

ROLLING ALONG

WINTER 2025

NORTH DAKOTA MOTOR CARRIERS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION



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The North Dakota Motor Carriers Association has been publishing the Rolling Along magazine since 1948. Each issue provides members with information concerning their association and the issues impacting the trucking industry.



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Members,

We are in the middle of winter here in North Dakota, which feels much different than the winter we experienced last year. The cold temperatures, snow and ice have a significant impact on our industry and require trucking companies to be flexible and proactive to manage safety, costs and timeliness in the face of seasonal challenges. Recently the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and North Dakota State University conducted research on how to reduce the risks and travel disruptions on the state's interstate highways during severe winter weather. The informative article with its findings can be found on page 10 and 11 of this edition of Rolling Along.

Now that we have turned the page on the calendar into a new year, it marks the beginning of a new legislative cycle that can have significant implications for our industry. The 69th North Dakota Legislative Session convened on January 7. This session brings many new faces to the House and Senate, ensuring a fresh perspective and potentially altering the legislative landscape. Our weekly newsletter and website will keep members updated as to the bills we are monitoring throughout this session. An example of the information included in this update can be found on page 7. Our association is supporting legislation that would limit the liability amount an owner or operator of a commercial motor vehicle could be required to pay in the event of an accident that causes injury or death to an individual other than the owner or operator of the vehicle. I challenge every member to reach out to their respective representatives to encourage them to show support for this bill. Scooter Pursley's article on page 6 provides additional information regarding the proposed legislation.

As we enter our 91st year of existence, I am encouraged by our partnership with our members, legislators and representatives. Our association's mission statement, "To Promote Highway Safety, Deliver Services, and Provide Representation for our Members" emphasizes many of the topics that are covered in this edition of Rolling Along. We are all part of a fabulous industry that is vital to our state and national economy.

I am looking forward to the upcoming year. With new challenges and opportunities forthcoming, I am excited to see how we can innovate, collaborate and reach our goals. The collective efforts of everyone in our association will undoubtedly lead to impactful achievements. Let's make this year one of growth and positive change!

Sincerely,



Jeremy Oistad



JEREMY OISTAD

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THE JANOUSEKS: TRUCKING IS ALL IN THE FAMILY

By Scooter Pursley | Clearwater Communications



In August, John and Cameron joined the North Dakota contingent in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the National Truck Driving Championship. In all likelihood, they will return to the national stage and be joined by Colton in the not-to-distant future.

John finished 35th in twin-trailer and Cameron was 19th in four-axle at the national event. They earned the trip by winning their classes at the North Dakota Motor Carriers Association State Truck Driving Championship in Fargo in June. John and his sons all drive for FedEx Freight and represented the company at TDC. From there, John qualified for his 12th national championship by winning the twin trailer state crown and Cameron qualified for his second in the four-axle class. Colton finished third in flatbed.

“We’ve got some really good drivers who have sharpened their skills,” John said of the state championships. “There is a lot of talent out there that people aren’t too crazy about driving up against.”

As for nationals, things get even tougher. “It’s a high-level event and gets a person to bring their A game because you’re competing against pretty good drivers from all of the states,” John said.

Trucking wasn’t a family tradition for the Janouseks before patriarch John Janousek took his place in the cab of a big rig by chance 35 years ago. But it is something that John has passed down to his sons, Cameron and Colton, in the years since.

Cameron said he enjoys prepping for the competition. “It’s a lot of fun to get ready for it,” he noted. “But it can be intimidating because there is a lot of high-level competition. The driving part is the quickest. You get there, you get in the truck and drive the course. You only get one shot at it.”

Similarly, John got one shot at landing a job in the trucking industry while attending a two-year college. Needing a job, he shot a glance at a help wanted ad and wound up on the loading dock of a local trucking firm. He obtained his CDL license on his 21st birthday and soon was on the road. He has driven for FedEx Freight for 27 years and logged 2.8 million miles mostly in double and triples, the longer combination vehicles.

Cameron, too, started on the loading dock in 2012 at FedEx Freight and it didn’t take a whole lot of coaxing to get him to go through the company’s driver development program due to his dad’s career.

“I would set up in the truck and he would show me around” Cameron recalled. “I was always very interested in it. I did (the dock) for a couple of months and got asked by management about driving. I thought about it, and thought this could be a good opportunity, so I went through the driver development program at FedEx Freight. By 2013, he was driving.

