assets. They are not tolerances to increase allowable mass.

'These are administrative/concessionary tolerances we've jointly agreed that allow for a degree of inaccurate loading,' says Mark O'Donnell who has led the work for the NZTA. 'We recognise the need to make this work for the industry

HPMV permits extended to two years

As from 7 January 2013, the NZTA will change the duration for an HPMV permit from one to two years. This is being done to provide efficiencies for both the industry and the NZTA by reducing the number of permits to be processed.

We suggest that applicants check the HPMV pages of the NZTA website to identify the status of bridges on a regular basis. As the Agency implements the HPMV Bridge Improvement Programme, we expect that bridge capacities will improve in some areas. Therefore, there may be an opportunity for permit holders to increase their tonnage on a route or extend a route.

and to realise the national economic benefits from moving freight more efficiently. It's an interim measure only until a review of the VDM Rule can be completed.'

Mark adds that the revised guidelines are not designed to create an additional weighing tolerance that can then be used to increase the total load carried. 'The revised rules are designed to be fair to those with minor and unintended load variances.'

Over the next year, the NZTA will take this through a process for legislative review and a possible amendment to the VDM Rule. The changes to conditions affect higher mass HPMV permits only and do not apply to over-length permit conditions, unless these vehicles are also operating at higher mass.

Enforcement officers may apply concessionary weight tolerances to HPMVs as per the following table:

Gross combination mass	No more than 500kg above maximum permit gross weight across all axle sets
Steering axle(s)	No more than 300kg on a single axle or a twin-steer axle set
All other axle sets within a combination	No more than 1000kg on any axle set

Setting the record straight on 23m-plus long HPMVs

There has been an increasing interest for HPMV applications involving 23m-plus long vehicles operating on state highways and local roads. This is a new and challenging area that begins to push the engineering and network operational boundaries. The length of these vehicles is therefore a significant concern, not only for industry but also for the NZTA and other network operators as well as for road users in general. Vehicles approved to operate above 23 metres are also likely to be route-specific as opposed to the shorter general access 'proforma' vehicles approved by to date by the NZTA.

Only nine operations have been approved as a trial on fixed routes in the central North Island as the NZTA needs to ensure due diligence on route suitability is carried out before further applications for route approvals are considered. This includes evaluating the potential economic gains given the moderate increase in deck space and payload capacity offset against any increase in road risk or infrastructure damage.

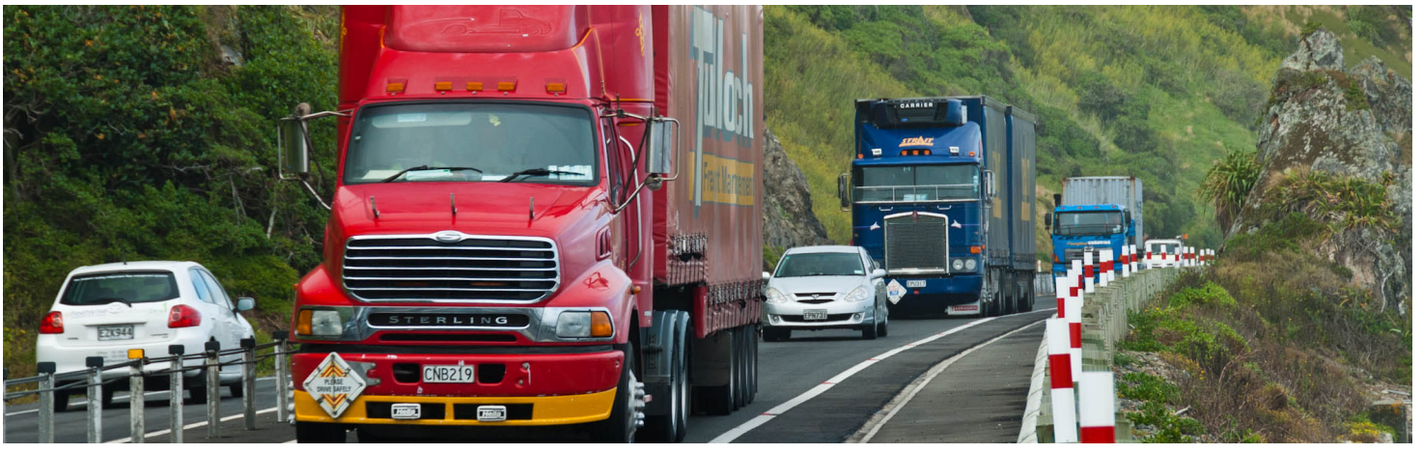
The NZTA is developing practical guidelines for route and vehicle assessments that will need to be considered before any application is lodged or equipment built. This route assessment will take into account international best practice that the NZTA must consider when approving routes for HPMV use. Until these guidelines are developed and released, operators should not second-guess on what might be possible on a proposed over-length HPMV route. 'Before you start looking at investing in new vehicles, operators should contact us first,' says Stephen Patience, HPMV Project Manager at the NZTA.

