

Abnormal Loads Policy

Owning Department:	CMPG on behalf of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police		
Department SPOC:	PC James Barry		
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Approved by

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Legal Basis

Legislation/Law specific to the subject of this policy document

Act (title and year)
The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986
The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003
The Road Traffic Act 1960 1988 1991 as amended
The Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989
Regulation 25 of the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989

Other legislation/law which you must check this document against (required by law)

Act (title and year)
Human Rights Act 1998 (in particular A.14 – Prohibition of discrimination)
Equality Act 2010
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated Regulations
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
Freedom Of Information Act 2000
The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
Other Related Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/abnormal-loads-and-the-esdal-system/• National Highways Code Of Practice For Self-Escorting Of Abnormal Loads (Department of Transport)
Crime and Disorder Act 1998

1. Summary Aim of Policy

To outline the considerations for policing the safe progress of abnormal loads throughout the areas of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police.

2. Benefit of Policy

To provide clarity regarding the responsibilities of the forces in relation to the escorting of abnormal loads and the associated procedures.

3. Reason for the Policy

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police recognise their duty under [Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998](#) to protect life and the need for safe and efficient transport of abnormal loads, including abnormal indivisible loads, on roads within the areas of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police.

This policy provides a framework for the management and administration of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police responses to escorting abnormal loads, including abnormal indivisible loads, within the force areas and to meet the requirements of legislation and regulations governing their movement. The policy also sets out the standards for the provision of police escorts

4. Description of the Policy

The responsibility for the safe management of abnormal loads lies with the operator and driver and is regulated by law. The role of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police in respect of most abnormal loads is therefore to ensure compliance with the law.

In accordance with an agreement by the haulage industry, National Highways and National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), routine escorting of abnormal loads authorised by The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 (STGO) will not be carried out by West Midlands and Staffordshire Police but in most cases organized by the operators themselves. West Midlands and Staffordshire Police will not escort abnormal loads which are up to 4.1 meters wide, except where no alternative arrangement can be provided to adequately ensure public safety.

5. What is an Abnormal Load?

An abnormal load is a load which exceeds the following weight and/or dimensions:

- 2.9 meters (9ft 51in) wide;
- 305mm (1ft) lateral projection;
- 44 tonnes in weight;
- 18.65 meters (61ft 2in) load length;
- 25.9 meters (85ft) overall length;
- 3.05 meters (10 ft) front or rear projection;

[\(The Road Vehicles \(Construction and Use\) Regulations 1986\).](#)

An abnormal indivisible load is an abnormal load that cannot without undue expense or risk of damage be divided into two or more loads for the purpose of being carried on a road [\(The Road Vehicles \(Construction and Use\) Regulations 1986\).](#)

