

**TITLE 32
HIGHWAYS, BRIDGES, AND FERRIES**

(Selected Sections)

**CHAPTER 1
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- §32-1-9. Enforcement of provisions.
- §32-1-10. Penalty for violation.

§32-1-9. Enforcement of provisions.

It shall be the duty of all state and local law enforcement officers to enforce any provision of this title which states that any act or omission is unlawful.

§32-1-10. Penalty for violation.

(a) Any person who violates any of the provisions of this title for which no specific penalty is provided, whether or not such act or omission is expressly declared elsewhere in this title to be unlawful, or who violates any of the rules and regulations issued under authority of and in accord with the provisions of this title shall be guilty of a misdemeanor; provided, however, that a violation of Code Sections 32-6-26 and 32-6-27 shall not be considered a crime.

(b) In addition to the penalty provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section, the department shall have the right to enjoin any act or omission so punishable as a misdemeanor or punished otherwise as provided elsewhere in this title.

**CHAPTER 6
REGULATION OF MAINTENANCE AND USE OF PUBLIC ROADS
GENERALLY**

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General Provisions

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Article 1
General Provisions

§32-6-1. Obstructing or injuring public roads.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to obstruct, encroach upon, solicit the sale of any merchandise on, or injure materially any part of any public road. For purposes of this Code section, the term "obstruct" shall include without limitation the causing of any buildup of rock, gravel, mud, dirt, chemicals, or other materials by continued ingress or egress of vehicles or of any natural waters dammed or redirected by diversion to an extent which presents a hazard to the traveling public.

(b) Any person who unlawfully obstructs, encroaches upon, or injures said public road shall be responsible for reimbursing the Department of Transportation or the applicable local governing authority in the case of a road which is part of a county road system or municipal street system for the costs of removal of said obstructions or encroachments and the costs of repairs to the public road incurred by such department or local governing authority, including any costs associated with traffic management; provided, however, that such costs shall be limited to those costs which are directly incurred from such damages. Costs incurred for traffic management may include, but not be limited to, costs incurred for flagging, signing, or provision of detours, provided that these activities are directly caused by the obstruction, encroachment, or injury to the public road system. The court may, in addition to any other sentence authorized by law, order a person convicted of violating this Code section to make such restitution for the offense.

(c) Nothing in this Code section shall abridge or limit any authority provided by law for the installation and operation of vending machines at welcome centers, tourist centers, and safety rest areas. Nothing in this Code section shall limit in any way the department's authority to lease property to state or federal agencies, counties, or municipalities as provided for in Code Section 32-7-5, or limit the Department of Transportation's ability to grant a license to any utility or railroad corporation as defined in Code Section 46-1-1.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2002 Act 917(4), eff. 7/1/2002.)

§32-6-2. Parking regulations with regard to public roads of the state highway system.

Notwithstanding Code Section 40-6-200 and Code Sections 40-6-202 through 40-6-204:

(1) The department may regulate and prohibit the parking of any type of vehicle on any public road on the state highway system, including extensions thereof into or through municipalities. Whenever any state or local law enforcement officer or employee of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety to whom law enforcement authority has been designated finds a vehicle parked in violation of law or the department's regulations, such officer or employee is authorized to move such vehicle or require the driver or other person in charge of the vehicle to move the same. If the vehicle is unattended, such officer or employee is authorized to remove or provide for the removal of such vehicle to the nearest garage or other place of safety at the owner's expense. State or local law enforcement officers and the department are further authorized, with or without the consent of the owner, to remove or have removed any obstruction, cargo, or personal property which is abandoned, unattended, or damaged as a result of a vehicle accident which the department determines to be a threat to public health or safety or to mitigate traffic congestion.

(2) A county may regulate and control the parking of vehicles on the county road system and to this end the county may place parking meters on or immediately adjacent to any or all such roads, except extensions into a municipality, for the purpose of authorizing timed parking in designated spaces upon the payment of a charge

for such privilege. A county may also place such parking meters on or adjacent to any public road on the state highway system located within the county and outside the corporate limits of a municipality when authorized by the department pursuant to paragraph (1) of this Code section;

(3) A municipality may regulate and control the parking of vehicles on its municipal street system and on extensions of a county road system within its corporate limits and to this end may place parking meters on or immediately adjacent to any or all of such roads for the purpose of authorizing timed parking in designated spaces upon the payment of a charge for such privilege. A municipality also may place such parking meters on or adjacent to any public road on the state highway system located within the corporate limits of the municipality when authorized by the department pursuant to paragraph (1) of this Code section; and

(4) It shall be unlawful for any person to park or leave unattended any vehicle upon the right of way of any public road on the state highway system for over 48 hours.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.951, Act 737(2-3), eff. 4/28/2000.)

§32-6-3. (Repealed and reserved by Ga.L.1999 p.81, Act 37(32), eff. 4/5/99.)

Article 2 Dimensions and Weight of Vehicles and Loads

§32-6-20. Restrictions.

No vehicle or load shall be operated or moved upon the public roads of Georgia if a dimension or the weight of such vehicle or load exceeds the limitations specified in Code Sections 32-6-22 through 32-6-24 or in Code Section 32-6-26 unless exempted in Code Section 32-6-25 or authorized to do so by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28.

§32-6-21. Secured loads only.

(a) No vehicle shall be driven or moved on any public road unless such vehicle is constructed or loaded or covered so as to prevent any of its load from dropping, escaping, or shifting in such a manner as to create a safety hazard. However, this Code section shall not prohibit the necessary spreading of any substance in public road maintenance or construction operations.

(b) No person shall operate or load for operation, on any public road, any vehicle with any load unless such load and any covering thereon is securely fastened so as to prevent said covering or load from becoming loose, detached, or in any manner becoming a hazard to other users of the public road.

(c) Nothing in this Code section nor any regulations based thereon shall conflict with federal, Georgia Public Service Commission, or Georgia Board of Public Safety regulations applying to the securing of loads on motor vehicles.

(d) The provisions of subsection (b) of this Code section and regulations based thereon shall not apply to vehicles carrying silage from field to storage and storage to feedlot or vehicles or equipment carrying unginced cotton.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2002 Act 953(1), eff. 7/1/2002.)

§32-6-22. Vehicle height limits.

(a) Except as authorized in subsection (b) of this Code section and except when so authorized by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28, no vehicle unladen or with a load shall exceed a height of 13 feet, six inches.

(b) On highways which constitute a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways as such term is used in 23 U.S.C. Section 127 and ramps or service streets which provide reasonable access thereto, no vehicle transporting motor vehicles (commonly known as automobile carriers) unladen or with a load shall exceed a height of 14 feet.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32), eff. 3/16/2000.)

§32-6-23. Vehicle width limits.

Unless otherwise provided in this Code section or exempted in Code Section 32-6-25 or so authorized by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28, no vehicle shall exceed a total outside width, including any load thereon, of 102 inches, exclusive of mirrors and accessories attached thereto, when operated on any street, road, or highway.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.1999 p.567, Act 330(1), eff. 10/1/99.)

§32-6-24. Vehicle length limits.

(a) As used in this article, the term:

(1) "Bimodal semitrailer" means a detachable load-carrying unit designed to be attached to a coupling on the rear of a truck tractor by which it is partly supported during movement over the highway and designed either with retractable flanged wheels or to attach to a detachable flanged wheel assembly for movement on the rails.

(2) "Combination of vehicles" means a semitrailer pulled by a truck tractor or a semitrailer and trailer pulled by a truck tractor operating in a truck tractor-semi-trailer-trailer combination.

(3) "Extendable semitrailer" means a semitrailer that has been manufactured for the purpose of extending the frame to increase the overall length for the purpose of transporting single-piece loads.

(4) "Semi-trailer" means a detachable load-carrying unit designed to be attached to a coupling on the rear of a truck tractor by which it is partly supported.

(5) "STAA system" means the National Network and the Access Routes to the National Network as allowed under the federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA), as amended.

(6) "Trailer" means a detachable load-carrying unit designed to be attached to a coupling at the rear of a semitrailer and capable of support in operation without the truck tractor.

(7) "Truck tractor" means the noncargo-carrying power unit that operates in combination with a semitrailer or trailer, except that a truck tractor and semitrailer engaged in the transportation of automobiles may transport motor vehicles on part of the power unit.

(b) Unless exempted in Code Section 32-6-25 or so authorized by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28, the following length limits shall apply:

(1) Trailer and semitrailer lengths:

(A) Truck tractor-semi-trailer-trailer combinations shall have trailers and semitrailers that do not exceed 28 feet in length;

(B) Truck tractor-semi-trailer combinations shall have semitrailers that do not exceed 53 feet in length, unless signs are posted that indicate semitrailer length restrictions;

(C) On interstate and STAA system routes, single-piece loads may be transported on an extendable semitrailer that exceeds 53 feet, provided that no pieces will be loaded end to end and the semitrailer does not exceed 75 feet in length; on roads other than the interstate and STAA system routes, the foregoing provisions of this subparagraph shall also apply, except that the overall length shall not exceed 100 feet. Empty extendable semitrailers or extendable semitrailers transporting a single-piece load of 53 feet or less shall be required to maintain a semitrailer length of 53 feet or less. When the semitrailer is extended as described in this subparagraph, the rear extremity of each extendable semitrailer or load shall be marked with a four-inch multidirectional amber strobe light and with 12 inch bright red or orange warning flags on the rearmost of the load or semitrailer;

(D) Maxi-cube combinations shall have a cargo box that does not exceed 34 feet, provided that the pair of cargo boxes together does not exceed 60 feet and the overall length, including the power unit, does not exceed 65 feet; and

(E) Trailer and semitrailer length requirements in this paragraph shall not apply to automobile and boat transporters; however, no unit of the vehicle shall exceed 56 feet in length; and

(2) Overall truck tractor-semi-trailer or truck tractor-semi-trailer-trailer lengths:

(A) Maxi-cube combinations shall have an overall length that does not exceed 65 feet;

(B) Saddlemount and saddlemount with fullmount combinations shall have an overall length that does not exceed 75 feet; and

(C) All other combinations of truck tractor-semi-trailer or truck tractor-semi-trailer-trailer operated on roads other than interstate or the STAA system of roads shall have an overall length that does not exceed 100 feet,

unless signs are posted that indicate length restrictions. This maximum length shall include the federal allowance for automobile and boat transporter loads to overhang up to three feet over the front of the vehicle and overhang up to four feet over the rear of the vehicle.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.1999 p.567, Act 330(2), p.828, Act 398(1); Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32), p.1654, Act 930(1); Ga.L.2001 Act 2(32), eff. 2/12/2001.)

§32-6-25. Size exemptions for agricultural and forestry equipment.

The limitations of Code Section 32-6-23 as to width and of Code Section 32-6-24 as to length shall not apply to the following loads and vehicles, which may exceed such limitation without a permit: farming or agricultural equipment or forest management equipment, whether self-propelled or being hauled, when such vehicle or equipment is being operated during daylight hours upon a public road not part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways by dealers or by the owner thereof or his agent within a radius of 40 miles of the property of the dealer or owner. The foregoing exemptions do not apply to vehicles hauling or transporting forest products.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32), eff. 3/16/2000.)

§32-6-25.1. Size exemptions for port facility equipment.

The limitations of Code Section 32-6-23 as to width and of Code Section 32-6-24 as to length shall not apply to the following loads and vehicles, which may exceed such limitation without a permit: Any vehicle or equipment used for transporting cargo or containers between and within wharves, storage areas, or terminals within the facilities of any port under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Ports Authority when such vehicle or equipment is being operated upon any public road not part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways by the owner thereof or his or her agent within a radius of ten miles of the port facility of origin and accompanied by an escort vehicle equipped with one or more operating amber flashing lights that are visible from a distance of 500 feet.

(Added by Ga.L.1999 p.784, Act 383(2); chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32), eff. 3/16/2000.)

§32-6-26. Vehicle weight limits.

- (a) As used in this Code section, the term:
 - (1) "Federal bridge formula" means:

$$W = 500((LN/N-1) + 12N + 36)$$

Where W = the overall gross weight on any group of two or more consecutive axles to the nearest 500 pounds, L = the distance in feet between the extreme of any group of two or more consecutive axles, and N = the number of axles in the group under consideration.

(2) "Lift axle" means any axle on any vehicle manufactured after July 1, 1978, which axle may be raised or lowered with respect to the horizontal plane of the vehicle.

(3) "National highway" means any highway which constitutes a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways as used in Section 127 of Title 23 of the United States Code.

(4) "Single axle" means all the wheels whose centers may be included between two parallel transverse vertical planes 40 inches apart.

- (5) "State bridge formula" means:

$$W = 500((LN/N-1) + 12N + 36)$$

Where W = the maximum allowable gross weight of the vehicle or combination of vehicles to the nearest 500 pounds, L = the distance in feet between the first and last axles of the vehicle or combination of vehicles, and N = the number of axles on the vehicle or combination of vehicles.

(6) "Tandem axle" means, until April 1, 1988, two or more consecutive axles, excluding the steering axle, which extend across the full width of the vehicle and whose centers may be included between parallel vertical planes spaced more than 40 inches apart but not more than 96 inches apart.

(7) "Tandem axle" means, after April 1, 1988, two or more consecutive axles, excluding the steering axle, which extend across the full width of the vehicle and whose centers may be included between parallel vertical planes spaced more than 40 inches apart but not more than 216 inches apart.

(b) Except when authorized by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28 and except as otherwise provided in this Code section:

(1) No vehicle equipped with high pressure pneumatic, solid rubber, or cushion tires and operated upon any public road of this state shall carry a load on any wheel which exceeds 8,000 pounds by more than 13 percent or a load on any single axle which exceeds 16,000 pounds by more than 13 percent; and

(2) No vehicle equipped with low pressure pneumatic tires and operated upon any public road of this state shall carry a load on any wheel which exceeds 9,000 pounds by more than 13 percent or a load on any single axle which exceeds 18,000 pounds by more than 13 percent.

(c)(1)(A) On all highways within this state which are not national highways, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall not exceed 80,000 pounds; the maximum load authorized on any single axle shall be as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section; the maximum load on any tandem axle shall be 40,680 pounds; and subject to subparagraph (B) and subparagraph (C) of this paragraph, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall be the maximum load authorized on any single axle multiplied by the number of axles with which the vehicle is equipped.

(B) For vehicles and loads with an actual total gross weight between 73,280 pounds and 80,000 pounds, the maximum total gross weight authorized for the vehicle and load shall be determined by applying the state bridge formula.

(C) For any vehicle equipped with four axles, the maximum total gross weight authorized for the vehicle and load shall be 70,000 pounds.

(2) (Reserved.)

(3) After April 1, 1988, no lift axle may be used in computing the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle or load.

(d)(1)(A) On all highways within this state which are national highways, except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall not exceed 80,000 pounds; the maximum load authorized on any single axle shall be as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section; and, except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, the maximum overall gross weight in pounds on a group of two or more consecutive axles shall be determined by applying the federal bridge formula. In applying the formula, no lift axle shall be counted as an individual or additional axle when determining the maximum overall gross weight.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the maximum load authorized on any tandem axle shall be 34,000 pounds, and any two consecutive sets of tandem axles may carry a gross load of 34,000 pounds each if the overall distance between the first and last axles of such consecutive sets of tandem axles is 36 feet or more; however, except for vehicles and combinations of vehicles exceeding 55 feet in length, the maximum gross weight authorized on a tandem axle for a vehicle or combination of vehicles carrying a gross weight of less than 73,280 pounds shall be 40,680 pounds.

(2)(A) Any vehicle registered with the Department of Revenue prior to April 1, 1983, shall be exempt from the provisions of paragraph (1) of this subsection until April 1, 1988, upon obtaining a special permit from the department or upon being otherwise exempt under an agreement entered into pursuant to the provisions of subsection (e) of this Code section. This permit shall be issued for identification purposes, shall be nontransferable, and shall be terminated on April 1, 1988. For vehicles operating on highways within this state which are national highways under a permit issued under this paragraph, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall not exceed 80,000 pounds; the maximum load authorized on any single axle shall be as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section; except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, the maximum load on any tandem axle shall be 40,680 pounds; and, except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this paragraph, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall be the maximum load authorized on any single axle multiplied by the number of axles with which the vehicle is

equipped.

(B) For vehicles or combinations of vehicles carrying a gross weight of more than 73,280 pounds or for vehicles or combinations of vehicles exceeding 55 feet in length, the maximum gross weight authorized on a tandem axle shall be 34,000 pounds.