Unlike his dad, who would come home after nights on the road, Cameron is home most evenings with his wife and daughter. His daily runs take him south of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where he swaps trailers with drivers from Kansas City and returns to Fargo. “You’re able to cover the miles and get everybody back home,” he said.

Thirty-three-year-old Cameron said his family understands the trucking life. “You get by. I’ve got a good support system at home, and she understands what truck driving entails, the long days. Sometimes she’s not happy about it but she realizes it is what it is. It’s part of the job being gone long hours.”

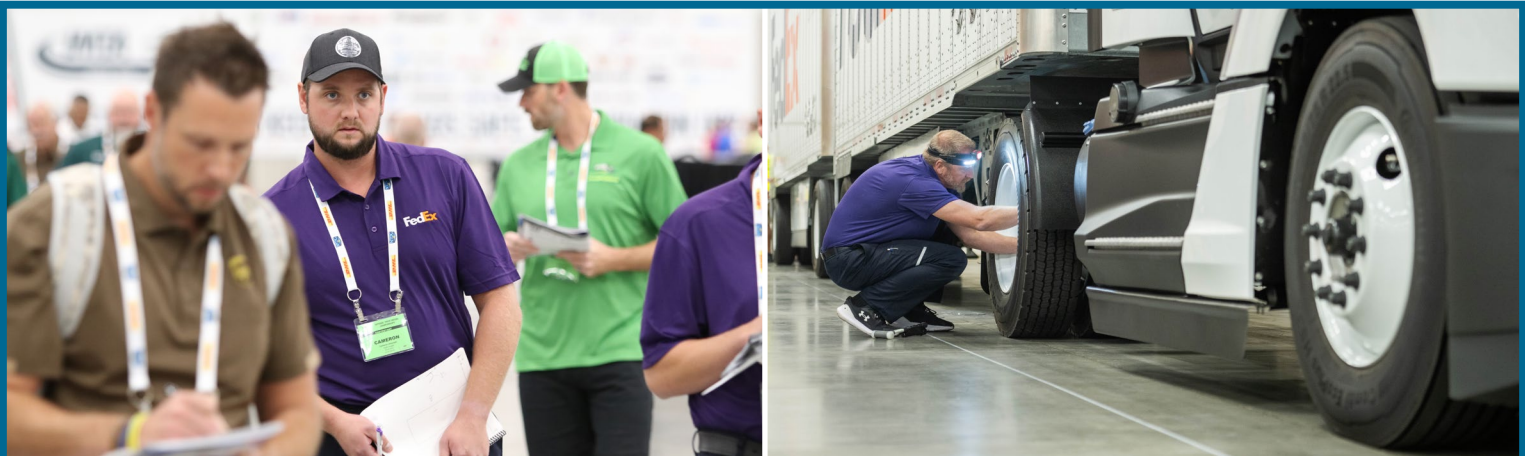
For that reason, John is proud that his sons have followed his career path, right down to starting on the loading docks and working their way to drivers.

"I think it's pretty unique that they are willing to follow in their dad's career," John said. "It's something a lot of young people don't really want to do. They want to blaze their own trail. The fact that they looked at what I've done in the past and thought 'yeah, I want to do that' it's a good feeling for me and makes me feel pretty good about the industry I'm in."

And they have the benefit of modern technology that has changed the trucking world since the days John got behind the wheel.

"Technology (has changed the most)," John explained. "The safety gear, automatics braking, lane departure ... High technology in 1991 was power steering."

Pictured on the left in a purple shirt is Cameron Janousek and pictured on the right is John Janousek



2024 NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS - North Dakota Results

Indianapolis, Indiana

NAME	PLACE	CLASS	COMPANY	NAME	PLACE	CLASS	COMPANY
David Comings	5th	Five-Axle	FedEx Freight	Thomas Tweten	25th	Three-Axle	ABF Freight Systems Inc.
Drew Bartelson	12h	Tanker	Old Dominion Freight Line Inc.	Darren Werness	31st	Flatbed	Old Dominion Freight Line Inc.
Ryan Seward	15th	Sleeper	FedEx Freight	John Janousek	35th	Twin-Trailer	FedEx Freight
Cameron Janousek	19th	Four-Axle	FedEx Freight	Anthony Colbenson	41st	Step Van	FedEx
Scott Meyers	25th	Straight Truck	FedEx Freight				

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LEGISLATION WOULD ADDRESS ‘NUCLEAR’ VERDICTS

By Scooter Pursley | Clearwater Communications

The proliferation of “nuclear” lawsuits against the trucking industry has prompted the North Dakota Motor Carriers Association to support legislation that would limit the liability amount an owner or operator of a commercial motor vehicle could be required to pay in the event of an accident that causes injury or death to an individual other than the owner or operator of the vehicle.

