Bridge Load Posting Program
FAST Act Emergency Vehicles | Fact Sheet

Safeguarding Montana's vital connections

In Montana, there are primarily two categories of emergency vehicles that operate on public roadways. One category includes the emergency response vehicles that serve our hometowns daily, such as fire, ambulance, and other emergency vehicles.

The other category of emergency vehicles is typically heavier and larger and used for national-level emergency events, like massive wildfires or other disasters that threaten public safety. These emergency vehicles generally carry personnel, equipment, and supplies and operate primarily on the interstate highway system (IHS) to travel through multiple states.

Different states have different overweight and oversize emergency vehicle regulations. Sorting through this patchwork of regulations while responding to emergencies across the nation could hinder response times, delaying the protection of persons and property.

In 2015, Congress created the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which, in part, amends federal weight limits so emergency responders can quickly and more easily move personnel and equipment from state to state on the IHS.

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is required to evaluate bridges on or within reasonable access to the IHS to make sure they are strong enough to carry the heavier and larger emergency vehicles. Bridges that cannot safely carry these heavier, larger category of emergency vehicles, FAST Act Emergency Vehicles, must be posted with "Emergency Vehicle" weight limit signs.



This ambulance is not considered a FAST Act Emergency Vehicle.

EMERGENCY VEHICLE	
WEIGHT	LIMIT
SINGLE AXLE	17T
TANDEM	27T
GROSS	38T

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has begun placing new load posting or "Weight Limit" signs at bridges around the state as required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Bridge load posting is a matter of public safety and will help MDT safeguard vital transportation infrastructure.

In Montana, the IHSs include:



The "Emergency Vehicle" weight limits on posted signs are intended for FAST Act Emergency Vehicles only and *likely* do not apply to typical local emergency vehicles.



This large ladder truck with heavy axles is considered a FAST Act Emergency Vehicle.

FAST Act Emergency Vehicles (EVs):

- **Legislation:** EVs are a special type of emergency vehicle authorized by federal legislation [23 U.S.C. 127(r)].
- **Use:** EVs are used under emergency conditions to transport personnel and equipment to support the suppression of fires and mitigation of other hazardous situations.
- **Need:** EVs were designated to help with national disaster response by allowing responders to bypass "patchwork" regulations between states.
- **Specifications:** EVs are heavier and larger than the emergency response vehicles that protect our hometowns. Amended weight limits for these specific vehicles include an increased maximum gross vehicle weight (86,000 pounds) and increased maximum axle weights as follows:
  - 24,000 pounds on a single steering axle
  - 33,500 pounds on a single drive axle
  - 62,000 pounds on a tandem axle
  - 52,000 pounds on a tandem rear drive steer axle

Are you wondering if your vehicle is considered a FAST Act EV? Contact MCS mdt.mt.gov/business/mcs/.

MONTANA
Department of Transportation

Scan for information

For more information:

For the most up-to-date information and additional resources, including frequently asked questions, visit MDT's Bridge Load Posting Program webpage at: bit.ly/bridgeload.

Interactive maps are also posted on the program's webpage. You can look up individual bridges and their corresponding posting at: bit.ly/MDTBridgeMap.

To request an alternative accessible format of this document, please contact MDT's ADA Coordinator Matt Maze at 406-444-5416, Montana Relay Service at 711, or by email at mmaze@mt.gov.

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