(C) For vehicles or combinations of vehicles carrying a gross weight of more than 73,280 pounds, the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle and load shall be determined by applying the federal bridge formula. In applying the formula, no lift axle shall be counted as an individual or additional axle.

(3) If at any time federal law authorizes any weight greater than that authorized by this subsection, such greater weight under federal law shall be authorized on the national highways within this state.

(e)(1) Subject to the provisions of this article, the department shall be authorized, on behalf of the state, to enter into agreements with the United States Secretary of Transportation as provided in Section 127 of Title 23 of the United States Code, relating to the control of vehicle weight and width limitations, which agreements shall exempt certain vehicles from the requirements of subsection (d) of this Code section. The department shall be authorized to take action in the name of the state to comply with the terms of any such agreement and to promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to ensure the department's compliance with federal laws and to provide for the issuance of the special permits required by this Code section.

(2) The department shall include in any agreement with the United States Secretary of Transportation a provision which ensures that any vehicle registered with the Department of Revenue prior to April 1, 1983, shall be exempt from the application of the federal bridge formula as required by subsection (d) of this Code section if the vehicle otherwise complies with the provisions of paragraph (2) of subsection (d) of this Code section and obtains a special permit from the department. The department shall also include in any agreement with the United States Secretary of Transportation a provision which ensures that any lift axle may be counted as an individual or additional axle when computing the maximum total gross weight authorized for a vehicle and load below 73,280 pounds as provided in subparagraph (d)(2)(A) of this Code section.

(3) Any agreement entered into pursuant to this subsection shall be terminated April 1, 1988.

(f) On any public road of a county road system, the maximum total gross weight of a vehicle and load shall not exceed 56,000 pounds unless the vehicle is making a pickup or delivery on such road; except that if a county road is constructed to the same standards as those highways of this state which are national highways and is authorized as a designated local truck route pursuant to official resolution of the county and approval of the commissioner, the maximum weight limits for such designated local truck route shall be the same as those for highways in this state which are not national highways as provided by paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of this Code section.

(g)(1) The weight limitations provided for in this Code section, except the limitation in subsections (f) and (h) of this Code section, may be exceeded on any public road within this state which is not a national highway, or when making a pickup or delivery on any public road of a county road system, without a permit only when the load on any single axle does not exceed 23,000 pounds, the load on any tandem axle does not exceed 46,000 pounds, and the maximum total gross weight of the vehicle and load does not exceed 80,000 pounds when:

(A) Hauling forest products from the forest where cut to the owner's place of business, plant, plantation, or residence;

(B) Hauling live poultry or cotton from a farm to a processing plant;

(C) Hauling feed from a feed mill to a farm;

(D) Hauling granite, either block or sawed for further processing, from the quarry to a processing plant located in the same or an adjoining county;

(E) Hauling solid waste or recovered materials from points of generation to a solid waste handling facility or other processing facility; or

(F) Hauling concrete that is in a freshly mixed and unhardened state for delivery to a customer located in the same or an adjoining county.

No lift axle may be used in computing the maximum total gross weight authorized for any vehicle or load under this paragraph.

(2) Any vehicle carrying a load as authorized in this subsection at night shall be equipped with lights clearly visible for a distance of not less than 300 feet from the front and rear of the vehicle.

(h) Notwithstanding any provision of this Code section to the contrary, no vehicle or combination of vehicles shall be operated over any bridge with a posted limit which is less than the total gross weight of the vehicle and its load.

(i)(1) Any vehicle which can be made to comply with the requirements of this Code section by shifting the load and which is then loaded to comply with this Code section shall not be held to be in violation of this Code section.

(2) On all highways within this state which are not national highways:

(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, for all vehicles, fines for violations of the total gross weight limitations provided for in subsection (c) of this Code section shall be based on the amount by which the actual weight of the vehicle and load exceeds the allowable maximum weight determined under subsection (c) of this Code section.

(B) For vehicles equipped with four axles, fines or violations of the total gross weight limitations provided for in subsection (c) of this Code section shall be based on the amount by which the actual weight of the vehicle and load exceeds 70,000 pounds.

(j) Except as provided in subsections (f) and (h) of this Code section, weight limits and axle definitions for any bimodal semitrailer, semitrailers, and trailers operated on highways and public roads within this state shall be weight limits and axle definitions authorized by federal law governing national highways.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.1998 p.1206, Act 920(3); Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32); Ga.L.2002 Act 995(1), eff. 7/1/2002.)

§32-6-27. Enforcement of limits.

(a) Any person who violates the load limitation provisions of Code Section 32-6-26 shall be conclusively presumed to have damaged the public roads, including bridges, of this state by reason of such overloading and shall recompense the state for such damage in accordance with the following schedule:

(1) For the first 1,000 pounds of excess weight, 0.8¢ per pound; plus 1.5¢ per pound for the next 2,000 pounds of excess weight; plus 3¢ per pound for the next 2,000 pounds of excess weight; plus 4¢ per pound for the next 3,000 pounds of excess weight; plus 5¢ per pound for all excess weight over 8,000 pounds;

(2) Where a vehicle is authorized to exceed the weight limitations of Code Section 32-6-26 by a permit issued pursuant to Code Section 32-6-28, the term "excess weight" means that weight which exceeds the weight allowed by such permit. For such vehicles, damages for excess weight shall be assessed according to the following schedule: 125 percent times, in each category of excess weights, the rate imposed on offending vehicles operating without a permit.

(a.1)(1)(A) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is authorized to issue a citation to the owner or operator of any vehicle in violation of a maximum weight limit on a county road which is a designated local truck route under subsection (f) of Code Section 32-6-26 and for which signs have been placed and maintained as required under paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of Code Section 32-6-50.