Senate bill 2206, introduced by senators Cole Conley, Dean Rummel and David Clemens and representatives Karen Anderson, Jim Grueneich and Dori Hauck seeks to cap the amount an individual can recover from a commercial motor carrier in the event of an accident causing injury or death at \$500,000. The bill is being heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

This cap is for noneconomic damages only, which are intangible losses that cannot easily be quantified by dollar amounts. Vehicle and property damage and loss of income are normally defined as economic damages, items that can be quantified. The limit of \$500,000 mirrors the current North Dakota Century Code in a medical malpractice case.

“Our association is committed to safety and accountability, but we must also ensure that our members are not burdened by excessive and unjust punitive damages,” said NDMCA President Jeremy Oistad. “This responsible legislation should protect public safety without opening the door to lawsuit abuse that threatens the livelihoods of hardworking operators.”

Nuclear verdicts occur when a jury awards an exceptionally high sum in a lawsuit, often in cases involving truck accidents. While compensation for genuine damages is essential, these large awards frequently exceed reasonable expectations. Damages can reach nearly \$100 million.

Trucking advocate PrePass Safety Alliance contribute to the rise of nuclear verdicts to three factors:

1. Third-Party Litigation Financing

Investors fund lawsuits in exchange for a share of the payout, incentivizing larger claims.

2. Emotional Appeals

Plaintiffs’ attorneys often focus on the emotional aspects of an accident, highlighting the suffering of victims to sway juries. While empathy is natural, these tactics can lead to disproportionate awards that go beyond compensatory justice.

3. Perception of the Industry

Trucking companies are sometimes portrayed as large, impersonal corporations. This image can bias jurors, making them more likely to award higher damages.

NDMCA lobbyist Scott Meschke reports the NDMCA bill has received attention from legislators and stakeholders. The Independent Insurance Agents of North Dakota, the property and casualty insurance industry, the Petroleum Marketers of North Dakota and others have expressed support for the bill as drafted. Additionally, a group has met with the North Dakota Association for Justice (trial lawyers) and the North Dakota Insurance Commission about the bill, its intent and the rationale behind its drafting.

In its current form, the NDMCA bill would limit noneconomic damages against a commercial motor vehicle carrier and evidence of safety belt usage in civil actions; and amend and reenact section 39-21-41.4 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to requiring safety belts in certain motor vehicles.

The legislature is limited to 80 days, which means a conclusion at the end of April or beginning of May.

Senate bill 2206 co-sponsored by Sen. Cole Conley, Sen. Dean Rummel, Sen. David Clemens, Rep. Karen Anderson, Rep. Jim Grueneich and Rep. Dori Hauck would limit the amount a driver could recover from an owner or operator in the event of an accident. The Senate Judiciary Committee heard the bill Jan. 20.

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Committees, Leadership prepare for 69th Legislative Assembly

COMMITTEES NAMED. The Senate Transportation Committee will again be chaired by Sen. Dave Clemens (R-16, Fargo) and new Senator Claire Cory (R-42, Grand Forks) will be the Vice Chair. They will be joined by Sens. Jerry Klein, Bob Paulson, Dean Rummel and Kathy Hogan (D). On the House side, Rep. Dan Ruby (R-38, Minot) will chair the Transportation Committee. The Vice-Chair will be Jim Grueneich (R-28). Reps Johnston (new), Hendrix (new), Osowski (new), Morton (new), Koppelman, Christianson (new), Kasper, Frehlich, Maki (new), Schatz, Finley-DeVille, and Dressler (new). With seven (7) freshman legislators on this body, we anticipate many educational meetings on our main issues will take place as the session begins.



LEGISLATION. The NDMCA bill has garnered some attention from legislators and stakeholders. Several groups including the Independent Insurance Agents of ND, the property and casualty insurance folks, the Petroleum Marketers of ND and others have expressed support for the bill as drafted. More discussions ensue as we get closer to the bill being formally introduced. Additionally, a small group met with the NDAJ (trial lawyers) and the ND Insurance Commission about the bill, its intent and the rationale behind its drafting. Having open discussions with both supporters and opponents helps craft better policy, and can help deflect potential pitfalls during the process.

PROPERTY TAXES. Seems everyone has gotten the message loud and clear that the 69th Legislative Assembly will be focused on finding a way to provide meaningful and lasting property tax relief to homeowners. One legislator shared with me that there maybe as many as FORTY (40) bills introduced related to property taxes.

ARMSTRONG ADMINISTRATION. Kelly Armstrong was sworn in on December 15 as the 34th Governor of North Dakota. During the transition period, he named several cabinet officials including reappointing Ron Henke as NDDOT Commissioner. From a transportation industry perspective, this provides some continuity, and we look forward to working with Commissioner Henke and his staff. Roz Leighton, Armstrong's Chief of Staff in Washington, DC will fill that same role here in Bismarck. They are still filling out staff and policy positions, so we are awaiting who will be the transportation policy director for the new Governor.

Outgoing Governor Doug Burgum appointed Lt. Daniel Haugen as interim Superintendent of the Highway Patrol. Colonel (Ret.) Brandon Solberg has moved into the position of Facility Management Director. [News release here.](#)

THE WORK BEGINS. The Legislature convened officially on January 7, 2025. The State of the State, State of the Tribes and State of the Judiciary addresses all will be given. No floor sessions were held, but standing committees met and began organizing for a session that features well in excess of 1,000 bills. May 2 is the last day the of the 80-day Session. Pundits predict the Legislature will use most of not all of those allotted 80 days.

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATURE - A GUIDE TO GETTING INVOLVED

North Dakota's legislative process is intended to involve the public. Even though we are represented at the Capitol during the legislative session, by our elected officials, the legislature wants to hear how an issue might affect you as a citizen; positive or negative. North Dakota's legislature is a citizen legislature, and they meet for a total of 80 days every odd numbered year to accomplish the work of the people.

North Dakota's legislature is exceptionally transparent when compared to other states in the country. Every bill that is introduced by a legislator receives a committee hearing, committee vote, and a vote by the full House or Senate, which is all accessible by the public.

Attending a Hearing and Testifying

The North Dakota Legislative Council webpage at ndlegis.gov is the best public resource for the legislature. Here you will find hearing and floor session schedules, bill drafts, and the live streaming options.

Before the Hearing

- Find out when and where your bill will be heard. Usually, public testimony is heard during the first hearing and once a hearing is closed no further public testimony is taken.
- If you plan to testify, written testimony is usually needed. If attending in person, be sure to provide enough copies for the legislators in the committee and some extras for the clerk. If testifying virtually, you will need to submit your testimony online at least one hour before the hearing starts.
- Coordinating with others that might be testifying on the same bill is helpful, but not necessary. This will limit duplication of information and ensure the correct message is conveyed to the committee.
- If testifying on behalf of someone other than yourself, you will need to register with the Secretary of State as a lobbyist.

At the Hearing

- Be present at the start of the hearing. In-most cases everyone will be able to testify but the chairman may cut it short for high of people. There is always the option to submit written only. This is true in-person and on-line.

- At the beginning of the hearing the chairman will call the committee to order and start the hearing for the particular bill. The clerk will read the bill heading and the first speaker to introduce the bill is normally the primary bill sponsor. The chairman will then ask for testimony, first from proponents, then opponents, and lastly neutral testimony from State agencies if needed.
- When it is your turn to testify stay calm and be conversational. Legislators truly want to learn about your position on the bill. Be brief and concise with your information. Try not to repeat other testimony or be too technical.
- Expect comments and questions from committee members. Answer questions by addressing the chairman and committee the same as during testimony.

