

Virginia Oversize Details

To move large or oversize shipments in the state of Virginia, you must first obtain a trucking permit. To remain in state regulations and maintain driver safety, it's important to gain the proper permits while getting ready to hit the road. Doing so will help you avoid any costly fines or delays down the line.

Oversized permit regulations often vary from state to state, so Virginia has a set of guidelines to follow when preparing your shipment.

Legal Dimensions Maximums

Legal dimensions are those that do not require specific permits outside of those related to normal trucking regulations. These often change by state regulation, so check the state guidelines for each area before traveling.

For Virginia, the legal maximum width of a load can measure up to 8 feet and 6 inches. The height of any given shipment should not measure more than 13 feet and 6 inches high unless otherwise specified by local regulations.

The maximum legal length of loads may vary by the route taken. However, the state regulation allows the legal travel of semi-trailers 48 feet in length or 53 feet as long as the is 41 feet kingpin to center rear tandem. If the highway is not designated, a haul can be a legal limit of 65 feet.

For loads exceeding the trailer's length, Virginia allows 3 feet of overhang in the front and 4 feet in the back.

Most states also have specific regulations on maximum weight capacity based on the local infrastructure. For example, in Virginia, a load may weigh up to 80,000 lbs. in gross weight. However, there is also emphasis placed on how the weight is distributed. So a single axle, the weight should not exceed 20,000 lbs. to remain in legal compliance. This increases to 34,000 lbs. for double axles and 42,500 lbs. for a triple axle.

Permit Maximums

Loads that exceed the legal maximum measurements set by Virginia require oversize permits, which you must obtain before entering the state. Standard oversized shipping permits still have maximum measurements to be followed. Any load passing the permit maximums is considered a superload and falls under different regulations. If the load measures as a superload, the shipment may require special permits, equipment, surveys, or escort services.

Oversize load permits in Virginia can measure a total up to 15 feet wide unless differently marked. The length of loads can measure 150 feet long, including the trailer and cargo. Virginia also allows a maximum permitted height of up to 15 feet.

With a permit, the maximum weight of a load can change with how many axels the truck has and the spaces between them. However, the statewide limit of permit maximum weight will vary by route and location.

Anything over the limits set with oversized permits classify as superloads and are subject to further regulation. For Virginia, allow 5 to 10 days for the Department of Transportation to process superload permit requests.

Per Axle Weight Limits

Though the maximum permitted weight is left up to route location, the weight per axle more clearly sets regulations. For example, in contrast to the legal 20,000 lbs. for a single axle, the allowed weight for a single axle with a permit rises to 24,000 lbs. For a tandem, the weight increases to 44,000 lbs.

Tridem axles are more highly regulated in Virginia as they have a permitted maximum for interstates that is different from all other roads. On interstates, a tridem can hold 60,000 lbs while all other roads are regulated to 54,500 lbs. However, tridem axles are the only ones that have interstate-specific regulations.

Quad axles have a varying weight of 63,000 lbs to 65,000 lbs, and this is decided based on the spacing between. Any loads exceeding these limits classify as superloads and will need extra time for permit processing. Additionally, all weight limits may be subject to route, so a survey may be necessary for overweight loads.

Pilot Car / Escort

Virginia requires all escort and pilot vehicles to be VA certified for loads over 12 feet wide. Additionally, that state has specific regulations on both interstates and two-lane highways.

For interstate highways, any load over 120 feet long will require one escort, and any over 150 feet require 2. Regardless of total length, loads with 10 feet of overhang in the front or 15 feet in the back will require one escort vehicle. With width, 12 feet loads and over require one escort, 14 feet and over require 2, and 16 feet and over require 3. If any shipment is over 18 feet wide, the number of escorts will be decided by need. Additionally, one escort and pole are required for loads with a height over 14 feet and 5 inches.

For two-lane highways, loads over 85 feet long require one escort, and any over 150 feet require 2. Loads with 10 feet of overhang in the front or 15 feet in the back will require one escort vehicle. With width, 12 feet loads and over require two escorts, 14 feet and over require three, and 16 feet and over require 4. If any shipment is over 18 feet wide, the number of escorts will be decided by need. Additionally, an escort is required for loads with a height over 14 feet and 5 inches.

Route Survey

Route surveys may be done to verify a load's determined route so that the safety of the driver, other motorists, and the shipment is protected. In addition, loads extending over the maximum length, width, or weight may need additional surveys according to local or state superload regulations.

Operating Hours, Restricted Travel, and Holiday Restrictions

Virginia regulates travel for loads that are overlength, overwide, or overweight. You should only move any large load between 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after sunset from Monday to Saturday.

Additionally, no travel can be completed on major holidays, including New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. For travel within city limits, this can only take place from 7:00 am to 9:00 am or 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Curfew hours may vary based on route and destination, so contact the Virginia Department of Transportation to verify the shipment route.

Signs, Flags, and Lights Requirements

Most oversized shipments require a variety of equipment, including signs, flags, and lights that help elevate the visibility of the haul.

Signs

Any over-dimensional load will require large “oversize load” signs at the front and rear of the vehicle. These signs should be made of large, black letters placed on a bright yellow background.

Flags

On wide loads, red or orange flags are required to be placed in each corner of the load. You should also place flags on the outermost areas of the overhang or the vehicle.

Lights

For a rear overhang of 4 feet or more, you should place a red light visible from a 500-foot distance. For loads over 12 feet wide or 75 feet long, a flashing/strobe amber light should also be visible from 500 feet.

Obtaining a Permit

For more information on obtaining oversize or superload permits, call the Virginia Department of Transportation at 804-786-3495. You may also call 804-249-5130 about permit and shipping requirements.

The department operates between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm but will close for lunch hour until 1:30 pm. You may also submit permit requests on the Virginia Department of Transportation website at <https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/general/#hauling.asp>.