(B) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is authorized to issue a warning to the owner or operator of any vehicle in violation of a maximum weight limit on a county road which is a designated local truck route under subsection (f) of Code Section 32-6-26 but for which signs have not been placed or maintained as required under paragraph (2) of subsection (c) of Code Section 32-6-50 upon the first such violation and to issue a citation to such owner or operator for a subsequent such violation.

(2)(A) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is authorized to issue a citation to the owner or operator of any vehicle in violation of a maximum weight limit on a bridge for which signs have been placed and maintained as required under paragraph (3) of Code Section 32-4-41 or subsection (a.1) of Code Section 32-4-91.

(B) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is authorized to issue a warning to the owner or operator of any vehicle in violation of a maximum weight limit on a bridge but for which signs have not been placed or maintained as required under paragraph (3) of Code Section 32-4-41 or subsection (a.1) of Code Section 32-4-91 upon the first such violation and to issue a citation to such owner or operator for a subsequent such violation.

(b) The schedules listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this Code section shall apply separately to (1) the excess weight of the gross load and (2) the sum of the excess weight or weights of any axle or axles, provided that where both gross load and axle weight limits are exceeded, the owner or operator shall

be required to recompense the state only for the largest of the money damages imposed under items (1) and (2) of this subsection.

(c) Within 15 days after the issuance of the citation, the owner or operator of any offending vehicle shall pay the amount of the assessment to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety or request an administrative determination of the amount and validity of the assessment. If an administrative hearing is requested, it shall be held in accordance with Chapter 13 of Title 50, the "Georgia Administrative Procedure Act," and the rules and regulations of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety. Any person who has exhausted all administrative remedies available within the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety and who is aggrieved by a final order of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is entitled to judicial review in accordance with Chapter 13 of Title 50.

(d) All moneys collected in accordance with this Code section shall be transmitted to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, thereafter to be disposed of as follows:

(1) All moneys collected for violations of the weight limitations imposed by this article shall be remitted to the general fund of the state treasury; and

(2) All moneys collected for violations of the height, width, or length limitations imposed by this article, after the appropriate statutory deductions, shall be retained by the governing authority of the county wherein the violation occurred for deposit in the general treasury of said county.

(e) Any owner or operator of a vehicle which is operated on the public roads of this state in violation of the weight limitations provided in this article shall be required, in addition to paying the moneys provided in subsection (a) of this Code section, to unload all gross weight in excess of 6,000 pounds over the legal weight limit before being allowed to move the vehicle.

(f) Any person authorized by law to enforce this article may seize the offending vehicle of an owner who fails or whose operator has failed to pay the moneys prescribed in subsection (a) of this Code section and hold such vehicle until the prescribed moneys are paid. Any person seizing such vehicle under this subsection or subsection (e) of this Code section may, when necessary, store the vehicle; and the owner thereof shall be responsible for all reasonable storage charges thereon. When any vehicle is seized, held, unloaded, or partially unloaded under these subsections, the load or any part thereof shall be removed or cared for by the owner or operator of the vehicle without any liability on the part of the authorized person or of the state or any political subdivision because of damage to or loss of such load or any part thereof.

(g)(1) Whenever any person, firm, or corporation violates this article and becomes indebted to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety because of such violations and fails within 15 days of the date of issuance of the overweight assessment citation either to pay the assessment or appeal to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety for administrative review, as provided for in subsection (c) of this Code section, such assessment shall become a lien upon the overweight motor vehicle so found to be in violation, which lien shall be superior to all liens except liens for taxes or perfected security interests established before the debt to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety was created.

(2) Whenever any person, firm, or corporation requests an administrative review, it shall be held in accordance with Chapter 13 of Title 50, the "Georgia Administrative Procedure Act." In the event that the administrative law judge finds in favor of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, the person, firm, or corporation shall pay the assessment within 30 days after the issuance of a final decision by the administrative law judge or, if judicial review is had in accordance with Chapter 13 of Title 50, then within 30 days after final judicial review is terminated. If the person, firm, or corporation fails to pay the assessment within 30 days, such assessment shall become a lien as provided for under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(3) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall perfect the lien created under this subsection in the same manner as is provided for in subsection (b) of Code Section 40-3-50 and Code Section 40-3-53.

(h)(1) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, in seeking to foreclose its lien on the motor vehicle arising out of an overweight motor vehicle citation assessed under this article, may seek an immediate writ of possession from the court before whom the petition is filed, if the petition contains a statement of facts, under oath, by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, its agents, its officers, or attorney setting forth the basis of the petitioner's claim and sufficient grounds for issuance of an immediate writ of possession.

(2) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall allege under oath specific facts sufficient to show that it is within the power of the defendant to conceal, encumber, convert, convey, or remove from the jurisdiction of the court the property which is the subject matter of the petition.

(3) The court before whom the petition is pending shall issue a writ for immediate possession, upon finding that the petitioner has complied with paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection. If the petitioner is found not to have made sufficient showing to obtain an immediate writ of possession, the court may, nevertheless, treat the petition as one being filed under Code Section 44-14-231 and proceed accordingly.

(4) When an immediate writ of possession has been granted, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall proceed against the defendant in the same manner as provided for in Code Sections 44-14-265 through 44-14-269.