6. Legislation Covering the Movement of Abnormal Loads

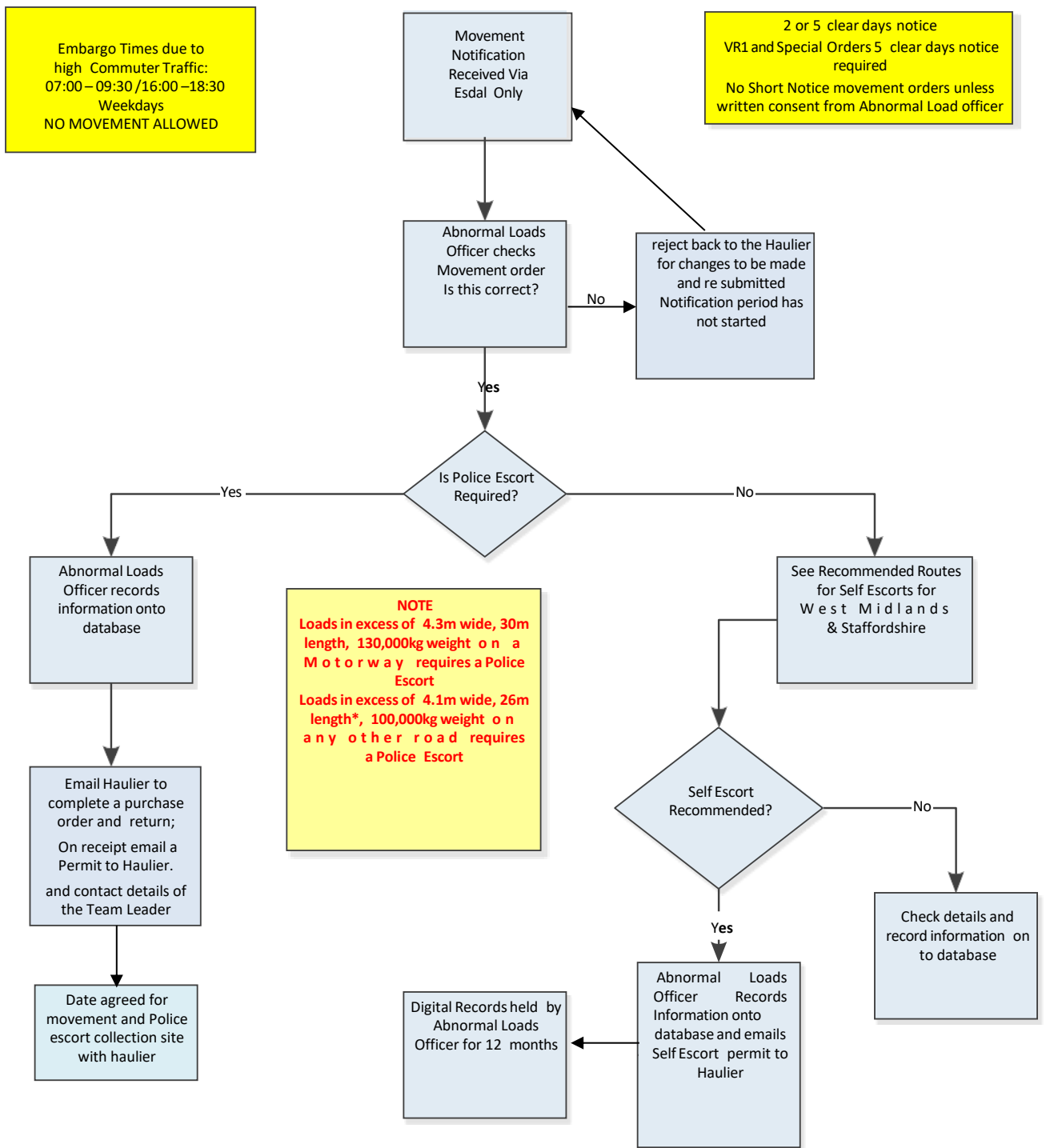
The movement of abnormal loads on the road is covered by STGO, The Road Vehicles (Authorised Weight) Regulations 1998 and regulations 81-82 of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986.

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police recognise the importance (to the economies of the counties) of the ability of the haulage industry to safely, successfully and efficiently transport abnormal indivisible loads on the highways network of the force areas. Legally enforceable standards exist for the notification of Abnormal Indivisible Load movement to both the Chief Constables and the Road and Bridge Authorities.

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police are not responsible for ensuring the safe operational passage of abnormal indivisible loads on the roads of the force area – this is the role of the operator, unless the abnormal indivisible load is being escorted by the police.

All employees of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police should be cognisant of their primary responsibility to preserve life and for public safety.

7. Flowchart: Abnormal Loads Process



8. Legislation

The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 (STGO)

This Order is a general order made under section 44(1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988. As devolved from under s. 40 of the Road Traffic Act 1972.

It authorises road use by certain special types of vehicles, notwithstanding that they do not fully comply with regulations made under section 41 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. It imposes the restrictions and conditions with which such vehicles must comply, including the extent to which regulations made under section 41 must be observed. Abnormal indivisible load vehicles are one of the specific vehicles authorised on permitted road use subject to STGO Regulations. Such vehicles may only be used for the carriage and movement of abnormal indivisible loads.

