

Weight Restriction Ordinance
Adopted 03-31-14 at the Annual Town Meeting



Section 1. Purpose and Authority

The purpose of this "Ordinance Restricting Vehicle Weight on Posted Ways" (hereinafter "Ordinance") is to prevent damage to town ways and bridges in the Town of Burlington which may be caused by vehicles of excessive weight, to lessen safety hazards and the risk of injury to the traveling public, to extend the life expectancy of town ways and bridges, and to reduce the public expense of their maintenance and repair. This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. § 3009 and 29-A M.R.S.A. §§ 2395 and 2388.

Section 2. Definitions

The definitions contained in Title 29-A M.R.S.A. shall govern the construction of words contained in this Ordinance. Any words not defined therein shall be given their common and ordinary meaning.

Section 3. Restrictions and Notices

The municipal officers may, either permanently or seasonally, impose such restrictions on the gross registered weight of vehicles as may, in their judgment, be necessary to protect the traveling public and prevent abuse of the highways, and designate the town ways and bridges to which the restrictions shall apply.

Whenever notice has been posted as provided herein, no person may thereafter operate any vehicle with a gross registered weight in excess of the restriction during any applicable time period on any way or bridge so posted unless otherwise except as provided herein.

The notice shall contain, at a minimum, the following information: the name of the way or bridge; the gross registered weight limit; the time period during which the restriction applies; the date on which the notice was posted; and the signatures of the municipal officers. The notice shall be conspicuously posted at each end of the restricted portion of the way or bridge in a location clearly visible from the traveled way.

Whenever a restriction expires or is lifted, the notices shall be removed wherever posted. Whenever a restriction is revised or extended, existing notices shall be removed and replaced with new notices. No person may remove, obscure or otherwise tamper with any notice so posted except as provided herein.

Section 4. Exemptions

Any vehicle delivering home heating fuel and operating in accordance with a permit issued by the MDOT under 29-A M.R.S.A. § 2395(4) and, when necessary during a period of drought emergency declared by the governor, any vehicle transporting well-drilling equipment for the purpose of drilling a replacement well or for improving an existing well on property where that well is no longer supplying sufficient water for residential or agricultural purpose and operating in accordance with a permit issued by the MDOT under 29-A M.R.S.A. § 2395(4-A) is exempt from the permitting obligations set forth in Section 5 herein. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, vehicles may travel over a posted town way and/or bridge in order to deliver wood for heating purposes; provided, however, said vehicle (a) shall be limited to one (1) cord of wood per trip and (b) only to make delivery to a residence located on the posted town way.

Section 5. Permits

The owner or operator of any vehicle not otherwise exempt as provided herein may apply in writing to the municipal officers for a permit to operate on a posted way or bridge notwithstanding the restriction. The municipal officers may issue a permit only upon finding all of

the following:

- A. No other route is reasonably available to the applicant;
- B. It is a matter of economic necessity and not mere convenience that the applicant use the way or bridge; and
- C. The applicant has tendered cash, a bond, or other suitable security running to the municipality in an amount sufficient, in its judgment, to repair any damage to the way or bridge which may reasonably result from the applicant's use of same.

Even if the municipal officers make the foregoing findings, they need not issue a permit if they determine the applicant's use of the way or bridge could reasonably be expected to create or aggravate a safety hazard or cause substantial damage to a way or bridge maintained by the municipality. They may also limit the number of permits issued or outstanding as may, in their judgment, be necessary to preserve and protect the highways and bridges.

In determining whether to issue a permit, the municipal officers shall consider the following factors:

- A. The gross registered weight of the vehicle;
- B. The current and anticipated condition of the way or bridge;
- C. The number and frequency of vehicle trips proposed;
- D. The cost and availability of materials and equipment for repairs;
- E. The extent of use by other exempt vehicles; and
- F. Such other circumstances as may, in their judgment, be relevant.

The municipal officers may issue permits subject to reasonable conditions, including but not limited to restrictions on the actual load weight and the number or frequency of vehicle trips, which shall be clearly noted on the permit.

Section 6. Administration and Enforcement

This Ordinance shall be administered and may be enforced by the Municipal Officers or their duly authorized designee (e.g., road commissioner, code enforcement officer, law enforcement officer).

Section 7. Penalties

Any violation of this Ordinance shall be a civil infraction subject to a fine of not less than \$500.00 nor more than \$1,000.00. Each violation shall be deemed a separate offense. In addition to any fine, the municipality may seek restitution for the cost of repairs to any damaged way or bridge and reasonable attorney fees and costs. Prosecution shall be in the name of the municipality and shall be brought in the Maine District Court.

Section 8. Severability; Effective Date

In the event any portion of this Ordinance is declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining portions shall continue in full force and effect. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon enactment.