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# Vehicle, Legal, Permit, and Bridge Weight Limits Explained for RI

## Vehicle Weights:

GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating). This is the maximum weight that can be carried by any vehicle on its own axles including the vehicle and all load on it. This weight is determined by the manufacturer based on the safe limits of the axles, braking system, suspension, frame, etc. This weight can NEVER be exceeded.

GAWR (Gross Axle Weight Rating). This is the maximum weight that can be carried by any single axle. This is the total weight applied to the ground by the axle. This weight is set by the manufacturer based on the safe limits of that axle. This weight can NEVER be exceeded.

Tare Weight/Unladen Weight: This is the actual weight of a vehicle when empty with no passengers or load.

GVW (Gross Vehicle Weight). This is the actual weight of a vehicle including the vehicle and any load. This is not a limitation but an actual measured weight at any given time.

## Legal Weights:

The legal weight limits of any vehicle, or combination of vehicles, in RI is determined by RIGL 31-25. These limits cannot be exceeded by any vehicle regardless of the vehicle weight limits unless they have an exemption or a permit which establishes a higher legal weight limit according to the permit.

Single Axle Weight Limit: 22,400 lbs. is the legal weight limit on any single axle. This cannot be exceeded unless a permit is received to do so. This DOES NOT overrule the GAWR.

Tandem Axle Weight Limit: 36,000 lbs. is the legal tandem axle weight limit on any number of axles that are within 8 ft center to center. This cannot be exceeded unless a permit is received to do so. This DOES NOT overrule the GAWR or GVWR.

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) Limit: The legal GVW of a vehicle is determined by Federal Formula B (the bridge formula) which is determined by the number of axles and the spacing between them. There is a maximum GVW of 80,000 lbs. regardless of the number of axles and spacing. This cannot be exceeded unless a permit is received to do so. This DOES NOT overrule the GAWR or GVWR.

Registered Weight (for RI registered vehicles):

Tractors must be registered to the maximum weight they intend to carry (vehicle, semi-trailer & load) up to the Annual Divisible Load Permit limits of 104,800lbs. This will exceed the GVWR of the tractor as it also includes the semi-trailer & its load.

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Single Unit Vehicles/Straight Trucks: must be registered to the maximum weight they intend to carry (vehicle & load) up to the Annual Divisible Load Permit limit of 76,650lbs. These registered weights do not include any trailer weight or trailer load.

A permit is required to exceed the legal weights as noted above. They can never exceed their GAWR or GVWR.

Permit Weights:

A vehicle can get a permit through RIDOT to exceed the legal weight of their vehicle. Permits NEVER overrule the GVWR or GAWR of a vehicle. Permits can occasionally overrule the bridge weight limit of a specific bridge or road through engineering analysis.

Single unit vehicles (straight trucks): These vehicles can get an annual divisible load permit up to 76,650 lbs. OR their GVWR, whichever is lower.

Tractors & semi-trailers: These vehicles can all get an annual divisible load permit up to 104,800 lbs. but they cannot exceed their GVWR or GAWRs. The permit weight of 104,800 lbs. is for the combination.

Other permits can be obtained to haul heavier loads but can NEVER exceed the GVWR or GAWRs.

Bridge Weight Limits:

Posted Bridge Limit: This is a weight limit established through engineering analysis for a bridge for certain vehicle configurations and weights. These can never be exceeded by legal weight vehicles or vehicles with annual permits. Occasionally a vehicle with a single trip permit can be determined safe to exceed these limits under certain circumstances.

Bridge Restrictions List Limits: These lists of bridges are determined specifically for annual permit vehicles. They determine exactly which bridges in the state each annual permit configuration cannot cross. These cannot be exceeded by the applicable annual permit vehicle.

Road Weight Limits: Weight limits on a specific road are generally established for size/safety concerns and to minimize truck traffic. These can often be exceeded for local delivery and access issues.

Weights & Explanations						
	Name	Limit	Type of Weight Limit	Origination	Can it be exceeded	How/When to exceed
1	GVWR	Max for vehicle	Vehicle	Manufacturer	No	Never
2	GAWR	Max for axle	Vehicle	Manufacturer	No	Never
3	Tare/Unladen	Empty vehicle	Vehicle	Manufacturer/Scale	Yes	When loaded
4	GVW, actual	Actual loaded weight	Vehicle	Scale	Actual weight	N/A
5	Single Axle	22400 lbs	Legal	RIGL 31-25-13	Yes	With permit
6	Tandem Axle	36000 lbs	Legal	RIGL 31-25-14	Yes	With permit
7	GVW, legal	Federal Formula B	Legal	RIGL 31-25-14	Yes	With permit
8	Registered Weight	Vehicle dependant	Legal	RIGL/DMV 31-3	Yes	With correct permit
9	ADL Single Unit	76,650 lbs or GVWR	Permit	RIGL 31-25-22	Yes	With additional permit
10	ADL Tractor	104,800 lbs	Permit	RIGL 31-25-22	Yes	With additional permit
11	ADL semi-trailer	104,800 lbs	Permit	RIGL 31-25-22	Yes	With additional permit
12	ADL Trailer	104,800 lbs	Permit	RIGL 31-25-22	Yes	With additional permit
13	Blanket Permit	130,000 lbs	Permit	RIGL 31-25-21	Yes	With single trip permit
14	Posted Bridge	Bridge specific	Bridge	RIDOT Engineering	Yes	With single trip permit
15	Bridge Restriction List	Legal GVW	Bridge	RIDOT Engineering	Yes	With single trip permit