National Highways Form VR1 (Permit)

This is required for vehicles / loads with widths exceeding 5.0 metres (16.402" ft) up to 6.1 metres (20.013" ft).

The preferred method to request a VR1 permit is through ESDAL <https://www.gov.uk/register-with-esdal> however the operator can also download the form via this link

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/lsoothab/vr1-form-updated-09-22.pdf>

The operator can then submit the completed form via email to abnormal.loads@nationalhighways.co.uk

Once the VR1 permit has been agreed by National Highways, the operator can submit the notification for movement. The notification must have the VR1 permit number on it. Any notifications that require a VR1 permit, but do not include the permit number, will be rejected and the vehicle will not have authority to move through the force areas of West Midlands or Staffordshire Police.

National Highways Special Order

This is required for vehicles/loads with widths exceeding 6.1m (20ft) or maximum rigid length exceeding 30.0m (98ft 5ins) – see STGO Schedule 1, part 4, paragraph 25 for definition of maximum length or gross weight of vehicle carrying the load exceeding 150,000kgs (147.63 tons)

A Special Order application can be completed and submitted online at www.highways.gov.uk/esdal however the operator can also download the form via this link

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/dnwb44dp/be16-form-revised-jan-22.pdf>

The operator can then submit the completed form via email to abnormal.loads@nationalhighways.co.uk

Approval is not automatic and is at the discretion of the National Highways abnormal

loads team acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. To ensure that the necessary clearances can be obtained in good time from the Police, Highway and Bridge Authorities, you should request permission for the move by returning the completed form 10 weeks prior to the scheduled date of the move. In fact, you cannot apply too early and National Highways invite manufacturers or hauliers to contact them at pre tender stage, before making a financial commitment to supply the load, to check whether permission would be granted.

Once the Special Order has been agreed by National Highways, the operator can submit the notification for movement. The notification must have the Special Order reference number on it. Any notifications that require a Special Order, but do not include the reference number, will be rejected and the vehicle will not have authority to move through the force areas of West Midlands or Staffordshire Police.

Abnormal Indivisible Load movements

The legislation that permits abnormal indivisible load movements is:

Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986 (C&U)

Road Vehicles Authorisation of Special Types (General) Order 2003 (STGO)

C&U Regulations requires operators to notify the movement of all abnormal indivisible loads and abnormal indivisible vehicles to the Police before moving them by road.

If you wish to register for a free Esdal account, you can do so via this link

<https://www.gov.uk/register-with-esdal>

C&U Regulations is the primary legislation for the construction and maximum dimensions for all vehicles and is the only legislation that can be used for prosecution purposes.

STGO permits the use of vehicles and / or loads which cannot comply with the maximum permitted weight, either gross or axle weight, for the class of vehicle being used for transporting a load.

STGO also contains the regulations for loads that exceed the maximum width permitted by C&U Regulations, agricultural vehicles and many other miscellaneous vehicles.

The legislation is in the most part permissive, providing that the operator complies with the requirements of notification procedures by submitting an accurate notification through ESDAL.

The only exceptions are as follows:

Loads exceeding 5.0 metres (16.402" ft) wide which require a VR1 Permit from National Highways which authorises the movement, but not the route, time or date.

This has to be arranged with the Police authority in that particular force area. Once the VR1 has been issued, the operator can then use the normal notification procedure quoting the VR1 reference. Notifications without the reference number on, will be rejected.

Loads exceeding 6.1 metres (20.013" ft) wide, 30 metres (98.42"ft) rigid length or 150,000 kilogram's (147.63 tonnes) weight, which require a Special Order from the Secretary of State. A Special Order ensures that the route is negotiable and may lay down certain conditions. It does not, however, replace the notification procedure.

Prohibitions

Should your vehicle be prohibited for any reason, it will be prohibited in its entirety (tractor unit, trailer and load) until that prohibition has been lifted, the defects have been rectified and the vehicle is safe and legal to continue its journey.

