



## **Enabling Guidance**

**Document title: Movement of Abnormal Loads and Special Types**

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***This enabling guidance is suitable for public disclosure under the  
Freedom of Information Act 2000***

This document sets out principles to help guide decision making and in some parts may be quite prescriptive. However, it is vital that officers and staff have the freedom to innovate, exercise discretion and take risk based decisions centred on the needs of the victim and the merits of each case.

There may be occasions when a member of staff is considered to have acted outside of the content of this document but if they have done so with honesty, integrity and professionalism, to make the best decision for the community we serve, they will be trusted and supported. On the occasions when this is the case, the rationale for it must be properly recorded.

***This document should be read in conjunction with the Force Policy Statement.***

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# Introduction

This enabling guidance provides a framework for the management and operation of escorting abnormal indivisible loads within Derbyshire including the M1 Motorway.

## Guidance

### General Background

The legal responsibility for the safe movement of abnormal indivisible loads lies with the haulage industry.

The legislation that permits abnormal load movement is: -

- The Construction and Use Regulations (C & U) and;
- The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) General Order (STGO)

The Construction and Use Regulations are the primary legislation for the construction and maximum dimensions for all vehicles and is the only legislation that can be used for prosecution purposes.

The Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Type) General Order 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. It also contains the regulations for loads, which exceed the maximum width permitted by C & U, agricultural vehicles and many other miscellaneous vehicles.

STGO also permits the use of properly trained and equipped attendants to act as escorts. The legislation does not contain any requirement for any abnormal load to be escorted, but self or private escorting of the majority of abnormal indivisible loads is permitted.

There are requirements for attendants for various categories of abnormal loads and legislation permits the attendant to be in an accompanying vehicle, which can be an agricultural vehicle and there is provision in the Roads Vehicle (Lighting) Regulations for amber beacons to be used in this practice.

The legislation is in the most part permissive, in that, providing the haulier complies with the requirements of notification procedures, an abnormal load can be moved without the need for any permit or authorisation.

The only exceptions are as follows: -

- i) Loads exceeding 5m wide or 30m in length require a VR1 from the Department for Transport which authorises the movement, but not the route, day or date. Once the VR1 has been issued the haulier can then use the normal notification procedure, quoting the VR1 reference.
- ii) Loads exceeding 6.0m wide, 30m rigid length or 150,000 KGs weight, require a Special Order from the Secretary of State. A Special Order ensures that the route is suitable and may lay down certain conditions. It does not, however, replace the notification procedure.

### Escorting Criteria

Derbyshire's stance is that vehicles meeting the following criteria will require escort: -

M1 Motorway and A50	Width	-	over 4.6m wide
	Weight	-	over 130 tonnes
	Length	-	over 30.5 long

All other roads	Width	-	over 4.1 wide
	Weight	-	over 100 tonnes
	Length	-	over 30.5 overall length

We will not routinely escort abnormal loads, they will normally be self or privately escorted to mitigate against the hauliers responsibility in the discharge of their responsibilities under both road traffic and health and safety legislation. However, we will insist on police escort on certain roads for loads of less than these dimensions if it is deemed necessary to allow safe and lawful movement. Each notification will be assessed individually. If a haulier is notified that police escort is required but chooses to disregard this and move anyway then this movement will be unlawful and leave the haulier liable to prosecution.

The escort will be provided only for the purpose of giving warning to the driver of that vehicle or combination and to any other person, of any danger likely to be caused by the presence on the road of that vehicle or combination.

The self/private escort will at all times comply with any instruction issued by the Derbyshire Constabulary.

An operator who cannot supply such escort and/or requests the provision of a police escort will be required to give at least five days notice of any proposed movement and to pay for such services in accordance with special duty rates.

The permitting of self/private escorting of abnormal loads will not remove the requirement to comply with the Road Traffic Act or any associated legislation regarding the use of any motor vehicle on a road. Self/private escort has no authority to stop or hold up traffic to allow the load to proceed and cannot authorise, instruct or guide the load to contravene road traffic regulations. Anybody found to be doing so will be considered for prosecution. Hauliers will need to research the route thoroughly beforehand and if any of these circumstances could apply then movement through Derbyshire would not be authorised without police escort.

