Updated Weight Restriction

Horse Creek Bridge (#5504)

January 2022



The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has issued an updated load posting for the US 12 Horse Creek Bridge, 20 miles northwest of Forsyth, in Rosebud County. The posting is part of a multi-year effort to update load ratings and postings on Montana bridges as mandated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The new posting on the Horse Creek Bridge applies to SHVs; it limits the maximum gross vehicle weight of single-unit vehicles with 6 or 7 axles to 31 tons.

The exact location of the Horse Creek Bridge is pictured to the right and viewable on Google Maps here: http://bit.ly/US12HorseCreek.



The FHWA mandate is in response to changes in the trucking industry over the last decade. Truck manufacturers are building SHVs capable of legally carrying heavier loads than typical vehicles have in the past. SHVs are single-unit, short-wheelbase, multiple-axle trucks commonly used in construction, waste management, bulk cargo, and commodities hauling industries.

Because SHVs are built to concentrate heavy loads over a short length, they have been found to stress bridges more than standard commercial vehicles. To account for their increasing presence and ensure safe operation, FHWA has determined that all states must consider these new, short, heavy vehicles when evaluating the safe limits of bridge capacity.

More information on Montana's bridge weight limit signs can be found in MDT's load posting brochure, located here: http://bit.ly/mtbridgebrochure.

To comply with FHWA's mandate, MDT has updated load ratings for 4,500 public bridges across the state, including approximately 2,500 owned and maintained by MDT.

Bridge weight restrictions are required when the engineering analysis of a bridge, known as a load rating, indicates that a bridge cannot carry standard, legal loads. Load ratings provide information about how much distributed weight can safely pass over a bridge. Load posting signs show maximum weight limits for different vehicle types, depending on their axle configuration. A posted bridge is safe to use, but the weight of certain vehicles must be limited accordingly.

Questions? Comments?
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Learn more about Montana's
Bridge Load Posting Program:
http://bit.ly/bridgeload