

PROCEDURE – Abnormal Indivisible Loads

Number: H 0401

Date Published: 20 November 2018

Version 6 – November 2018

1.0 Summary of Changes

This procedure has been amended on its yearly review as follows:

- Within Section 4 the 9 protected EIA characteristics have been updated;
- New paragraphs added within section 8 regarding data security and retention and disposal of records;
- Owner details updated.

2.0 What this Procedure is about

An abnormal indivisible load (abload) is a vehicle that has any of the following:

- Width of more than 2.9 metres;
- Rigid length of more than 18.65 metres;
- Lateral projection of more than 3.05 metres;
- Weight of more than 44,000 kilograms;
- Axle load of more than 10,000 kilograms for a single non-driving axle and 11,500 kilograms for a single driving axle.

Those responsible for transporting an abload need to follow regulations for notifying the authorities including:

- The police;
- Highway authorities;
- Bridge and structure owners like Network Rail.

This procedure provides a framework for the management and operation of Essex Police's response to these notifications and covers the deployment of appropriately trained officers to provide an escort at the request of those responsible for transporting an abload.

Reference to current legislation and guidance should be considered throughout the operation of this procedure. In particular the following legislation is of particular importance:

- Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (C&U);
- Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003 (STGO)

The ACPO Guidance/ Practice Advice on The Movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads is still the standing national police guidance on the subject.

Essex Police works closely with other police forces, highways authorities, bridge and structure and those responsible for transportation to ensure the safe and legal movement of an abload with minimal disruption to other road users.

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3.0 Detail the Procedure

3.1 Management of Notifications

The Abnormal Load Officer (ALO), Commercial Vehicle Unit manages all notifications sent to Essex Police; these are only received by email or through the Electronic Service Delivery for Abnormal loads system (ESDAL). All notifications receive an automatic response.

Movements notified to Essex Police are categorised in two ways ‘Standard’ and ‘Non-Standard.’ An appropriate permit is issued normally by way of email.

It is the haulier’s responsibility to survey the route and complete a risk assessment prior to the movement. This is to ensure the load can safely negotiate the route and to arrange for the removal and reinstatement of any street furniture where necessary.

3.1.1 Notice Period

All abloads require 2 clear working days’ notice before any movement can take place. The only exception to this is where there is a valid dispensation in place or the abload falls within STGO Category 3 or above and requires 5 clear working days’ notice.

3.1.2 Escort Determination Charts

To assist both hauliers and the ALO in making consistent assessments on what type of escort if any is required, two charts have been developed. They identify a base line for thresholds as to whether no escort, a self-escort or a police escort is required dependent on the dimensions of the load or its speed due to weight.

- Chart A covers movements on key routes around the County especially those that run from the major ports. Due to the layout of these roads the baseline there is lower threshold on what type of escort is required if any;
- Chart B covers all other routes throughout the county.

The use of these charts in no way prevents the ALO from operating outside of the thresholds mentioned nor does it prevent hauliers requesting a relaxation if certain circumstances support such a decision.

3.1.3 Standard Permits

Upon receipt of any abnormal load notification a standard permit is issued by way of automatic reply. Movements should not take place until the notice period has expired but where no further contact is received they may move subject to complying with the standard conditions contained therein. If a haulier believes it is necessary to move outside of those conditions or indeed they require a police escort it is their responsibility to contact the ALO prior to moving.

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The conditions on the **Standard Permit** are as follows:

1. Movements will not take place the following peak periods:
 - a) Monday – Friday 0700-0930 hours;
 - b) Monday – Thursday 1630-1900 hours
 - c) Friday 1500-1900hours
2. That the movement does not deviate from the notified route;
3. Movements will not take place during the hours of darkness unless the route is exclusively utilising roads listed in 'Chart A.'
4. Movements requiring a self-escort as per 'Chart A' or 'Chart B' will not take place unless the self-escorting vehicle and driver present fully comply with HA Codes of Practice: Lighting and Marking for Abnormal Load Self escorting vehicles incorporating operating guidance;
5. No more than 2 loads to travel together;
6. You do not require a Police Escort as per either chart or otherwise;
7. That as the haulier you have not received a Non-Standard Permit from me on behalf of the Chief Constable placing a variation of conditions on the movement;
8. A copy of this Standard Permit clearly showing the date and time sent will be carried with the load when being moved and produced upon demand to a police officer.

3.1.4 Non-Standard Permits

A **Non-Standard Permit** requires direct liaison with the ALO. They may have other conditions or a relaxation of conditions dependant on the circumstances.