After the Hearing

- After the hearing is closed the committee will continue to do committee work. This is when amendments are considered, committee discussions, or other information is gathered before they take a committee vote to recommend support or opposition to the bill. Committee work can happen during any free time of the committee. All committee work is public and can be found on the Legislative Council webpage. The committee clerk or your legislator are good resources as well.
- After the committee votes on a bill, it is sent to either the House or Senate for a full vote with the committee's recommendation. If the bill is passed by the House or Senate, it goes to the other chamber to repeat the process.
- Bills voted on and passed by both chambers are sent to the Governor for signature or veto. If a bill is voted down in either chamber it will not be sent to the governor and does not become law.



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KEEPING HIGHWAYS SAFER FOR TRUCKS DURING THE WINTER



A closer look at truck crashes during severe winter weather in North Dakota is yielding clues on how to reduce risks and travel disruptions on the state's interstate highways. The research was conducted by researchers at the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University.

"We looked at preparations and policies governing truck safety during winter weather, including government regulations, industry standards and best practices to prevent weather-related truck crashes," researcher Kimberly Vachal said. "Our goal was to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing strategies to prevent truck crashes during winter storm events."

Vachal, director of UGPTI's Rural Transportation Safety and Security Center, noted that truck crashes can become particularly disruptive with jackknifed or overturned trailers blocking travel lanes and disrupting winter weather maintenance and travel recovery activities. Researchers analyzed 594 truck-involved crashes among 2,104 crashes during the winter months from 2019 to 2024. They conducted case studies of crashes to learn the sequence and nature of truck-involved crashes during a severe winter storm that involved an interstate highway closure. They also gathered information from surrounding states on winter road management processes, enforcement practices, road closure decisions, education programs, and communication practices.

Along with Vachal, the UGPTI research team included statistician Yun Zhou, bridge and pavement engineer Kelly Bengtson, researchers Del Peterson and Kshitij Sharma, and sociologist Andrew Kubas. In incorporating the research team's broad areas of expertise, the study used a "Safe Systems" approach that factored in engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response. "We take all of that into account when we try to get our crash rates down and fatalities to zero," said Lt. Luke Hendrickson, commander of Motor Carrier Operations for the North Dakota Highway Patrol (NDHP).

The UGPTI research team worked closely with NDHP to identify objectives and focus the study on critical crash causes and decisions made by commercial motor vehicle drivers, DOT staff and NDHP personnel during winter storms. The study focused on I-94. Hendrickson noted the corridor carries 70% of North Dakota's interstate traffic with more than 300 million truck miles each year and about 25% of all vehicles traveling in the state. With only 100 troopers available statewide to respond to events on a daily basis,

Hendrickson said they are constantly working to balance mobility and safety on the state's highways.

Vachal and Hendrickson recently presented results of the study at the Western Regional Commercial Vehicle Safety Summit organized by UGPTI in Denver, Colorado. Hendrickson told participants, "We're going to be able to use this crash study for the I-94 corridor and in other areas of the state as well when it comes to being proactive to closing down highways and responding to events. We want to use this study to show us how to use our tools to be more efficient."

Hendrickson added that drivers often feel like they can drive in (poor) conditions even when we can't see the end of our squad cars. "We have to look at how we make decisions that will be more impactful for the people that can't make the good decisions for themselves," he said.

Study findings included:

- 84% of commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crashes during the study period were influenced by wind coupled with the presence of ice and low visibility.
- 40% of CMV crashes involve a jackknifed semi.
- Nearly 100% of crashes involved out-of-state commercial vehicle drivers.

- Nearly two-thirds of commercial vehicle crashes were single-vehicle crashes. When a second vehicle was involved, it was often a secondary crash.
- A lack of adequate truck parking results in trucks parking on exit ramps or shoulders with no essential services, which can slow recovery due to limited towing capacity and the buildup of large drifts.

As a result of the study, NDHP is examining several strategies to reduce winter crash risks and improve after-storm recovery:

- Develop education efforts focused on out-of-state drivers to be delivered at entry points into the state. Winter driver training courses may also be developed. The NDHP has already developed three short videos related to winter driving to educate out-of-state truckers.
- Review enforcement efforts. Of the 1,152 citations issued on I-94 during the study period, 38% were issued to truck drivers involved in crash events. “Not every crash event deserves a citation, but it is a way to educate the driver,” Hendrickson said.
- Consult with NDDOT regarding placement of cable barriers in medians. “In some areas of the interstate system, the barriers are extremely close to the shoulder of the road,” Hendrickson said. “In the past, where a semi might have been able to enter the median and stop, the power unit is now being stopped more quickly, resulting in the trailer swinging around in a jackknife. Can we move those barriers without compromising safety?”
- Negotiate with Google Maps and other companies that offer mapping apps. Currently, when interstates are closed, map apps may route traffic to other state and county highways, resulting in stuck trucks and blocked roads. Currently, in South Dakota, when an interstate or other highway is closed, all other roads in the area are marked as closed by the mapping apps as well.
- Improve communication of truck parking options to provide safe havens for trucks during storms. “Parking is a huge problem for us,” Hendrickson said. “We don’t want trucks to stop in the middle of nowhere where they get stuck and start freezing and cause huge snowdrifts.”
- Implement reduced speed zones where wind, blowing snow, and ice are particularly troublesome.
- Close certain roads during high winds. This strategy is used to reduce risks to commercial motor vehicles in Wyoming.
- Improve planning related to smaller weather events. “We’ll have a traffic watch center paired with a department of emergency services, DOT, and the Highway Patrol,” Hendrickson said. “With data from this study we’ll be able to say, based on what’s happened before, this is what we should do to reduce impacts this time to have a more efficient response and prevent crashes.”

- Increase fines for ignoring winter road closures. The fines act as a deterrent and can provide some relief for the financial burden on emergency services.
- Make road maintenance adjustments to include improved snow and ice removal techniques, pre-treatment strategies, and implementation of new technologies that could reduce crash risk.
- Implement road design changes such as greater separation of the road from the surrounding area to allow snow to blow off the road. Deeper ditches, wider rights-of-way, living snow fences, snow fences, and even darker colored pavement can reduce problems with snow and ice buildup.
- Employ intelligent transportation systems such as variable message signs, roadside weather stations, and variable speed limits to help improve safety during adverse weather.

“Our goal is to reduce fatalities to zero,” Hendrickson said. “But beyond that we’re looking at how long it takes for traffic flow to recover from a crash. If we have a semi in the ditch and a couple of cars that crash, we’re out there investigating the crash. Then other emergency services come out to take care of the victims and then you have tow companies that come out to remove the vehicle and then DOT has to come to clear off the highway. In the study, we found that it takes more than six hours for traffic speeds to recover to 90%. That’s a long time. It affects commerce. It affects traffic flow. And it affects safety.”

Hendrickson added, “If we can get ahead of these storm events and perhaps keep vehicles off the road, it will keep commerce moving a little bit more smoothly and we won’t have these big gaps in service and traffic. And, ultimately, it will keep the highways safer.”



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2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

