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The Wisconsin Department of Transportation adopts an order to amend TRANS 276.07(6), relating to allowing the operation of double bottoms and certain other vehicles on certain specified highways.

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**ORDER ADOPTING RULE**

**Analysis Prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation**

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** ss. 85.16(1) and 348.07(4), Stats.

**STATUTE INTERPRETED:** s. 348.07(4), Stats.

**Plain Language Analysis and Summary of, and Preliminary Comparison with, Existing or Federal Regulation.**

This rule amends s. Trans 276.07(6), Wisconsin Administrative Code, to add one segment of highway to the designated highway system established under s. 348.07(4), Stats. This rule adds the newly constructed STH 29 bypass around Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, to the designated highway system<sup>1</sup>. Prior to construction of the bypass, trucks were required to exit Highway 29 before it entered downtown Chippewa Falls and could re-enter the highway once they passed the town on other roads. With construction of the bypass, STH 29 no longer enters downtown Chippewa Falls, and there is no need to force trucks to exit the highway at Chippewa Falls. The safer and faster means for them to travel is along the new bypass.

Additional Historical Background: In the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 (STAA), the federal government acted under the Commerce clause of the United States Constitution to provide uniform standards on vehicle length applicable in all states. The length provisions of STAA apply to truck tractor-semitrailer combinations and to truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combinations. (See Jan. 6, 1983, Public Law 97-424, § 411) The uniform standards provide that:

- No state shall impose a limit of less than 48 feet on a semitrailer operating in a truck tractor-semitrailer combination.
- No state shall impose a length limit of less than 28 feet on any semitrailer or trailer operating in a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combination.

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<sup>1</sup> This rule achieves this objective by consolidating two segments of Highway 29; one between I-94 and Chippewa Falls and the other between Green Bay and Chippewa Falls into one contiguous segment from I-94 West of Elk Mound to USH 41 in Green Bay.

- No state may limit the length of truck tractors.
- No state shall impose an overall length limitation on commercial vehicles operating in truck tractor-semitrailer or truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combinations.
- No state shall prohibit operation of truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combinations.

The State of Wisconsin complied with the federal requirements outlined above by enacting 1983 Wisconsin Act 78 which amended § 348.07(2), Stats., and § 348.08(1), Stats. This act created §§ 348.07(2)(f), (fm), (gm) and 348.08(1)(e) to implement the federal length requirements. In 1986 the legislature created § 348.07(2)(gr), Stats., to add 53 foot semitrailers as part of a two vehicle combination to the types of vehicles that may operate along with STAA authorized vehicles. (See 1985 Wisconsin Act 165)

The vehicles authorized by the STAA may operate on the national system of interstate and defense highways and on those federal aid primary highways designated by regulation of the secretary of the United States Department of Transportation. In 1984 the USDOT adopted 23 CFR Part 658 which in Appendix A lists the highways in each state upon which STAA authorized vehicles may operate. Collectively these highways are known as the National Network. In 1983 Wisconsin Act 78, the legislature enacted § 348.07(4), Stats., which directs the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to adopt a rule designating the highways in Wisconsin on which STAA authorized vehicles may be operated consistent with federal regulations.

The Department of Transportation first adopted ch. Trans 276 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code in December of 1984. The rule is consistent with 23 CFR Part 658 in that the Wisconsin rule designates all of the highways in Wisconsin that are listed in 23 CFR Part 658 as part of the National Network for STAA authorized vehicles. The federal regulation does not prohibit states from allowing operation of STAA authorized vehicles on additional state highways. The rule making authority granted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in § 348.07(4), Stats., allows the DOT to add routes in Wisconsin consistent with public safety. The rule making process also provides a mechanism to review requests from businesses and shipping firms for access to the designated highway system for points of origin and delivery beyond 5 miles from a designated route. A process to review and respond to requests for reasonable access is required by 23 CFR Part 658.

The long trucks to which this rule applies are those with 53-foot semitrailers, double bottoms and the vehicles which may legally operate on the federal National Network, but which exceed Wisconsin's regular limits on overall length. Generally, no person may operate any of the following vehicles on Wisconsin's highways without a permit: A single vehicle with an overall length in excess of 40 feet<sup>2</sup>, a combination of

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<sup>2</sup> 45-foot buses are allowed on the National Network and Interstate system by Federal law. Section 4006(b) of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.

vehicles with an overall length in excess of 65 feet, a semitrailer longer than 48 feet, an automobile haulaway longer than 66 feet plus allowed overhangs, or a double bottom. Certain exceptions are provided under s. 348.07(2), Stats., which implements provisions of the federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act in Wisconsin.