3.1.5 Dispensations

Essex Police issue dispensations to hauliers, farmers and agricultural contractors under specific circumstances to reduce unnecessary administrative burden for regular or short movements. This removes the requirement to submit the usual notification to police for each movement and expiry 12 months after issue.

3.1.5.1 Standard Dispensation

These dispensations are issued for loads up to a width of 3.5 metres which are to move in line with 3.1.3 Standard Permits plus a dedicated route on a road within 'Chart A.'

3.1.5.2 Non-Standard Dispensation

These dispensations are only issued in exceptional circumstances and similar to 3.1.4 Non-Standard Permits may have a variety of conditions placed against them.

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3.1.5.3 Agricultural Dispensation

These dispensations are issued for loads up to a width of 4.3 metres and specifically relate to movement of agricultural machinery up to 20 mile radius which is not loaded onto a large goods vehicle. Movements will be in line with 3.1.3 Standard Permits but there will not be a requirement for the route to be exclusively on roads within 'Chart A.'

3.1.6 Conditions on Movements

It is important that the ALO considers each movement or dispensation is assessed on its own merits using the determination charts and other information that may be available before stating the police position on a given movement or dispensation.

Conditions are only applied in the interests of road safety or in order to avoid undue traffic congestion.

Any conditions placed upon a movement are not necessarily enforceable in its own right except for those which relate to time, date or route (for standard permits: conditions 1-3) as per Schedule 5 STGO or Schedule 12 C&U. However it should be noted that where a haulier fails to comply with any condition set this will not go unchecked where there is a more general contravention of Road Traffic or Health & Safety legislation. In such circumstances the fact that such conditions had been in place will be considered as a factor in any subsequent prosecution or referral to the Health & Safety Executive.

3.1.6.1 Condition of Police Escort

Where a haulier is advised that a police escort is required in the opinion of the ALO they will be told why it is necessary. Ultimately this should be due to the need for the use of police powers and/ or exemptions to achieve the movement without causing serious disruption to other road users or to prevent road safety concerns.

Police escorts are not automatically provided if they are set as a condition, they must be requested as per 3.2 Police Escorts. Where the haulier does not want to use a police escort they should consider alternatives as per 3.1.6.2 Amendments to Conditions.

3.1.6.2 Amendments to Conditions

Where a haulier objects to a condition with good reason they should discuss this with the ALO. The haulier should explore other options such as an alternative route, alternative entry point into the UK or applying for a temporary traffic regulation order (TTRO) and resubmitting their notification.

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3.2 Police Escorts

Essex Police will only supply a police escort upon request of a haulier and after completion of a contract agreeing to make payment for the officer(s) as per the provision of Special Police Services. Reference should be made to G 1901 Procedure – Charging for Police Services with the exception of the use of 'Appendix D – Charging Agreement' within that procedure. The charging agreement can be found below at Appendix H.

Provision of a police escort is subject to a notice period of 5 clear working days although in exceptional circumstances the ALO will endeavour to accommodate requests in a shorter time frame. Agreement on a specific time and date is a point of negotiation between the haulier and ALO who has to consider the ability to identify resources when considering current police commitments at any given time.

In such circumstances Essex Police do not take any additional responsibility other than to ensure the safe passage of the convoy along the designated route utilising police powers and exemptions where necessary. The key principles that a police escort works to are:

- Controlling traffic around the abload;
- Reducing risks to the convoy and other motorists;
- Minimising delays to other motorists.

3.2.1 Escorting Officers

It is the responsibility of the ALO to assess the proposed route and advise how many officers are required to provide an appropriate escort. The ALO should always identify a suitably qualified Escort Commander where there is a need for an Escort consisting of 4 or more officers the Escort Commander will be a sergeant and this will be represented in the charges passed on to the haulier. All other officers will be charged at the constable rate irrespective of the officers' substantive rank.

3.2.1.1 Escort Commander Responsibilities

The escort of any abload by the police will be under the control of the Escort Commander they will ensure that they understand the route from **recent** experience or by utilising www.gridreferencefinder.com to check the route. This free website resource provides satellite imagery and measuring tool. For larger movements especially where the Escort Commander is unfamiliar with the route consideration should be given to driving the route prior to the movement.

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The Escort Commander is responsible for the following:

- Liaison with the abload driver and self-escort driver on the day of the movement;
- Informing the Force Control Room (FCR) of the movement under police escort;
- Completion of initial checks on the abload:
 - Completion of Abload Check Sheet Form;
 - All movement paperwork is correct (VR1, Special Orders etc.);
 - Ensuring driver is properly licensed;
 - Compliance with driver hours legislation;
 - Both vehicles, drivers, attendants and escorts comply with C&U, STGO and relevant Codes of Practice.
- Briefing of other police officers forming part of the escort;
- Briefing key individuals which form part of the convoy and in particular:
 - Agreeing communication parameters;
 - Identifying any concerns regarding the route etc;
 - Addressing issues that would prevent the movement going ahead.

