

Oversized Loads in Iowa Work Zones

Quick Summary on Restrictions

- Report all measured widths reduced to 18 feet or less to the 511 system.
- Report width restrictions at least one foot less than the actual measured width.
 - Example 1 – measured width: 17' 4"; width reported to 511: 16' 4".
 - Example 2 – measured width: 18' 1"; no need to report to 511 system.
- Objects that create a width restriction may be:
 - Temporary Barrier Rail, channelizing devices, yellow pavement markings, steel beam guardrail, bridge barrier rail, cable barrier rail...
- Shoulders should not be considered as part of the available width for oversized loads unless:
 - The plans state to include the shoulder as part of the available width.
 - The shoulders are strengthened as part of the construction project.
- It is not safe for a wide load to overhang into a work zone or an opposing direction of traffic.
- Length restrictions should be considered when an obstruction is present on the inside of a curve.

Iowa's Oversized Load Permits

A permit is typically required for a vehicle or load exceeding one of our size limits to travel on the primary highway system. Separate permits must also be obtained for city and county routes.

Maximum Size Before a Permit May be Needed	
Width	8 feet 6 inches
Height	13 feet 6 inches
Length	41-foot single vehicle, 53-foot trailer, 57-foot lowboy trailer for construction equipment
Weight	80,000 pounds total, 20,000 pounds per axel

Iowa requires that loads be broken down into the smallest reasonable size before a carrier can apply for an oversized permit. This typically requires parts that can be removed within eight hours to be shipped on a separate load. Also, most oversized loads have travel time restrictions between a half hour before sunrise and a half hour after sunset.

Motor carriers, such as prefabricated homes, can also apply for an annual permit in Iowa. This permit allows them to route their oversized loads throughout the year without applying for an individual permit. Loads with an annual permit may be as wide as 16 feet and up to 120 feet long. Unless the load is less than 12' 6" wide, the carrier will have to either be routed by motor carrier services or check the 511 map for construction work zone restrictions.

Why Report up to 18 feet?

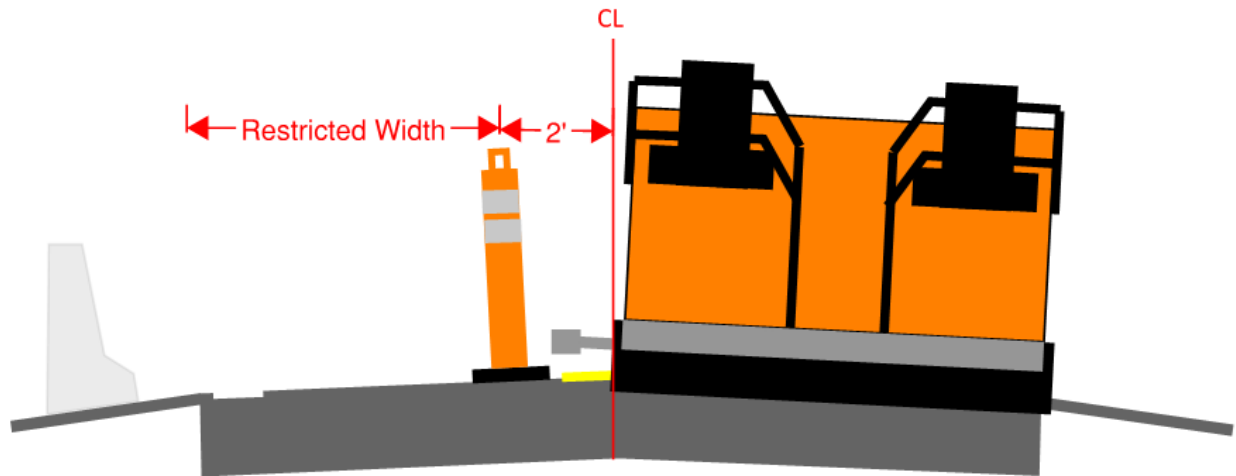
The state of Iowa receives hundreds of permit requests per day, and we use an automated review process to handle that volume. Any load 18 feet wide or less is automatically reviewed by our system based on the information in 511. Loads greater than 18 feet are less common, and the permits for these loads get a personal route review to make sure they are routed correctly. This review also includes contacting (among others) each district to get specific restriction information for each potential project along the route.

Restricted Width Signing (TC-81)

Restricted width signing is required when the available width between two fixed obstacles is reduced to 15 feet 6 inches or less. Restricted width signing is posted with a width of one foot less than the actual available width to give oversized vehicles at least six inches on each side to pass the obstacles. The signing is required up to 15 feet 6 inches because of the clause circled in red in the detailed permit information table below. Motor carrier service routing may not be required for some loads with a width of 14 feet 6 inches or less, and the 15 feet 6 inches available width gives them the six inches on each side. The most common obstacles that create a width restriction are concrete bridge barriers and temporary concrete barrier rail. We do not provide restricted width signing for non-fixed objects, such as channelizers, due to the short duration they are typically in place. It would not be feasible to continually move the extensive restricted width signing with an operation similar to hot mix asphalt (HMA) paving.

