

ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The prohibition provided for in section 417.2 of the Highway Safety Code (chapter C-24.2) is suspended for a person driving on either bridge P-15020 of autoroute 25 or bridge P-10942 of autoroute 30 with a Class A, B or C road vehicle, within the meaning of the Regulation respecting toll road infrastructures operated under a public-private partnership agreement (chapter P-9.001, r. 3), during the period in which all activity carried on in work environments is suspended, as ordered by Order in Council 223-2020 dated 24 March 2020.

2. This Order comes into force on 25 March 2020.

Québec, 24 March 2020

FRANÇOIS BONNARDEL,
Minister of Transport

104323

M.O., 2020**Order 2020-03 of the Minister of Transport dated 25 March 2020**

Highway Safety Code
(chapter C-24.2)

Suspension of the axle load and total loaded mass limits applicable during the thaw period to certain road vehicles or combinations of road vehicles

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,

CONSIDERING section 633.2 of the Highway Safety Code (chapter C-24.2), under which the Minister of Transport may, if the Minister considers that it is in the interest of the public and is not likely to compromise highway safety, by order and after consultation with the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, suspend the application of a provision of the Code or the regulations for the period specified by the Minister;

CONSIDERING that the said section also specifies that the Minister may prescribe any rule, applicable when using the exemption, that ensures an equivalent level of safety in the Minister's opinion;

CONSIDERING that the said section specifies that the publication requirement set out in section 8 of the Regulations Act (chapter R-18.1) does not apply to an order made under the said section 633.2;

CONSIDERING section 18 of the Regulations Act, which specifies that a regulation may come into force on the date of its publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec* where the authority that has made or approved it is of the opinion that the urgency of the situation so requires, and considering that the reason justifying such coming into force must be published with the regulation;

CONSIDERING that it is expedient to suspend the axle load and total loaded mass limits applicable during the thaw period to road vehicles and combinations of road vehicles that are carrying only foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products, pharmaceutical products and products needed to produce foodstuffs, and that respect the axle load and total loaded mass limits prescribed for a normal period;

CONSIDERING that the Minister considers that it is in the interest of the public to suspend those limits, in a manner compliant with the conditions imposed, and that the suspension is not liable to compromise road safety;

CONSIDERING that in the Minister's opinion the rules prescribed for using the exemption ensure an equivalent level of safety;

CONSIDERING that the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec has been consulted with respect to the suspension;

CONSIDERING that, in the opinion of the Minister of Transport, the urgent need to temporarily suspend the axle load and total loaded mass limits applicable during the thaw period to road vehicles and combinations of road vehicles that are carrying only foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products, pharmaceutical products and products needed to produce foodstuffs and that respect the axle load and total loaded mass limits prescribed for a normal period is due, in particular, to the following circumstances and justifies the coming into force of this regulation on the date of its publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*:

— The government declared a public health emergency throughout Québec in order in council 177-2020 dated 13 March 2020, for a period of 10 days and, in order in council 222-2020 dated 20 March 2020, renewed it until 29 March 2020 and implemented certain measures to protect the population;

— Following this declaration, the Minister of Health and Social Services, in orders 2020-003 dated 14 March 2020, 2020-004 dated 15 March 2020, 2020-005 dated 17 March 2020, 2020-006 dated 19 March 2020, 2020-007 dated 21 March 2020, 2020-008 dated 22 March 2020 and 2020-009 dated 23 March 2020, ordered measures to protect the health of the population;

— This exceptional situation and the measures implemented raise fears in the population that lead to targeted purchasing behaviour, causing temporary stockouts of certain foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products and pharmaceutical products;

— These temporary stockouts increase the appearance of shortages, reinforcing the targeted purchasing behaviour and creating the risk of an actual shortage of certain products and foodstuffs;

— This exceptional situation and the measures implemented have led to a shortage of workers in transportation companies caused by the effort made to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including the suspension of school and day care services and the isolation of the persons the most at risk;

— It is difficult, for example, for milk transport companies to transport all the milk produced because of the extra axle load and total loaded mass limits imposed during the thaw period, combined with a reduction of around 15% to 20% in the number of available workers, leading to a major loss of efficiency in transportation that imperils the supply chain;

— Delivery problems in terms of time, quantity and quality are also present in the delivery of other foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products and pharmaceutical products;

— The same problems exist in the delivery of products to Québec's agricultural producers to allow them to continue the agricultural production process that maintain the supply of foodstuffs;

— The public health authorities have asked the population to reduce the number of trips between regions to slow the spread of COVID-19;

— The axle load and total loaded mass limits imposed during the thaw period are lower, meaning that more trips are completed for the same quantity of foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products, pharmaceutical products and products needed to produce foodstuffs;

— These measures are therefore necessary and urgent to ensure food security for the population and protect its health;

ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The provisions of Divisions III and IV of the Vehicle Load and Size Limits Regulation (chapter C-24.2, r. 31), which establish the maximum axle load and maximum total loaded mass applicable during a period of thaw or rain to road vehicles and combinations of road vehicles, are hereby suspended.

2. To benefit from the exemption set out in section 1, a road vehicle or combination of road vehicles must meet the two following conditions:

(1) it must carry only foodstuffs, sanitary and medical products, pharmaceutical products and products needed to produce foodstuffs; and

(2) it must comply with the maximum axle load and maximum total loaded mass applicable to the road vehicle or combination of road vehicles in a normal period, as set out in Divisions III and IV of the Vehicle Load and Size Limits Regulation (chapter C-24.2, r. 31).

3. This order in council comes into force at the time of its publication in the *Gazette officielle du Québec*. It is repealed on 20 June 2020.

FRANÇOIS BONNARDEL,
Minister of Transport

104324