

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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April 15, 1953

To Paul A. MacDonald, Deputy Secretary of State
Re: Legal Loads of Trucks

We have your memo of April 8, 1953, and the attached letter from Raymond S. Oakes, Esquire, in which memo you request answers to questions concerning the interpretation of section 100 of Chapter 19 of the Revised Statutes, as amended, which statute deals with the load in pounds that may be carried by a group of axles on commercial vehicles.

The pertinent portions of the statute which are ~~are~~ to be considered read as follows:

". . . No vehicle having 2 axles shall be so operated, or caused to be operated, when the gross weight exceeds 32,000 pounds.

"No group of axles shall carry a load in pounds in excess of the value given in the following table corresponding to the distance in feet between the extreme axles of the group, measure longitudinally to the nearest foot:

"Distance in feet between the extremes of any group of axles	Maximum load in pounds carried on any group of axles
4 to 7, inclusive.	32,000*
17	41,160*
27 and over	50,000

provided, however, that no vehicle shall have a gross weight imparted to any road surface of more than 22,000 pounds on any one axle, and no vehicle having two or more axles less than 10 feet apart shall be operated, or caused to be operated, with more than 16,000 pounds imparted to the road surface from either axle; provided further, that no vehicle shall be so operated, or caused to be operated, when the load imparted to the road surface is greater than 600 pounds per inch width of tire (manufacturer's rating); . . ."

The definition of the term "group of axles" will be helpful in considering the problems presented to us in your questions.

"Group of axles" means those axles which are contiguous and segregated by reason of their use. In the instant case, the extreme axles of the group would be the first axle or wheel and the rear axle or wheel of the tandem axles of wheels. These are the

extreme axles of the group. See State v. Balslev, 48 N. W. 2d, 287.

Question #1. "Under Section 100 is the expression 'distance in feet between the extremes of any group of axles' to be interpreted as to the extreme from the front axle to the rear axle or, in a three axle job, as between the front axle and the middle axle or between the middle axle and the rear axle?"

Answer. In the instant case, where a three-axle vehicle is concerned, the expression "distance in feet between the extremes of any group of axles" is to be interpreted as the extreme from the front axle to the rear axle - and not as between the front axle and the middle axle or between the middle axle and the rear axle.

Question #2, "If a three axle job is registered for 50,000 pounds, may it carry 22,000 pounds on any one axle so long as the aggregate does not exceed 50,000 pounds, assuming the tire width is sufficient to qualify?"

Answer. If ~~axles~~ the middle and rear axles are less than 10 feet apart, then the gross weight to be imparted to either of those axles could not exceed 16,000 pounds. See above underlined portion of the law quoted, in which case the front axle only could carry 22,000 pounds, if between that axle and the middle axle there was a distance of 10 feet.

Question #3. "If a three axle truck is 17 feet from front axle to rear axle and is registered for, say, 46,000, 48,000 or 50,000 pounds, may it carry a load according to the registration so long as the maximum does not exceed the 50,000 pounds, no more than 22,000 pounds is on any one axle and the tire width qualifies?"

Answer. Over-registration gives no more right than over-insurance. A three-axle truck having a distance of 17 feet from the front axle to the rear axle, being registered for 46,000, 48,000 or 50,000 pounds, may not carry a load according to the registration, as such truck is limited to carrying a load not to exceed 41,160 pounds. See statute above quoted.

Question #4. "If so (perhaps repeating) is there any limit to the weight on any axle or combination of axles except the 22,000 per axle and the 50,000 pounds over all, assuming forward and rear axles are not 'less than 10 feet apart' and the tire width is sufficient to qualify?"

In answer to Question #4 we would refer you to the answer given to Question #2 and would also refer you to the first sentence of the above quoted section of the law.

Alexander A. LaFleur
Attorney General

jgf/c (Slightly altered to obviate reference to a diagram which will be found in the file.)