Your vehicle and load may be moved to another location other than where it was stopped for safety of the load, vehicle, driver or officers.

All prohibited vehicles will be cabled after 1hr with a release fee payable, once all corrections have taken place. Prohibition will not be lifted until payment received and confirmed.

Furthermore, prohibited vehicles will not be able to move forward with a short notice movement order. A correct notification must be submitted and correct number of clear days passed.

9. Escort Policy

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police will comply with the NPCC recommendation in respect of escorting of abnormal indivisible loads.

The practice of Police escorting abnormal indivisible loads is undertaken for purposes of road safety and to minimise congestion.

Legislation does not contain any requirement for any abnormal indivisible load to be routinely escorted by the Police.

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police require a **minimum** of **2** clear days notice* for each request for movement, whilst other authorities will require longer. It is the responsibility of the operator to define what type of category the abnormal indivisible load is.

Any long or short term projects which will increase abnormal loads on the network will be reviewed in accordance with this policy. Every effort should be made by contractors and the Police to engage at the earliest opportunity to develop an effective working relationship and to ensure public safety

Non-Escorted Loads

Where a load falls below the Highways Authority Code of Practice criteria for self-escort and there are no other safety considerations, then a self-escort will not be required; although the operator may still provide one.

Self-Escort (by or on behalf of the haulier)

The National Highways Code of Practice sets guidance for self-escort. As the main purpose is that of safety, if the abnormal load officer or other suitable trained representative of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police deem that a self-escort is required, it will then be the requirement of the operator/company to provide the required level of escort(s) as requested, at the cost of said operator/company.

Where the operator provides their own self / private escort, they are expected to comply with any instructions issued by either West Midlands or Staffordshire Police and to comply with the National Highways Code of Practice.

Where an operator fails to comply with forces instructions and restrictions or the National Highways Code of Practice, offences may be committed in contravention of C&U and STGO Regulations. Additionally, any incidents that occur will be examined in respect of road traffic legislation and criminal law.

The permitting of self / private escorting of abnormal indivisible loads will not remove the requirement of the driver and his/her attendants to comply with the Road Traffic Act or any associated legislation regarding the use of any motor vehicle on a road.

Police Escort

West Midlands and Staffordshire Police will carry out a risk assessment of each proposed abnormal indivisible load route and a charge will be made for the provision of this service.

In West Midlands and Staffordshire Police force areas it is the responsibility of the operator, to notify and request a police escort, if your load dimensions meet the criteria below

	Width	Length	Weight
MOTORWAY	Over 4.6M 15'1"	Over 30M 98'4"	Over 130T
OTHER ROADS	Over 4.1M 13'5"	Over 27M 88'.5"	Over 100T

This must be done by sending the appropriate paperwork to police.escort@westmidlands.police.uk. It is the responsibility of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police forces to decide whether a police escort is required for an abnormal load. Time and resources will only be put towards escort planning upon receipt of the correct and accurate paperwork.

Where a Police escort is required, at least one hour prior to moving should be allowed for a suitably trained person of West Midlands or Staffordshire Police choosing to carry out compliance checks

Where a Police escort is provided, the services of West Midlands and Staffordshire Police will recover costs from the haulier as follows

Normal practice will be that police officers performing overtime on their rest days will be utilised.

A minimum of twenty working days notice will be required for the arrangement of a police escort.

Charges are to be paid in full in the event of any cancellation of Police resources or amendment to the movement date, within fifteen working days of the agreed move date.

Amounts payable due within 14 days of receipt of invoice.

Abnormal Indivisible Loads, will not be picked up and escorted by West Midlands and Staffordshire Police whilst already 'on the move', unless suitable documentation has been provided, in advance, by the previous force area showing that all compliance checks have been completed. Should a National Highways abnormal lay by be identified as a suitable place for inspection to take place in, it will be the responsibility of the haulier to seek approval from National Highways to park there whilst this is carried out. This can be requested by emailing Richard.Hancox@nationalhighways.co.uk

Where a police escort is used, the driver of the abnormal indivisible load, his / her attendants and any self / private escort provided will at all times comply with any instructions issued by West Midlands or Staffordshire Police, in relation to escorting abnormal indivisible loads.