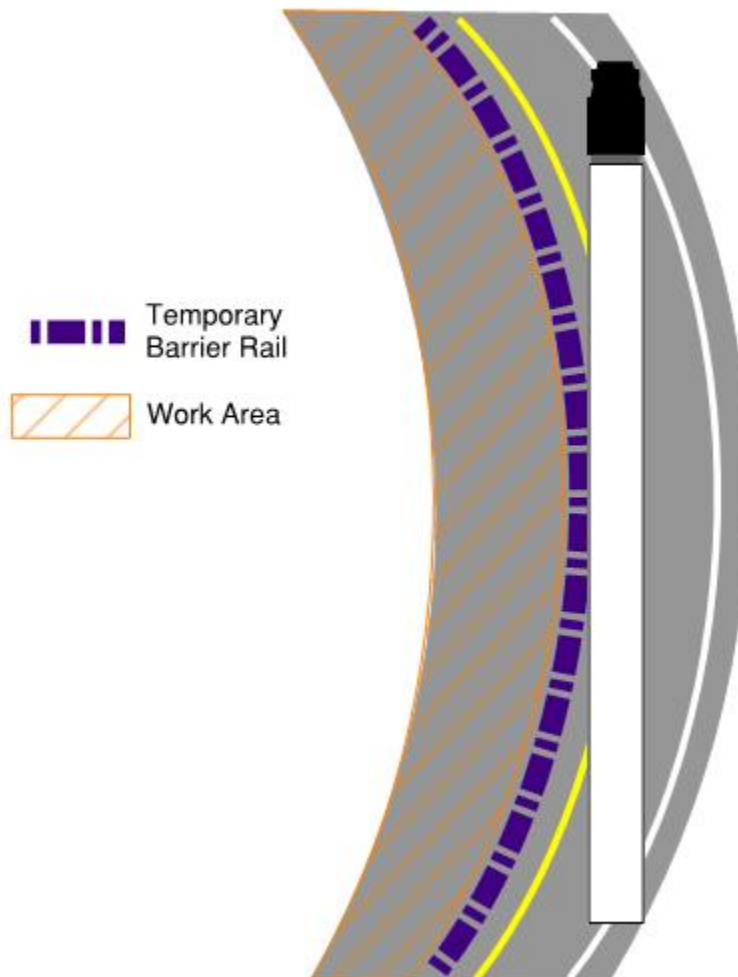
Special Cases

Lane Closures with Channelizers



Iowa DOT specifications allow the contractor to place channelizers up to two feet beyond the centerline. The restricted width should account for this extra space to protect the equipment and the people working just on the other side of the channelizers.

Restricted Widths Around Curves



Obstructions such as temporary barrier rail or channelizers can pose a unique challenge when placed on the inside of a curve. While some long loads may fit the available width at any point along the curve, they may be too long and become stuck as shown in the example above. In these cases, a length restriction should also be calculated and reported to the 511 system.

Detailed Permit Information

Current as of: 8/30/2021

Oversize/Overweight permits					
Permit type	Single trip	Annual		Annual*** oversize/overweight	Multitrip
Cost	\$35	\$50		\$400	\$200
Axle weight	20,000 pounds per axle *See exception.	20,000 pounds per axle		20,000 pounds per axle	20,000 pounds per axle
Gross weight	No limit	80,000 pounds		156,000 pounds	156,000 pounds
Height	No limit	13 feet 10 in.	15 feet 5 in.	15 feet 5 in.	15 feet 5 in.
Length	No limit	120 feet	120 feet	120 feet	120 feet
Width	No limit	12 feet 5 in.	16 feet	13 feet 5 inches	16 feet
Interstate travel	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	No interstate highway travel more than 80,000 pounds	Allowed
Routing	MCS routing required	MCS routing not required	MCS routing required when loads are more than 14 feet 6 in. wide. MCS routing required when loads are more than a 50-mile radius unless route continues on at least four-lane roads.	MCS routing not required.	Carrier provides route and Iowa DOT verifies. Load can change, configuration cannot.
Valid	One trip in five days	12 months from month issued		12 months from issued	60 days
Special mobile equipment except cranes	Allowed up to 36,000 pounds single axle; 126,000 gross weight with qualifying tires**	Allowed up to 36,000 pounds single axle; 80,000 pounds gross weight with qualifying tires**		Allowed up to 36,000 pounds single axle; 126,000 gross weight with qualifying tires**	
Carrier route check	None	None	None	- Construction and embargo maps - Vertical clearance maps - 156 Kip map - Check with Iowa DOT to ensure no changes	None

These permits are valid only for movement on state and federal highways. County and city permits must be obtained separately. *Exception: Cranes with pneumatic tires meeting the definition of an indivisible vehicle may have a maximum of 24,000 pounds per axle; single-trip permit and round-trip permits only; and travel is allowed on the interstate system. **Exception: Formula for construction equipment with flotation pneumatic tires: Axle weight = 20,000 pounds + (tire width - 18) x 1,882 pounds. *** Vehicles operating under an annual oversize/overweight permit can operate under annuals with no weight guidelines when they can meet the annual permit requirements with no weight dimensions.