The only exemptions will be the small number of Special Orders, which require police powers, or, removal of street furniture etc.

Police escorts will only be supplied if specifically requested or deemed necessary by the police and payment for their services will be required. Special duty rates will apply.

Only police officers performing overtime duties will be utilised. Only liveried Road Policing Unit vehicles will be used to escort abnormal loads. Armed Response Vehicles will not be used. Motorcycles must not routinely be used to escort abnormal loads on motorways.

A minimum of five days notice should be allowed for the arrangement of a police escort. However, we will endeavour to arrange it in less than five days whenever we can but this cannot be guaranteed.

Charges to be paid in full in the event of any cancellation or amendment to the travel date, within eight days of the movement date first indicated.

### **Not to Divert from Authorised Route**

Any escorts will be carried out by officers in uniform from the Road Policing Unit. Officers engaged in escorting abnormal loads will ensure that under no circumstances will the load be diverted from its authorised route unless permission is first obtained from the Force Abnormal Loads Officer. Special Order movements of exceptionally large loads using routes agreed by the Department of Transport must never be diverted from their agreed routes.

## **Warning Aids**

Escorting officers should use appropriate visual warning aids to give advance warning of the abnormal load to other road users.

## **Bridges**

Any vehicle or trailer carrying an abnormal load should not remain stationary on any bridge except in circumstances beyond the driver's control.

## **Automatically Operated Half-Barrier Level Crossings**

In the case of all police escorted abnormal loads which are routed over any automatically operated half-barrier level crossing, the police officer in attendance must always stop the load on the approach side of the crossing and inform the driver responsible for the load that they are required to telephone the railway signal person and give full details of the load before crossing. When clear of the level crossing, a further telephone call will be made confirming the load has passed.

Personnel involved in granting authority for abnormal loads which are unescorted but routed over such crossings, should make clear to the driver that they are not exempted from the need to stop and telephone for authority to pass over an automatic half-barrier level crossing.

## **Escorting Methods**

### **Special Roads**

On Motorways and dual carriageways, the escorting vehicle will follow the load at a distance so warning can be given to following traffic of the presence of the load ahead.

### **Other Roads**

On other roads, an escorting vehicle will be driven ahead of each load on the nearside centre of the road, at a distance safe for the particular road features i.e. bends, visibility, speed and volume of approaching traffic.

Derbyshire Road Policing Unit Officers will be pro-active in the enforcement of the legislation and the conduct of self/private records subject to the exigencies of other duties.

## Action Checklist for Derbyshire Police Procedures

### Procedures for Abnormal Loads Officers

Abnormal Load Department's Administration of Self/Private Escort.

The Abnormal Loads Officers will still be required to administer abnormal load notifications in accordance with the Construction and Use and Special Type General Order Legislation. The use of self/private escorts will have minimal effects on the actual administration procedures currently undertaken.

### Procedures on receipt of notification from a haulier

- a) Notifications are sent by e-mail or fax, all faxes are converted into an e-mail.
- b) Route, day and time of travel and dimensions of the load are checked and verified for accuracy and suitability.
- c) If the route is unsuitable or affected by roadworks or other features, an alternative route is identified, in consultation with other forces and/or highways agencies, if necessary.
- d) A decision is made as to whether the load requires a police or private escort. If a police escort is required then an incident will be created on the force system, where considered necessary.
- e) If an escort is required a reply is sent to the haulier containing any instructions for re-routing and informing them that the load will require self/private/police escort in Derbyshire.
- f) If a haulier requests a police escort or if the load is exceptional and requires specific resources these are arranged in consultation with Operational Support, Road Policing Section.

Although much of the responsibility for the safety of the movements of abnormal loads will be placed on the driver and escorts, there is still a legally required duty of care on the Abnormal Loads Officer to ensure that the load is on the safest and most suitable route.

There are some abnormal loads routes that while perfectly suitable for self/private escorts for the majority of the route, have a particular obstruction or location which would require the attendance of police resources to negotiate safely.

For occasional movements, when this localised service is required it may be possible to utilise duty resources without payment. This is subject to ongoing operational commitments which may affect such provision – dedicating police resources may still require special duty payment.

