



That Time of Year Again: Lighten the Load

Spring-Like Weather Brings on Weight Restrictions for Roads

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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EAST LANSING. Along with singing birds and blooming flowers, every spring in Michigan brings heaving and buckling pavement. Many local jurisdictions in Southern and Mid-Michigan have already implemented "frost law" or reduced loading provisions to protect their roads. These restrictions drop the legal axle weights of vehicles by either 25% or 35%, depending upon the road construction and design. While Michigan's weight laws apply to all vehicles, reduced loading has the biggest impact on commercial operations, due to the size and weight of the vehicles that are used.

State law provides the months of March, April, and May are automatically reduced loading months, but the statute also allows the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the county road commissions to implement those restrictions earlier or suspend reduced loading, depending upon weather conditions.

Along with reduced loading provisions are reduced speeds. For vehicles over 10,000 lbs. operated on reduced loading roads, the speed limit drops to a maximum of 35 mph, regardless of the posted limit. Speed, in conjunction with axle weight, has a tremendous impact on the creation of potholes.

MORE

Spring Weight Restrictions

Page 2

The term “frost law” refers to the amount of frost remaining in the ground. The warming and cooling of the ground created by spring weather changes causes the pavement to heave and buckle, creating potholes and broken pavement.

MDOT has a 24-hour phone number where callers can listen to a recorded message on the current status of reduced loading provisions on state roads by calling 800-787-8960, or by going on-line at www.michigan.gov/mdot. For local roads, contact your county road commission, or go on-line at <http://www.micountyroads.org/page.cfm/22/>.

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Lieutenant David W. Ford, MSP Motor Carrier Division, (517) 336-6449