The NZTA has a number of pending applications which will be reviewed in early 2013 once the policy has been developed. It must be remembered that any travel on local roads may also require approval from the local council, which is the road controlling authority for that road.

These extra-long vehicles can only be approved following a geometric evaluation of the proposed route to ensure it is suitable for the vehicle. This evaluation must address safety to the vehicle and other road users. An evaluation of the capability of the infrastructure and traffic engineering is therefore a critical requirement. 'We need to evaluate such things as the safety at rail crossings, negotiating intersections and roundabouts, and whether these vehicles can safely operate in their own lanes,' Stephen says.

The guidelines will help an operator evaluate whether specific engineering advice is required and, if so, what is required to obtain a permit for over-length HPMVs on a specific route from source of freight to destination. This will be included in the HPMV Permitting Manual on the NZTA website for all stakeholders including the road transport industry, truck and trailer manufacturers, local government, permitting staff and asset managers.

The NZTA is working with the Road Transport Forum, the CVIU, local authorities and other stakeholders to develop the policy, which is expected to be completed by March 2013.



Nearly 5000km opened up to HPMVs

Working in partnership with local councils, the NZTA has made 4800 kilometres of state highways and local roads available for HPMV access at varying weights since May 2010. This is ahead of our initial expectations set out in the recently released National Land Transport Programme 2012–15 and comes as a result of structural analysis being a part of the Bridge Improvement Programme, which is opening up more HPMV routes across the country. Hand-in-hand with this good news is that more applications are being approved for higher mass. Only a year ago, the ratio was one out of every three permits issued was for higher mass. Now, it's almost one out of every two permits. This uptake in HPMV is not just good news for the transport industry, it's also good news for New Zealand due to the economic and safety benefits that derive from improved freight efficiency.

Status of the 'H' sign

A recent amendment to the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Dimensions and Mass 2002 means that from Saturday 1 December 2012, HPMVs that do not have specific route restrictions listed on their permit no longer need to display an 'H' sign, unless the HPMV permit lists this as a permit condition. This mainly applies to proforma overlength HPMV vehicles. We suggest you review your permit conditions – if your permit does not list an 'H' as a condition, you can remove the 'H' signs from your vehicle. If your HPMV permit does list the 'H' sign as a condition, then you could apply for a new permit which will now not include this condition. However, a new permit fee will be charged to cover the cost of a re-issue. The NZTA will update Factsheet 13G.

For more information

For more information, please contact:

Stephen Patience, VDM Project Manager
vdm@nzta.govt.nz
04 894 6237

Visit the HPMV webpage at: **www.nzta.govt.nz/HPMV**

Have you heard about the central New Zealand freight story?

As you may be aware the NZTA is working with the freight sector in the upper North Island and South Island to develop a shared understanding of the broader freight picture. We are also starting these freight conversations in central New Zealand.

On the following pages you'll find a short document with our current understanding of the freight picture in central New Zealand. It asks you to reflect on the freight matters impacting on your business and central New Zealand. Our freight team are also asking you to complete a short survey, by 21 December. The survey has 26 questions and is anonymous. You can access the survey here. Your feedback would be appreciated.