The effect of this rule will be to extend the provisions of s. 348.07(2)(f), (fm), (gm) and (gr), and s. 348.08(1)(e), Stats., to the highway segment listed above. As a result, vehicles which may legally operate on the federal National Network in Wisconsin will also be allowed to operate on the newly-designated highway. Specifically, this means there will be no overall length limitation for a tractor-semitrailer combination, a double bottom or an automobile haulaway on the affected highway segment. There also will be no length limitation for a truck tractor or road tractor when operated in a tractor-semitrailer combination or as part of a double bottom or an automobile haulaway. Double bottoms will be allowed to operate on the affected highway segment provided neither trailer is longer than 28 feet, 6 inches. Semitrailers up to 53 feet long may also be operated on this highway segment provided the kingpin to rear axle distance does not exceed 43 feet. This distance is measured from the kingpin to the center of the rear axle or, if the semitrailer has a tandem axle, to a point midway between the first and last axles of the tandem. Otherwise, semitrailers, including semitrailers which are part of an automobile haulaway, are limited to 48 feet in length.

These vehicles and combinations are also allowed to operate on undesignated highways for a distance of 5 miles or less from the designated highway in order to reach fuel, food, maintenance, repair, rest, staging, terminal or vehicle assembly or points of loading or unloading.

**Comparison with Rules in Adjacent States:** None of the states adjacent to Wisconsin (Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa) have administrative rules relating to long truck routes in their states.

**Summary of Factual Data and Analytical Methodologies Used and How the Related Findings Support the Regulatory Approach Chosen:** The Department initiated this rule change to accommodate traffic flow along the STH 29 corridor. The need to exempt the section of STH 29 passing through Chippewa Falls ceased to exist upon construction of the new bypass. The bypass was built, in part, to accommodate long truck traffic along STH 29. The public hearing and Department investigation undertaken in preparation for the hearing provide the engineering and economic data needed to make a final decision on whether to withdraw the proposal or proceed to final rule making.

**Effect on Small Business and, If Applicable, Any Analysis and Supporting Documentation Used to Determine Effect on Small Businesses:** The provisions of this rule adding a highway segment to the designated system have no direct adverse effect on small businesses, and will have a favorable effect on those small businesses which are shippers or carriers using the STH 29 bypass around Chippewa Falls. The

Department's Regulatory Review Coordinator may be contacted by e-mail at [andrew.ruiz@dot.state.wi.us](mailto:andrew.ruiz@dot.state.wi.us), or by calling (414) 438-4585.

**Fiscal Effect and Anticipated Costs Incurred by Private Sector:** The Department estimates that there will be no fiscal impact on the liabilities or revenues of any county, city, village, town, school district, vocational, technical and adult education district, sewerage district, or federally-recognized tribes or bands. The Department estimates that there will be no fiscal impact on state or private sector revenues or liabilities.

**Copies of Rule:** Copies of the rule can be obtained, without cost, by writing to Ashwani Sharma, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Highway Operations, Room 501, P. O. Box 7986, Madison, WI 53707-7986. You may also contact Mr. Sharma by phone at (608) 266-1273.

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**TEXT OF RULE**

**SECTION 1.** Trans 276.07(6) is amended to read:

|                 | <u>Route</u>      | <u>From</u>                             | <u>To</u>                           |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Trans 276.07(6) | STH 25            | Minnesota Line                          | STH 48                              |
|                 | STH 26            | IH 90 at Janesville                     | USH 151 S.E. of Waupun              |
|                 | STH 26            | USH 151 N.E. of Waupun                  | USH 41 S.W. of Oshkosh              |
|                 | STH 27            | USH 18 in Prairie du Chien              | USH 14 S. of Viroqua                |
|                 | STH 27            | USH 14 S.E. of Viroqua                  | STH 40 in Radisson                  |
|                 | STH 28            | STH 33 in Horicon                       | IH 43 in Sheboygan                  |
|                 | STH 29            | USH 10 in Prescott                      | STH 35 in River Falls               |
|                 | STH 29            | IH 94 W. of Elk Mound                   | <del>USH 53 at Chippewa Falls</del> |
|                 | <del>STH 29</del> | <del>STH 124 S. of Chippewa Falls</del> | USH 41 in Green Bay                 |
|                 | STH 29            | USH 141 at Bellevue                     | STH 42 in Kewaunee                  |

**(END OF RULE TEXT)**

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**Effective Date.** This rule shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register as provided in s. 227.22(2)(intro.), Stats.

Signed at Madison, Wisconsin, this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of January, 2006.

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FRANK J. BUSALACCHI  
Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation