

Bridge Load Postings for Emergency Vehicles

April 2026



MaineDOT is adding new signage types indicating emergency vehicle weight limits. Emergency vehicle operators must be aware of the vehicle weight and configuration as the weight limits are to be followed to ensure safe crossing. There are no exceptions for emergency vehicles crossing bridges.

In December 2015, the federal legislation Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law. The FAST Act defines an emergency vehicle as one designed to be used under emergency conditions to transport personnel and equipment to suppress fires and mitigate other hazardous situations. Pumper and tanker trucks carry large volumes of water for fire suppression, and ladder trucks carry heavy counterweights to enable horizontal and vertical reach needs during operation. Emergency vehicles are allowed to weigh up to 62,000 pounds on a single rear axle and 86,000 pounds on a tandem rear axle.

The National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) requires all bridges to be load rated and posted if necessary for all legal and permitted vehicles. The FAST Act vehicle configurations fall under this requirement.

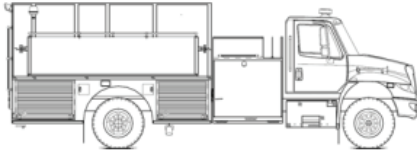
Bridges not designed for modern vehicles or bridges with elements experiencing deterioration that cannot safely support legal vehicles must be weight restricted. The FAST Act emergency vehicles cause stress on bridge elements exceeding those caused by standard commercial vehicles. The emergency vehicle posting signs will be used when standard commercial vehicles are safe to cross the bridge, but the FAST Act emergency vehicles are restricted. Standard posting signs will be used when commercial vehicles and emergency vehicles are restricted.



Emergency Vehicle Examples

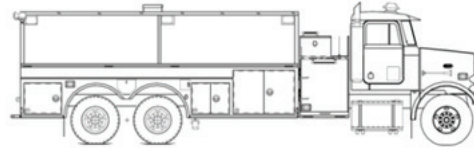
Figures from Fire Apparatus Manufacturer's Association (FAMA), Emergency Vehicle Size and Weight Guide

COMMERCIAL CHASSIS PUMPER – SINGLE REAR AXLE



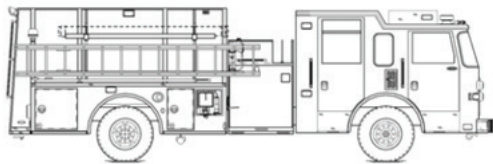
GVW: 16.5 T (min), 24.5 T (max)

COMMERCIAL CHASSIS TANKER – TANDEM REAR AXLE



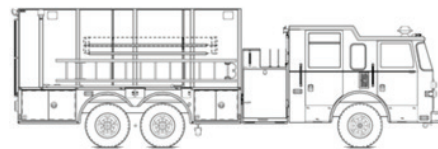
GVW: 23 T (min), 37 T (max)

CUSTOM CHASSIS PUMPER – SINGLE REAR AXLE



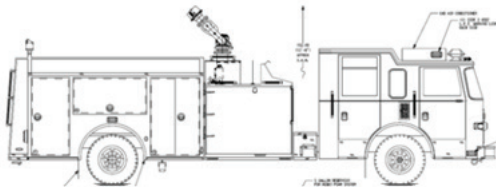
GVW: 21 T (min), 27.5 T (max)

CUSTOM CHASSIS TANKER – TANDEM REAR AXLE



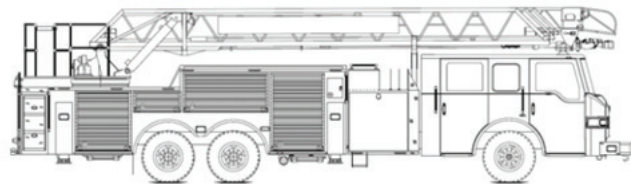
GVW: 29.3 T (min), 39.4 T (max)

INDUSTRIAL FOAM PUMPER – SINGLE REAR AXLE



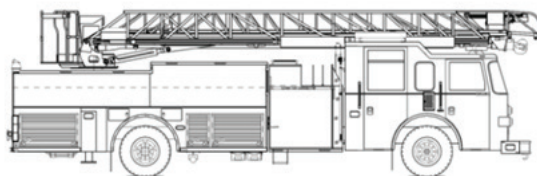
GVW: 22 T (min), 27.5 T (max)

AERIAL LADDER – TANDEM REAR AXLE



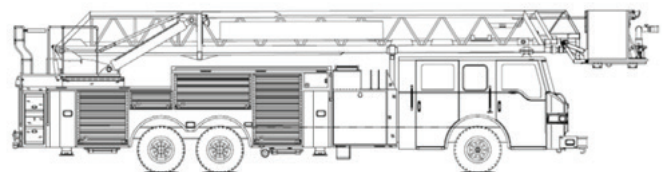
GVW: 27 T (min), 28.4 T (max)

AERIAL LADDER – SINGLE REAR AXLE



GVW: 22 T (min), 28.9 T (max)

AERIAL PLATFORM REAR MOUNT – TANDEM REAR AXLE



GVW: 33.7 T (min), 43 T (max)



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