(i)(1) Whenever any person, firm, or corporation violates this article and fails within 15 days of the date of issuance of the overweight assessment citation either to pay the assessment or appeal to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety for an administrative review as provided for under Chapter 13 of Title 50, the "Georgia Administrative Procedure Act," the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety may act to suspend the motor vehicle license plate of the vehicle involved. However, if the person, firm, or corporation requests an administrative review, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall act to suspend the license plate only after the issuance of a final decision favorable to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety and the requisite failure of the person, firm, or corporation to pay the assessment. Upon such failure to pay the assessment, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall send a letter to the owner of such motor vehicle stating the fact of such overdue assessment. Upon receipt of such letter from the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, it shall be the duty of the owner of such vehicle to notify the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, within 15 days of the date on which notification was mailed by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, as to whether the assessment has been paid. If such information is not received by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety within the specified time period or if the assessment has not in fact been paid, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall suspend the motor vehicle license plate issued to the motor vehicle involved in the overweight assessment citation and shall notify the owner of the motor vehicle that he or she must forward the motor vehicle license plate issued to such motor vehicle to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety. Upon complying with this subsection by paying the overdue assessment and upon submitting proof of compliance and paying a \$10.00 restoration fee to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, the commissioner of motor vehicle safety shall return any motor vehicle license plate suspended under this subsection to the owner of such motor vehicle. In cases where the motor vehicle license plate has been suspended under this subsection for a second or subsequent time during any two-year period, the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety shall suspend the motor vehicle license plate for a period of 60 days and thereafter until the owner submits proof of compliance with this subsection and pays the \$25.00 restoration fee to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.

(2) The Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, upon suspending the motor vehicle license plate, as provided for in this subsection, shall require that such plate be surrendered to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety immediately following the effective date of suspension; and it is the duty of the owner, immediately upon receipt of notice from the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, to forward the license plate to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.

(3) If such motor vehicle license plate is not received by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety within ten days following the effective date of suspension, the commissioner of motor vehicle safety shall forthwith direct any peace officer to secure possession of such plate and return the same to the commissioner of motor vehicle safety.

(4) Unless otherwise provided for in this subsection, notice of the effective date of suspension shall occur when the driver receives actual knowledge or legal notice thereof, whichever occurs first. For the purposes of making any determination under this article relating to the return of a suspended motor vehicle license plate, no period of suspension under this subsection shall begin until the plate is surrendered to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety or to a court of competent jurisdiction under this subsection, whichever shall occur first. If the motor vehicle license plate is lost or for any other reason surrender to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety is impossible, the period of suspension shall begin on the date an affidavit setting forth the reasons for such impossibility is received by the department.

(5) It shall be unlawful to refuse to deliver upon a legal demand any motor vehicle license plate.

(6) Any person violating the provisions of paragraph (2) of this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than 90 days.

(7) For the purposes of this subsection, where any provisions require the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety to give notice to a person, which notice affects such person's motor vehicle license plate, the mailing of such notice and the name and address shown on the notice of overdue assessment citation supplied by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety, as required by this subsection, shall be presumptive evidence that such person received the required notice.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.1998 p.1206, Act 920(4); Ga.L.2000 p.951, Act 737(2-4,2-5); Ga.L.2002 Act 462(32), eff. 4/18/2002.)

§32-6-28. Excess weight and dimension permits.

(a) Generally.

(1)(A) The commissioner or an official of the department designated by the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, upon application in writing and good cause being shown therefor, issue a permit in writing authorizing the applicant to operate or move upon the state's public roads a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles and loads whose weight, width, length, or height, or combination thereof, exceeds the maximum limit specified by law, provided that the load transported by such vehicle or vehicles is of such nature that it is a unit which cannot be readily dismantled or separated; and provided, further, that no permit shall be issued to any vehicle whose operation upon the public roads of this state threatens to unduly damage a road or any appurtenance thereto, except that the dismantling limitation specified in this Code section shall not apply to loads which consist of cotton, tobacco, concrete pipe, and plywood that do not exceed a width of nine feet or of round bales of hay that do not exceed a width of 11 feet and which are not moved on part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways. However, vehicles transporting portable buildings and vehicles not exceeding 65 feet in length transporting boats on roads not a part of The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways, regardless of whether the nature of such buildings or boats is such that they can be readily dismantled or separated, may exceed the lengths and widths established in this article, provided that a special permit for such purposes has been issued as provided in this Code section, but no such special permit shall be issued for a load exceeding 12 feet in width when such load may be readily dismantled or separated. A truck tractor and low boy type trailer may, after depositing its permitted load, return to its point of origin on the authorization of its original permit.

(B) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the commissioner or an official of the department designated by the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, upon application in writing and good cause being shown therefor, issue to a specific tow vehicle a permit in writing authorizing the applicant to operate or move upon the state's public roads a motor vehicle or combination of vehicles and loads for transporting not more than two modular housing units or sectional housing units if the total weight, width, length, and height of the vehicle or combination of vehicles, including the load, does not exceed the limits specified in Code Section 32-6-22, Code Section 32-6-26. No permit shall be issued to any vehicle or combination of vehicles whose operation upon the public roads of this state threatens the safety of others or threatens to damage unduly a road or any appurtenance thereto.

(2) Permits may be issued, on application to the department, to persons, firms, or corporations without specifying license plate numbers in order that such permits which are issued on an annual basis may be interchanged from vehicle to vehicle. The department is authorized to promulgate reasonable rules and regulations which are necessary or desirable to govern the issuance of such permits, provided that such rules and regulations are not in conflict with this title or other provisions of law.

(3) Every such permit shall be carried in the vehicle or combination of vehicles to which it refers and shall be open to inspection by any police officer, state trooper, or authorized agent of the department.

