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Senate Bill 432 (as introduced 6-14-11)
Sponsor: Senator Mike Kowall
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 10-3-11

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to create an exception to prescribed maximum axle loads for vehicle mounted mobile pavement marking equipment, and set a maximum gross weight of 84,000 pounds for this type of equipment.

The Code prescribes maximum axle loads ("normal loading maximums") for certain vehicles based on the distance between axles. If the spacing is at least nine feet between axles, the maximum axle load is 18,000 pounds for vehicles equipped with high pressure pneumatic or balloon tires. If the spacing is less than nine feet but more than 3.5 feet between axles, the maximum axle load is 13,000 for high pressure pneumatic or balloon tires. If axles are spaced less than 3.5 feet apart, the maximum axle load is 9,000 pounds.

When normal loading is in effect, the Michigan Department of Transportation or a local highway authority may designate certain highways where bridges and road surfaces are adequate for heavier loading, on which the maximum tandem axle assembly loading may not exceed 16,000 pounds for any axle of the assembly, if no axle is within nine feet of any other axle.

On a legal combination of vehicles, only one tandem axle assembly is permitted on the designated highways at the gross permissible weight of 16,000 pounds per axle, if there is no axle within nine feet of any other axle, and if no other tandem axle assembly exceeds a gross weight of 13,000 pounds per axle. On a combination of truck tractor and semitrailer with up to five axles, two consecutive tandem axle assemblies are permitted on the designated highways at a gross permissible weight of 16,000 pounds per axle, if there is no axle within nine feet of any other axle.

The bill would provide exceptions to these loading maximums for vehicle mounted mobile pavement marking equipment, under proposed Section 722b (described below).

("Vehicle mounted mobile pavement marking equipment" would mean a combination of cab, chassis, and operating apparatus. The term would include the following, all of which may cause shifting axle loads during operation:

- A grinder designed to remove coatings from a hard surface through the use of revolving heads with a variety of sacrificial cutter teeth.
- A groover designed to place grooves or slots in a hard surface for the placement of liquid or solid pavement markings.

- A waterblaster that employs at least one ultra-high pressure water pump designed to remove coatings from hard surfaces.
- A pavement marking striper (applicator) designed to apply at least one component pavement marking material onto a hard surface.

"Operating apparatus" would mean an assembly of components that is permanently affixed to a cab and chassis, and that performs pavement marking operations. "Pavement marking operations" would mean operations incidental to and necessary for the placement or removal of pavement markings or other coatings from a road, runway, taxi way, or other similar surface.)

Proposed Section 722b would prescribe maximum axle weights applicable to vehicle mounted mobile pavement marking equipment. Except as otherwise provided, for a front axle, the load could not exceed 22,000 pounds, and if there were a second axle, the second axle load could not exceed 22,000 pounds. If there were a second front axle, each individual axle could not exceed 20,000 pounds.

For a tandem axle, the axle load could not exceed 40,000 pounds if the axle spacing were at least nine feet from either of the following:

- The centerline of the first front axle to the centerline of the first tandem axle with no second front axle in place.
- The centerline of the second axle to the centerline of the first tandem axle.

If the axle spacing for a tandem axle were less than nine feet from the centerline of a second front axle to the centerline of the first tandem axle, the axle load could not exceed 36,000 pounds.

For other axles, the axle load could not exceed 20,000 pounds, if the axle spacing were less than nine feet but more than 3.5 feet from the centerline of axles.

The maximum gross weight of vehicle mounted mobile pavement marking equipment would be 84,000 pounds.

MCL 257.722 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate, but likely negligible, fiscal impact on State and local government. To the extent that the new exemption to maximum axle load resulted in fewer misdemeanor violations, local governments could experience a reduction in correctional costs. Any reduction in penal fine revenue resulting from the exemption would affect public libraries.

Fiscal Analyst: Matthew Grabowski

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.