11. Restrictions

Once an abnormal indivisible load movement has been notified to West Midlands or Staffordshire Police, restrictions may be placed on the movement. These restrictions normally govern roads, times and/or days that a load is permitted to move. This prevents an abnormal indivisible load from travelling during:

- Bank holiday weekends, as set out in the table below

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>No movement allowed from</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Movement able to commence from</u>	<u>Time</u>
Early May Bank Holiday	Saturday 29 th April	12.01am	Tuesday 2 nd May	9.30am
King Charles Coronation	Saturday 6 th May	12.01am	Tuesday 9 th May	9.30am
Spring Bank Holiday	Saturday 27 th May	12.01am	Tuesday 30 th May	9.30am
Summer Bank Holiday	Saturday 26 th August	12.01am	Tuesday 29 th August	9.30am
Christmas	Sunday 24 th December	12.01am	Wednesday 27 th December	9.30am

New Year	Sunday 31 st December	12.01am	Tuesday 2 nd January 2024	9.30am
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- During periods where a major event has been planned (you will be notified)
- Between 07:00 – 09:30 and 16:00 -18:30 Monday to Friday
- Other times at the discretion of the forces (you will be notified)
- Any deviation from the restrictions above can only be given by a suitably trained officer from West Midlands or Staffordshire Police, having given due consideration to road safety and congestion issues.

12. Administration

In the event of a load being notified that may be of public interest; this may appear on West Midlands and/or Staffordshire Police force webpages and/ or social media platforms. Photos, along with vehicle stop description and outcomes may also appear in presentations and training documents that will be used internally and externally.

13. Designated / Undesignated Routes

Whilst the majority of abnormal loads travel along designated routes, if the load is to travel on minor or infrequently used roads, it is the responsibility of the operator to ensure the route is negotiable and suitable for the vehicle and load. This applies to escorted and non-escorted loads and is carried out in cooperation with the Abnormal Loads Officer.

- a. The operator, the Abnormal Loads Officer and / or a Police officer will check any undesignated route to confirm the suitability for the load(s) notified.
- b. It is the responsibility of the operator to check whether any roadworks or road closures or events that are current or planned, may cause the route to be altered or unsuitable.

14. Abnormal Loads Dispensation

An abnormal loads dispensation is a document that is issued on an annual basis. This allows operators to transport abnormal loads only if they meet the required specifications for the two particular uses. There are two different types of Abnormal Load dispensation which are:

General Dispensations

General Dispensations Form can be authorised and issued by the Abnormal Loads Officer on the behalf of the Chief Constable, to operators who frequently move notifiable Abnormal Loads up to a maximum width of 3.5metres (11.45" ft).

This allows movement of specific loads without the requirement to give West Midlands and/or Staffordshire Police 2 clear days notice*. You must still follow the correct and accurate notification process through ESDAL.

The dispensation relates only to the vehicles operated by the named company.

Each load so authorised must have a copy of the dispensation in the driver's possession and must be valid from 1st January to 31st December depending on when they apply or part year thereof from date of issue.

Should a vehicle be moving under a dispensation notice and be stopped and inspected by an officer from West Midlands or Staffordshire Police and non compliance issues found, the driver and haulier will be dealt with as appropriate. In addition, the operator will be sent a letter reminding them of their responsibilities in respect of the law and moving under a dispensation notice. This letter will further advise, that should a vehicle moving under the same dispensation notice be stopped again within the one year dispensation period, the dispensation will be revoked.

Back dating of certificates is not permitted in any circumstance.

These dispensations are granted pursuant to paragraphs 2(4) and 4(2) of schedule 5 to the STGO Regulations which gives discretion to the Abnormal Loads Officer to accept shorter notice periods and fewer details than those otherwise required by schedule 5.