(4) The application for any such permit shall specifically describe the type of permit applied for, as said types of permits are described in subsection (c) of this Code section. In addition, the application for a single-trip permit shall describe the points of departure and destination.

(5) The commissioner or an official of the department designated by the commissioner is authorized to withhold such permit or, if such permit is issued, to establish seasonal or other time limitations within which the vehicles described may be operated on the public road indicated, or otherwise to limit or prescribe conditions of operation of such vehicles when necessary to ensure against undue damage to the road foundation, surfaces, or

bridge structures, and to require such undertaking or other security as may be deemed necessary to compensate the state for any injury to any roadway or bridge structure.

(6) For just cause, including, but not limited to, repeated and consistent past violations, the commissioner or an official of the department designated by the commissioner may refuse to issue or may cancel, suspend, or revoke the permit and any permit privileges of an applicant or permittee. The specific period of time of any suspension shall be determined by the department. In addition, any time the restrictions or conditions within which a permitted vehicle must be operated are violated, the permit may be immediately declared null and void.

(7) The department is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to enforce the suspension of permits authorized in this Code section.

(b) Duration and limits of permits.

(1) Annual permit. The commissioner or an official of the department designated by the commissioner may, pursuant to this Code section, issue an annual permit which shall permit a vehicle to be operated on the public roads of this state for 12 months from the date the permit is issued even though the vehicle or its load exceeds the maximum limits specified in this article. However, except as specified in paragraph (2) of this subsection, an annual permit shall not authorize the operation of a vehicle:

- (A) Whose total gross weight exceeds 100,000 pounds;
- (B) Whose single axle weight exceeds 25,000 pounds;
- (C) Whose total load length exceeds 100 feet;
- (D) Whose total width exceeds 102 inches or whose load width exceeds 144 inches; or
- (E) Whose height exceeds 14 feet and six inches.

Furthermore, an annual permit to operate a vehicle which exceeds the height limitations set forth in Code Section 32-6-22 shall be issued only on condition of payment of an indemnity bond or proof of insurance protection for \$300,000.00. Such bond or insurance protection, conditioned for payment to the department, shall be held in trust for the benefit of the owners of bridges and appurtenances thereto, traffic signals, signs, or other highway structures damaged by a vehicle operating under authority of such overheight permit. The liability under the bond or insurance certificate shall be absolute and shall not depend on proof of negligence or fault on the part of the permittee, his or her agents, or operators.

(2) STAA annual permit. Vehicles and loads that meet the requirements for an annual permit may apply for a special annual permit to carry wider loads on the STAA system of roads. The wider load limits shall be a maximum of 14 feet wide from the base of the load to a point 10 feet above the pavement and 14 feet and eight inches for the upper portion of the load.

(2.1) Six-month permit. Six-month permits may be issued for loads of tobacco or unginning cotton the widths of which do not exceed nine feet, provided that such loads shall not be operated on The Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways.

(3) Single trip. Pursuant to this Code section, the commissioner may issue a single-trip permit to any vehicle.

(c) Fees. The department may promulgate rules and regulations concerning the issuance of permits and charge a fee for the issuance thereof as follows:

(1) Annual. Charges for the issuance of annual permits shall be \$150.00 per permit.

(2) STAA annual permit. Charges for the issuance of STAA annual permits shall be \$500.00 per permit.

(3) Six months. The charges for the issuance of six-month permits for loads of tobacco or unginning cotton shall be \$25.00 per permit.

(4) Single trip. Charges for the issuance of single-trip permits shall be as follows:

(A) Any load not greater than 16 feet wide, not greater than 16 feet high, and not weighing more than 150,000 pounds or any load greater than 100 feet long which does not exceed the maximum width, height, and weight limits specified by this subparagraph \$ 30.00

(B) Any load having a width, height, or weight exceeding the maximum limit therefor specified in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph and not weighing more than 180,000 pounds \$125.00

(C) Any load having a weight exceeding the maximum limit therefor specified in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph \$500.00

(d) Notwithstanding any provision of Code Section 48-2-17 to the contrary, all fees collected in accordance with this Code section shall be paid to the treasurer of the department to help defray the expenses of enforcing the limitations set forth in this article and may also be used for public road maintenance purposes in addition to any sums appropriated therefor to the department.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.1999 p.567, Act 330(3); Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32), p.1654, Act 930(2); Ga.L.2002 Act 917(5,6), eff. 7/1/2002.)

§32-6-29. Enforcement of article duty of Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.

(a) The Department of Transportation shall be responsible for rules and regulations relating to size and weight limits and issuance of permits under this article.

(b) The Department of Transportation shall not, however, employ any law enforcement officers or agents. Responsibility for enforcement of this article shall be in the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.

(c) (Reserved.)

(d) (Reserved.)

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 737(2-6), eff. 4/28/2000, p.1654, Act 768(1), eff. 7/1/2000.)

§32-6-30. Inspection of vehicle for violations of article.

(a) Any law enforcement officer or employee of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety to whom law enforcement authority has been designated who observes a motor vehicle being operated upon a public road of the state and who has reason to believe that:

(1) Any provision of this article is being violated;

(2) The vehicle is improperly licensed in violation of Code Sections 40-2-150 through 40-2-162; or

(3) A fuel tax registration card is not being carried or that a proper distinguishing identification marker is not affixed to the vehicle in violation of Code Sections 48-9-39 and 48-11-14 is authorized to stop such vehicle and weigh, measure, or inspect the same. Violations of such licensing or fuel tax registration and identification requirements shall be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety or the Department of Revenue as appropriate.