The survey is the first phase of our freight work in the central region. It will help us better understand what industry needs to improve the efficient movement of freight. In early 2013 we will report back on the findings from the survey, and we will organise a series of regional workshops to talk through the issues raised and gain a more in-depth, shared understanding. If you have any questions, would like a copy of the background document, or would like to get involved please email centralfreight@nzta.govt.nz.

Christmas and New Year close-off dates for accepting HPMV applications

HPMV applications will be accepted up to 20 December. Our permitting staff will be back in the new year to receive applications from 7 January 2013.

Please review your permit requirements and submit applications as early as practicable, as this will help us meet the needs of all our customers.

What is the central New Zealand freight story?

One of the NZ Transport Agency's priority areas of work is improving the efficiency of supply chain and freight movements with the ultimate aim of helping to reduce the cost of doing business across the country. An important first step in this work is developing a common view between the NZTA, local government and the private sector around what we should be doing now, and into the future.

99%

The % of NZ's exports and imports shipped by sea 2000–2011.

$91 BILLION

New Zealand exports and imports approximately $91 billion worth of goods each year.

100%

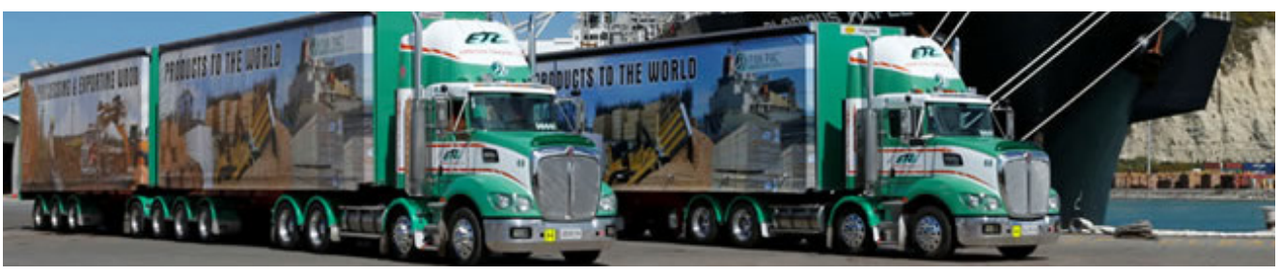
The forecast growth of freight by 2031.

4500 KILOMETRES

4500km of state highways and local roads will be available for full HPMV access by 2015.

