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A PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS REGIME TO REGULATE CAR-CARRIERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

Until recently, South African car-carriers operated under the abnormal load permit system allowing an additional 300 mm height and 500 mm length. Because car-carrier payloads are divisible and abnormal load permits are usually granted for indivisible loads, these permits were granted only as a special concession to the car-carrier industry. This practice is being phased out due to concerns over the stability of the over-height vehicles and a number of incidents of non-compliance by some car-carrier operators. The Abnormal Loads Technical Committee has stipulated two requirements should operators wish to operate car-carriers in excess of legislated dimensional limits. Firstly, the operator must be RTMS-certified (RTMS is the Road Transport Management System, a voluntary accreditation scheme addressing overloading, vehicle maintenance, driver training etc.); and secondly, the car-carrier should be shown to comply with the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) scheme. The PBS scheme is a detailed set of safety standards which regulate vehicle performance (such as vehicle rollover tendency) when conducting prescribed manoeuvres. A number of PBS demonstration projects are currently running in South Africa. This paper outlines the progress to date in developing and implementing PBS-compliant car-carrier designs, the regulatory challenges encountered, and the envisaged regulatory future for car-carriers in South Africa.