(b)(1) If the operator of the vehicle shall refuse to stop upon proper order as directed by a person authorized by subsection (a) of this Code section to stop, weigh, measure, or inspect the vehicle or its load, the operator shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$200.00. The operator shall have the right to post an appropriate bond, which shall not exceed \$400.00, when any law enforcement officer or employee of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety authorized to enforce this article apprehends said operator for any violation of this article.

(2) In addition, the operator's driver's license or nonresident's driving privilege may be suspended for a period of not more than 90 days by the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety upon satisfactory proof of said refusal to stop or drive the vehicle upon the scales. Each person who shall apply for a Georgia driver's license, or for nonresident driving privileges, or for a renewal of same thereby consents to stop such vehicle for inspection or to drive such vehicle upon scales whenever so ordered by a law enforcement official or authorized employee of the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.951, Act 737(2-7); Ga.L.2002 Act 898(5), eff. 7/1/2002.)

§32-6-31. Provisions of certain Code sections.

The provisions of Code Sections 32-1-10, 32-6-26, 32-6-27, and 32-6-29 shall not, and shall not be construed to, modify, change, or diminish any power or duty held by any other law enforcement unit, enforcement officer, or peace officer.

(Chgd. by Ga.L.2000 p.136, Act 474(32); Ga.L.2002 Act 462(32), eff. 4/18/2002.)

Article 3
Control of Signs and Signals

Part 2
State Highway System

§32-6-79. Permit required for signs.

(a) On and after October 6, 1971, no person, firm, or corporation shall erect or maintain a sign authorized by paragraph (1), (4), or (5) of Code Section 32-6-72 without a permit issued by the department.

(b) On and after January 1, 1972, no person, firm, or corporation shall maintain a sign lawfully in existence on October 6, 1971, and which is authorized by this part without a permit issued by the department.

(c) On and after March 4, 1977, no person, firm, or corporation shall erect or maintain a sign authorized by paragraph (1) of Code Section 32-6-73 without a permit issued by the department.

(d) On and after July 1, 1977, no person, firm, or corporation shall maintain a sign lawfully in existence on March 4, 1977, and which sign is authorized by paragraph (1) of Code Section 32-6-73 without a permit issued by the department.

(e)(1) It is the intent of this Code section to provide for a system of cataloguing and registering nonconforming signs in order to administer this part more adequately. The department is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations consistent with this Code section requiring the registration of nonconforming signs; and such rules and regulations shall inform the applicants of the procedures to make application for nonconforming sign permits.

(2) From March 24, 1980, all persons, firms, or corporations who own nonconforming signs as defined in paragraph (12) of Code Section 32-6-71 shall have a period of one year during which time they shall be required to file application for nonconforming sign permits. Applications for nonconforming sign permits shall be made upon forms prescribed and provided by the department and shall contain the signature of the applicant and such other information as may be required by the department's rules and regulations. If the applicant files the application for a nonconforming sign permit upon the forms and according to the procedures provided by the department and within the specified time period of one year, the application shall be considered to have been filed timely and properly. An application fee of \$50.00 shall accompany the application for each nonconforming sign and both the application and the fee shall be submitted to the department. The money received from permit fees shall be used to help defray the expenses of administering this part, Code Section 48-2-17 to the contrary notwithstanding. The department shall have a period of two years from March 24, 1980, to process applications for nonconforming sign permits. If at the end of this two-year period the department has failed to approve or deny a proper and completed application, it shall be conclusively presumed for all purposes that the sign can be permitted as a nonconforming sign and the department must issue the permit within a reasonable time. Should the department deny the application for a nonconforming sign permit, the applicant may seek relief in accordance with Code Sections 50-13-13 through 50-13-18. In cases where the applicant fails to exhaust the procedures prescribed by Code Sections 50-13-13 through 50-13-18, the department's denial of the permit request will be final and the sign shall then become an illegal sign as defined by paragraph (6) of Code Section 32-6-71 and shall be subject to removal under the terms of this part.

(3) If the owner of the nonconforming sign fails to apply properly for a permit, it is conclusively presumed that the sign has been abandoned, and the sign shall then become an illegal sign as defined by paragraph (6) of Code Section 32-6-71, and the sign shall be subject to removal under the terms of this part.

(f) On or after March 24, 1980, the department shall have the right to refuse to issue any additional signs to any person, firm, or corporation who the department determines is maintaining or is allowing to be maintained an illegal sign or signs as defined by paragraph (6) of Code Section 32-6-71 on the interstate or primary highways in this state until such illegal sign or signs are removed. The refusal by the department to issue any additional permits shall not be considered a final denial. If the applicant does not believe the sign or signs designated by the department are illegal, the applicant may seek relief in accordance with Code Sections 50-13-13 through 50-13-18. Unless, within 120 days after the applicant has requested an administrative hearing, the department has issued a final agency decision that the sign or signs are illegal, the department may no longer refuse to issue permits because of a contention that an illegal sign or signs are being maintained.

§32-6-91. Signs without permit.

Any person who erects or maintains any sign for which a permit is required by this part without a valid permit or renewal of such permit issued by the department shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Each day or fraction thereof during which a sign is unlawfully maintained shall constitute a separate offense. The commissioner and officials or employees of said department designated by the commissioner are authorized to take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to procure the prosecution and conviction of any person, firm, or corporation violating this Code section.

§32-6-92. Unauthorized signs.

Any person who maintains any sign not authorized by this part and which was not lawfully in existence on October 6, 1971, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Each day or fraction thereof during which a sign is unlawfully maintained shall constitute a separate offense. The commissioner and officials or employees of the department designated by the commissioner are authorized to take such actions as may be necessary or appropriate to procure the prosecution and conviction of any person, firm, or corporation violating this Code section.