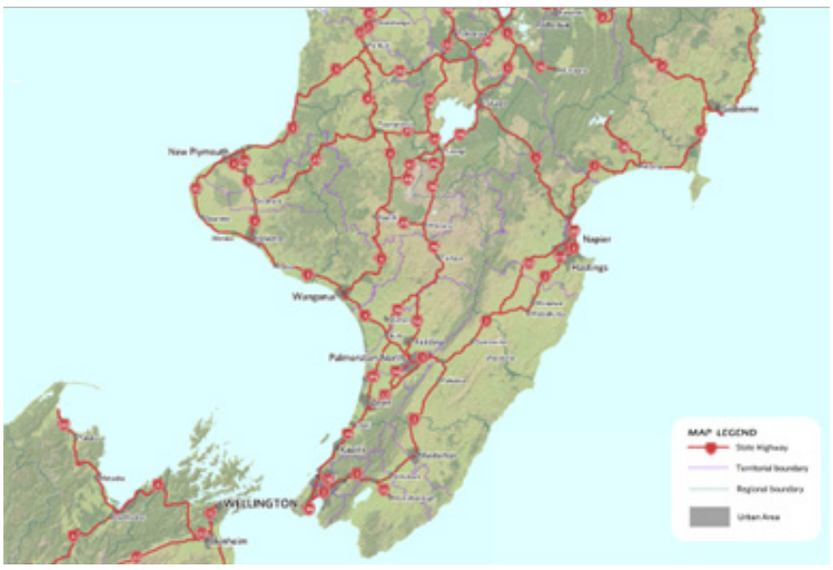
Central NZ freight highlights

- Central New Zealand's exports are largely based on primary products: forestry, meat, dairy, and horticulture. The Taranaki region also has a significant oil and gas industry. The bulk of exports are currently shipped from the nearest regional port.
- There is significant inter-regional movement of freight (using road, rail and coastal shipping) to other ports, processing facilities or to distribution centres.
- The bulk of New Zealand's imports disembark at the Auckland and Tauranga ports. Any constraints or vulnerabilities on the freight links through the central region will impact on national supply chains.
- Palmerston North is emerging as a key collection point and distribution hub for the central region.
- There is increasing pressure on access to regional ports from residential development and traffic congestion.
- The Cook Strait ferries are a vital part of the national strategic network. The government is currently investigating the viability of shifting the southern terminal from Picton to Clifford Bay.



INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by the NZTA central region office. The NZTA's central region includes the lower North Island from Taranaki, across to Gisborne then down to Wellington and the top of the South Island.



This proposal is intended to be a starting place for discussions between NZTA regional staff, local government, KiwiRail and the private sector about freight issues in central region. While this document focuses on the central NZ freight story, it is linked to NZTA freight engagement work in the upper North Island and South Island, and will contribute to the NZTA national effort to improve the efficiency of supply chain and freight movements.

THE ISSUE

As a trade dependant country there is much to gain from improving productivity and innovation in the freight sector. Any change in the freight sector that reduces costs and/or time to get products to market will strengthen New Zealand's ability to participate in the global economy, making our exports more price competitive and our imports cheaper.

> 'A more efficient and effective freight system can raise the prosperity of New Zealand's businesses and workers and enhance consumers' purchasing power.' Productivity Commission *Final report on international freight transport services,* April 2012.

These issues require the freight sector, producers and infrastructure providers to work together. To develop that collaborative approach, the Productivity Commission recommended that the freight sector make greater use of facilitated discussion models, based on information sharing and relationship building to promote coordination between public and private sectors around investing and planning for improved freight efficiency. In the upper North Island, and the South Island, the freight sector has already started those discussions. **We'd like to kick start those discussions in the central region.**

THE CURRENT FREIGHT PICTURE

Forestry, dairy production, pastoral agriculture, horticulture and aggregates currently make the greatest demands on the transport system in the central region. Forestry is the region's most significant export by weight. While logs are usually exported from the nearest

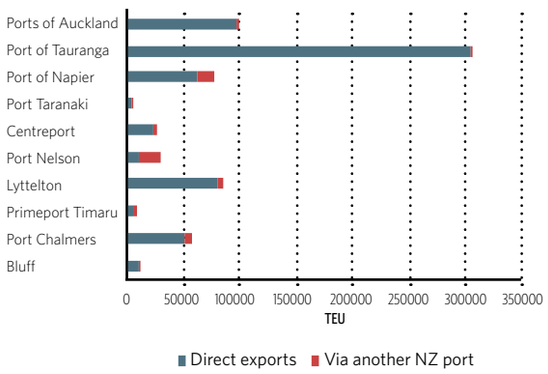
regional port, an increasing proportion of primary products are processed before being sent offshore. The supply chains for these products are more complex, for example some horticulture produce in Gisborne and Hawke's Bay is transported to Auckland for processing, while dairy products are exported from a number of ports in the North Island.

