

Abnormal road loads

Guidance for hauliers

Background

Network Rail is the single biggest owner of bridge structures in mainland UK. Each year we receive over 180,000 abnormal load notifications from around 1,200 different hauliers. The vast majority of the notifications received do not affect our bridges or tunnels and therefore we spend a considerable amount of time and resource identifying which notifications we need to look at. We have therefore changed the way we manage abnormal load notifications to give a better service.

Improving the notification process

To improve the speed that we are able to respond to your notifications we have reviewed over 6,500 bridges and tunnels to create a comprehensive schedule of roads carried by our bridges and tunnels. For each bridge or tunnel we have carried out an Indicative Capacity Appraisal (ICA) to calculate the maximum allowable gross vehicle weight for each STGO category together with information to help you locate and identify the bridges and tunnels on maps.

This information will allow you to be more confident in your initial route planning and at the same time will reduce the number of notifications you need to send us.

The ICA schedules are available in a number of formats so that you can download the format that best suits your needs. These formats are:

- Microsoft Excel 2003 ® spreadsheet file (.xls)
- Comma Separated Value file (.csv)
- Adobe Acrobat ® document (.pdf)
- AutoRoute file (Excel spreadsheet configured for import into Microsoft AutoRoute ®)

Special Order movements

The process for notifying us of Special Order movements is unchanged.

General Order movements

There are two ways of notifying us about General Order movements:

1. By ESDAL

If you use the ESDAL system the process has not changed. Once you have selected a route we will receive an e-mail telling us that you have submitted a notification. If any structure on your route is unsuitable we will let you know.

To help you in your route planning over time ESDAL will be loaded with our ICA information. Until then you could use the ICA schedule to help inform your route planning.

2. By fax or e-mail (Appendix A has a flowchart for this method)

When planning a route you will already identify the Highway Authorities and Police Forces that need notifying but the ICA schedule will allow you to identify which of our bridges and tunnels are affected by the proposed movement.

Once you have identified which of our bridges and tunnels are affected by the movement there are two possible outcomes:

a. your vehicle is within the capacities

If your proposed gross vehicle weight is less than the ICA for all our bridges along the route, please notify us via abnormal.loads@networkrail.co.uk or fax 0121 345 4396.

We will audit these notifications on a random basis to verify that the movements are compliant with the ICA limits.

Generally we will not respond to notifications to these locations.

b. your vehicle is outside the advised capacities

If your proposed gross vehicle weight is more than the ICA for one or more of our bridges or tunnels, and there is no practical alternative route a notification of the exceeded bridges is required in order that an additional appraisal can be carried out.

Please notify us via email using AbnormalLoads.AdditionalAppraisal@NetworkRail.co.uk or fax 0121 345 4361.

This is to easily identify those notifications that require additional appraisals and prioritise them over notifications that are within the advised ICA limits.

Where possible please tell us which bridges or tunnels need additional appraisals using our reference from the ICA schedule. This will help us respond quicker and more efficiently.

If the bridge(s) requiring an additional appraisal are not identified using our reference we will still respond to the request but it may take longer.

All notifications received requiring an additional appraisal will be acknowledged but your load should not be moved over the bridge or tunnel until we have told you the outcome of the additional appraisal.

If your load does not pass over one of our bridges or tunnels you do not need to notify us.

If you are in any doubt about the suitability of a bridge to carry your proposed load please send your notification to us using option b (additional appraisal required).

Appendix A

General orders process