Agricultural Dispensations

Agricultural Dispensations Form can be authorised and issued by the Abnormal Loads Officer on the behalf of the Chief Constables, to farmers, farm companies and farming contractors, who can demonstrate the need to move agricultural vehicles, implements and appliances on public roads in the course of their business. This is subject to the agreement of the West Midlands and Staffordshire Police Abnormal Loads Officer.

The dispensation allows the holder to move agricultural machinery up to a maximum of 4.3 metres (14.10" ft), on public roads within a radius of 25 miles (40.23 Km) of the operating base, without the requirement of giving 24 hours' notice to the police. You still must follow the notification process through ESDAL.

All movements are subject to compliance with safety conditions, in respect of attendants, signing and 'self-escorts'.

Should a vehicle be moving under a dispensation notice and be stopped and inspected by an officer from West Midlands or Staffordshire Police and non compliance issues found, the driver and operator will be dealt with as appropriate. In addition, the operator will be sent a letter reminding them of their responsibilities in respect of the law and moving under a dispensation notice. This letter will further advise, that should a vehicle moving under the same dispensation notice be stopped again within the one-year dispensation period, the dispensation will be revoked.

Each machine authorised will have a copy of the dispensation in the driver's

possession and is valid from 1st January to 31st December depending on when they apply or part year thereof from date of issue, back dating of certificates is not permitted in any circumstance.

These dispensations are granted pursuant to paragraphs 2(4) and 4(2) of schedule 5 to the STGO Regulations which gives discretion to the Abnormal Loads Officer to accept shorter notice periods and fewer details than those otherwise required by schedule 5.

Abnormal Load Summary Requirements – Aide Memoire

The following vehicles are required to give West Midlands and/or Staffordshire Police **2** clear days (i.e. 48 hours) notice* before any movement can be authorised through the county

Width:

Below 2.9m (9'6") - no notification

Between 2.9m (9'6") and 4.3m (14'1") wide (this being the total width including any projection) - 2 clear days notice*

Please Note: *Anything above 3.5m (11'6") may require a self-escort vehicle*

Over 5.0m (16'40") wide - requires VR1 issued by National Highways

Length:

Below 18.65m (61') - no notification

Between 18.65m (61') and 27.4m (90') - 2 clear days notice*

For some light loads where the rigid length exceeds 27.4m (89'11") such as yacht masts moved on conventional motor vehicles not exceeding 12 tonnes gross weight or trailers not exceeding 10 tonnes gross weight a National Highways Special Order will be required.

Over 30m (98'5") requires a Special Order issued by National Highways

Please Note: *that the length does not include the traction unit (cab), unless some of the load is being carried on it*

Weight:

Below 44,000KG = no restrictions

Between 44,000-50,000KG = 2 clear days notice* to Road and Bridge Authorities

Between 50,000-80,000KG = 2 clear days notice* to Police and 5 days to National Highways and Bridge authorities

Between 80,000KG-150,000KG = 2 clear days notice* to Police and 5 clear days with indemnity to Road and Bridge Authorities

Over 150,000KG = National Highways Special Order plus 5 clear days' notice to Police and 5 clear days' notice with indemnity to Road and Bridge Authorities

**Clear days' notice excludes Saturdays, Sundays or a public holiday in any part of Great Britain in relation to movements authorised by the Special Types General Order only, there being no such exclusion in Special Orders unless specifically stated.*

Application to move Special Types or Special Purpose vehicles, such as very large

agricultural vehicles, that may not be fully permitted by the Construction and Use (C&U) Regulations or fall outside the scope of the Special Types General Order should be made to the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA). The VCA website is <http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/>

Self escort is defined as an accompanying vehicle, operated independently of the Abnormal Load. See [National Highways Code of Practice Lighting and Marking for Abnormal Load Self Escorting Vehicles Incorporating Operating Guidance](#).

(Police escorts can be utilised but at a cost to the haulier)