March 25 **Annual Vehicle/Pre and Post Trip Inspection Webinar**

April 15 **Cargo Securement**

For more information go to <https://members.ndmca.org/calendar>

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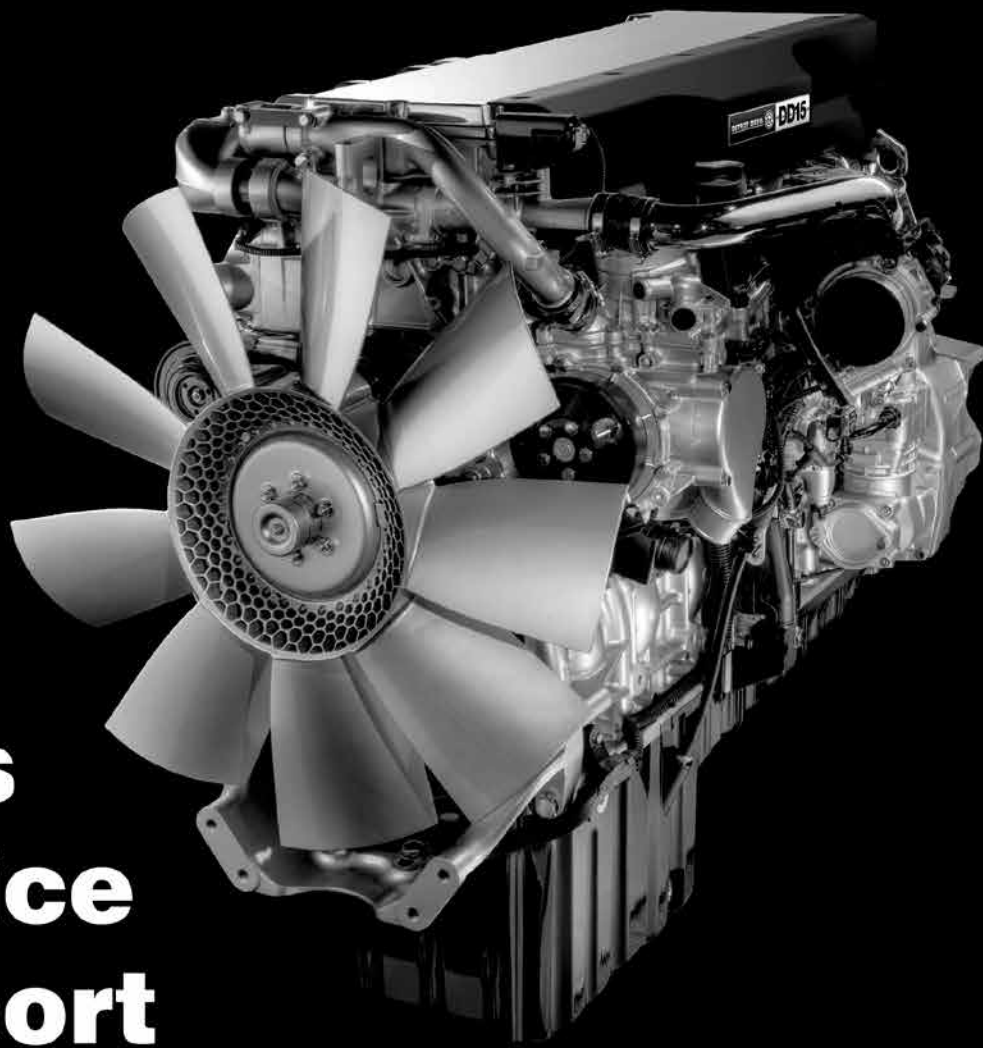


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TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR OVERSIZE AND OVERWEIGHT PERMITTED MOVEMENTS IN 2025

North Dakota Highway Patrol/Motor Carrier Operations

Oversize/Overweight Permit Office (10-2024)

1. Permitted movements not exceeding 16 feet in width may travel on any day, ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
2. Permitted movements that are over-height and/or over-length only, may travel on any day, ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
3. Permitted movements that are twelve feet in width or less, one hundred twenty feet long or less, or overweight only may travel on any day or night with proper lighting.

Holidays	Permit Office closed	Load Movement
New Year's Day	January 1, 2025	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on December 31 until sunrise on January 2.
Martin Luther King Day	January 20, 2025	Permitted vehicles and load movements are allowed to travel as stipulated.
President's Day	February 17, 2025	Permitted vehicles and load movements are allowed to travel as stipulated.
Good Friday	April 18, 2025	Permitted vehicles and load movements are allowed to travel as stipulated.
Memorial Day	May 26, 2025	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on May 24 until sunrise on May 27.
Independence Day	July 4, 2025	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on July 3 until sunrise on July 5.
Labor Day	September 1, 2025	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on August 30 until sunrise on September 2.
Veteran's Day	November 11, 2025	Permitted vehicles and load movements are allowed to travel as stipulated.
Thanksgiving Day	November 27, 2025	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on November 26 until sunrise on November 28.
Christmas Eve/ Christmas Day	December 24, 2025, at 12 pm December 25, 2025 All day	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on December 24 until sunrise on December 26.
New Year's Day	January 1, 2026	Permitted movements <u>exceeding</u> 16 feet in width, <u>may not</u> travel from noon on December 31 sunrise on January 2.

4. North Dakota has a travel information map that provides width, length, and height restrictions on state highways due to construction, road conditions, load restriction information, as well as weight limits placed on the state highways in the spring of the year. If you have any questions, contact the Permit Office at 701-328-2621 or visit the NDDOT travel information map at <https://travel.dot.nd.gov/>.

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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates must meet one of the eligibility requirements below to apply

- works for a member company
- parent works for a member company
- sponsored by a member company
- enrolled in or planning to enroll in a transportation field of study

*full list of eligibility requirements can be found online.

APPLICATION PROCESS

For more information and to download the application visit
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Deadline to apply is April 14, 2025.
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