

## **Time required to obtain a special travel permit**

The *Highway Safety Code* provides that the owner or operator of a vehicle that is oversized with regard to its load or dimensions cannot have that vehicle travel without obtaining beforehand a special permit specifically issued for that purpose. The special travel permit is issued by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), subject to certain conditions and upon payment of the fees and charges provided for in the *Regulation respecting special permits*. The permit can be issued only for travel by a vehicle that is oversized with respect to its dimensions because of its design characteristics or for the transport of an indivisible load.

The *Regulation respecting special permits* identifies 7 classes of permits. Class 1 to 5 permits can be obtained directly, without delay, at SAAQ service centres. To obtain a Class 6 or 7 permit, the applicant must obtain an attestation from the ministère des Transports du Québec demonstrating the feasibility of the planned transport.

The purpose of this bulletin is to inform those interested of how long it usually takes to process applications for special permits when, pursuant to section 3 of the Regulation, an expert's report from the ministère des Transports is required.

The amount of time taken depends largely on the following stages of processing:

- **Stage 1:** reception of the special permit application by the SAAQ;
- **Stage 2:** validation of the information in the application, preliminary analysis and verification of the documents required (letter from the shipper, etc.);
- **Stage 3:** consultation of the Road infrastructures;
- **Stage 4:** consultation of territorial divisions, if applicable;
- **Stage 5:** obtaining of municipal authorizations and of an affidavit, if applicable;
- **Stage 6:** evaluation and preparation of the expert's report, once all documents and information are available (in certain cases, the application must be submitted to the committee responsible for analysing applications);
- **Stage 7:** transmission of the expert's report to the SAAQ and issuance of the permit, if warranted.

Carriers may sometimes be required to take certain actions before and during the transport movement provided for in the permit (such as notifying the person in charge of the road network or seeing that vehicles are accompanied by an adequate police escort). Permit holders are responsible for making sure that the road network allows for travel involving the loads and dimensions in the planned transport.

The following table gives the average maximum times taken for the main stages in the processing of a special permit application.

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>CLASS 6</b>	<b>CLASS 7</b>	<b>CLASSES 6 AND 7</b>
1 and 2	1 day	1 day	1 day
3	2 days	2 days	2 days
4	---	5 days	5 days
6 and 7	1 day	1 day	1 day
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 days</b>	<b>9 days</b>	<b>9 days</b>

About 4 days must be allowed for the processing of a Class 6 permit application, and 9 days for a Class 7 permit application. Of course, this does not include the time needed to obtain municipal authorizations or the other documents that applicants are required to submit.

In the last three years, about 77% of Class 6 permit applications have been processed in 4 days or less, and 65% of Class 7 permit applications in 9 days or less. Some of the most frequent reasons for delay in the issuance of a special permit requiring an expert's report are given below:

- the applicant submitted incomplete or incoherent information;
- the route identified is incomplete or impossible;
- delays in obtaining municipal authorizations and documents from the shipper;
- the planned transport is incompatible with municipal standards;
- police escorts are not available;
- the planned transport is complex in nature.

The ministère des Transports du Québec takes all the measures required to process as rapidly as possible the numerous applications it receives for Class 6 and 7 special permits. Although it tries to issue permits in the shortest time possible in order to minimize impacts on carriers, shippers and the other actors concerned, the department feels it must produce expert's reports of high quality, that take account of its concern for the safety of road users and the protection of road infrastructures.

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