This means that while regional ports are important to help understand freight movements and regional economic interests, they don't paint the full picture of freight systems. *What are the critical freight supply chains for the Central region?*

Inter-regional freight movement is even more pronounced for imports. While, the regional ports handle bulk imported items such as oil and agricultural fertilisers, Centreport in Wellington is the only significant importer of manufactured products in the Central region. The bulk of New Zealand's imports disembark at the Auckland and Tauranga ports. *How do the north-south freight flows impact on supply chains?*

Manawatu Gorge
The Manawatu Gorge slip and repair work

Export hubbing is limited but relatively more occurs in the central region (January–September 2012)



The central region also has relatively more trans-shipments from its ports

The bulk (by weight) of the region's exports are still shipped from the nearest port, so good access to the port gate is recognised as a key issue by infrastructure providers. A range of other factors can also impact on port operations. Ports are often adjacent to areas regarded as attractive for residential, commercial and office space development, creating potential conflict between residential development and other industrial land uses. The increasing intensification of land surrounding ports also impacts on land prices which pushes transport, warehousing, wholesale and manufacturing industries further away. *What are some of the issues impacting on the efficiency and access to your regional port?*

Most of the central region's ports have limited space for expansion. Hubs or inland ports could help to address those space constraints. Inland ports can also create opportunities to consolidate freight for trans-shipment or for cluster packaging, storage, and transport services. Waingawa near Masterton is an example of how the forestry industry is consolidating freight before transporting it to Centreport. Palmerston North is another location that is emerging as a key collection point and distribution hub for the central region. *What opportunities are there to consolidate freight and/or develop freight hubs in the central region?*

The freight industry is constantly changing. Technology will impact on logistics services and fleet development, while potential developments such as the Ruataniwha Dam in Central Hawke's Bay could have a significant impact on land use in the surrounding region. *What future developments could have a significant impact on freight in the Central region?*

THE STRATEGIC FREIGHT NETWORK

New Zealand freight volumes are predicted to double over the next 30 years, but the increase will not be uniform across the country. Some areas and corridors will experience more concentrated growth in both the volumes and frequency of travel. Supply chains and infrastructure working together to provide the right level of service in the right locations in order to manage this increased demand is a key challenge for the sector.

> '...the specific infrastructure needs will depend not just on the level of growth but on how any particular growth and productivity path is realised.' *The 2010 National Infrastructure Plan.*

The strategic freight network supports the movement of high volume (and high value) freight, allows transfers to other transport modes and provides access to national and international markets. While the skeleton of our strategic freight network is established, understanding where future issues and constraints could arise is critical to avoid under or over investment. This is the challenge for all infrastructure providers, not just those in the public sector. *How should strategic freight network in the central region be developed to meet the needs of the future freight task?*

Supply chains are only as strong as their weakest link, for example the recent year-long closure of the Manawatu Gorge to road

traffic illustrated how key routes can be closed for long periods of time. Duplicating infrastructure is one way to improve resilience, but it can also result in the costs from over-investment in under-utilised capacity. *What are key resilience issues for our strategic freight network?*

The Cook Strait ferry is another vital part of the national network and a key component of the national and inter-island supply chains. Picton has been the South Island ferry terminal since 1962. The government recently announced its intention to further test the viability of a ferry terminal at Clifford Bay. The proposal to move to Clifford Bay has the potential to cut the journey time by 80 minutes for road/ferry trips between Wellington and Christchurch and by 110 minutes for the same rail/ferry trip. *If a new terminal were constructed at Clifford Bay, how would it affect inter island supply chain?*

REGULATORY ISSUES

Transport providers in the freight industry are subject to regulation, including vehicle operating hours, licensing, and roadside vehicle checks. There is an opportunity for the private and public sector to work together to reduce compliance costs while at the same time increasing levels of safety and promoting the right choices. *How could current regulations or their implementation be changed to improve freight movements in the Central region?*

Productivity improvements were at the heart of recent changes to the Land Transport Rule for Vehicle Dimensions and Mass. Permits can now be issued for high productivity motor vehicles (HPMVs) allowing larger and heavier vehicles to operate on routes that have been approved for their use. *How is the HPMV regime improving freight movement productivity in the central region? Are there any barriers to the uptake of HPMV?*

NEXT STEPS

An electronic survey accompanies this document. We invite you to consider the questions and discuss them with others who also have freight as their business. Over the Christmas period we will collect your feedback and then discuss it with you in a series of regional workshops in early in 2013. Our intention is that those workshops provide a forum for freight sector participants to start an informed discussion about the strategic issues for freight in the central region now and in the future.