If the escorting officers are in any doubt about the dimensions of the load, suitability of the route, or have any other doubts concerning the safety of moving the load; the load must be stopped and not commence or continue until it is safe to do so. The lead officer must communicate any concerns to the ALO or out of hours the Duty Roads Policing Sergeant.

At the conclusion of the operation the escorting officers will submit a report to the ALO identifying any issues or concerns in order to ensure that these can be addressed in the future. This report can be in the form of an email direct to the ALO.

3.2.2 Police Escort Vehicles

All police vehicles are specified within the Transport Services Fleet Vehicle Catalogue. Under normal circumstances the only vehicles that should be used for the escort of abloads are:

- Marked Compact Traffic;
- Marked Motorcycle – Traffic only;
- Traffic Vehicle;
- Marked Traffic 4x4;
- Armed Response Vehicle.

It is the responsibility of the Escort Commander to ensure appropriate vehicles are used. There may be circumstances which it is necessary or advantageous to use other police vehicles. Where this is the case the Escort Commander must give due consideration to the lighting, conspicuity and performance and make a decision which should be audited on the Abload check sheet form.

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3.2.3 Abload Escort Training

It is essential that this role is undertaken by those who have been trained and have the relevant experience. Only currently authorised police advanced trained drivers and/ or riders who have completed the one of the following may be used for escort work:

- Both theory and practical modules of the Abnormal Load Escort Course;
- Completed a Roads Policing PDP prior to 2004.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment

This procedure has been assessed with regard to an Equality Impact Assessment. As a result of this assessment it has been graded as having a low potential impact as the proposals in this procedure would have no potential or actual differential impact on grounds of age, sex, disability, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity.

5.0 Risk Assessment

In general Essex Police is not responsible for ensuring the safe operational passage of abnormal loads on the roads of Essex; this is the role of the haulier.

Where officers are engaged in an escort then the following risk assessments will apply:

- MRA 02-9 Incidents on High Speed Roads
- MRA 36-7 RPU DRC
- MRA 052-7 Rolling Road Block

6.0 Consultation

The following have been consulted during the formulation of this document:

- Roads Policing
- Driver Training
- Force Control Room
- Health & Safety
- Federation
- Superintendents Association
- Professional Standards
- Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator
- Force Solicitor
- Corporate Finance

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7.0 Monitoring and Review

The Head of Roads Policing, OPC is responsible for monitoring the practical implementation and effectiveness of this procedure and associated risk assessments. They will ensure it is reviewed annually updated to incorporate new legislation and national guidance.

8.0 Governing Force policy. Related Force policies or related procedures

- H 0400 Policy - Incident Management
- D 2000 Policy - Safe Driving
- G 1901 Procedure – Charging for Police Services

8.1 Data Security

Essex Police have measures in place to protect the security of your data in accordance with our Information Management Policy – W 1000 Policy – Information Management.

8.2 Retention & Disposal of Records

Essex Police will hold data in accordance with our Records Review, Retention & Disposal Policy – W 1012 Procedure/SOP - Records Review, Retention and Disposal

We will only hold data for as long as necessary for the purposes for which we collected. Victims/public should be reminded that Essex Police take the protection of personal data seriously as described in the privacy notice <https://www.essex.police.uk/hyg/fpnessex/privacy-notice/>.

9.0 Other source documents, e.g. legislation, Authorised Professional Practice (APP), Force forms, partnership agreements (if applicable)

- Road Traffic Act 1988;
- Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986;
- Road Vehicles (Authorisation of Special Types) (General) Order 2003;
- Highways Agency Code of Practice: Lighting and Marking for Abnormal Load Self-escorting vehicles incorporating Operating guidance;
- ACPO Guidance/ Practice Advice on The Movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads;
- National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services;
- APP Roads Policing: Management of Incidents;
- National Decision Making Model.
- Chart A - Escort Determination
- Chart B - Escort Determination

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- Appendix C - Standard Permit
- Appendix D - Non-Standard Permit
- Appendix E - General Dispensation
- Appendix F - Non-Standard Dispensation
- Appendix G - Agricultural Dispensation
- Appendix H - Charging Agreement
- Transport Services Fleet Vehicle Catalogue