



FAQs Bull Run Bridge weight limits

Jan. 2023

The Bull Run Bridge is closed to all traffic weighing over 12 tons due to a new load rating from the Oregon Department of Transportation.



Background

The Bull Run Bridge was originally constructed in 1894 as part of the Burnside Bridge over the Willamette River in downtown Portland, and was moved to its current location in 1926. The Bull Run Bridge crosses the Bull Run River and is a key access point to the Bull Run Reservoirs, which provide clean water to over 1 million customers in the Portland area.

The bridge has been deteriorating over the last 25 years and load rating calculations require the county to further restrict weights of vehicles that can cross the bridge. The bridge is inspected annually by the Oregon Department of Transportation to identify if further restrictions are needed as the bridge continues to deteriorate. The bridge sufficiency rating is 2 out of 100, the lowest rated bridge in the State of Oregon.

Further deterioration of the structure could require the bridge to be closed to all traffic in the next five to 10 years if it is not replaced. A closure would require residents, businesses and emergency services to use a lengthy detour route to reach homes and businesses in the Bull Run River watershed.

Navigating the weight restrictions for commercial freight businesses

While this closure to vehicles over 12 tons is resulting in much longer travel times, it is necessary to maintain critical access for community members' daily and recreational use, and for emergency services. We can no longer provide special use permits for heavy loads due to the declining condition of the bridge.

Trucks and other vehicles weighing over 12 tons will need to travel on Gordon Creek Road in Multnomah County, which also has two bridges with weight restrictions for certain vehicle types. Visit www.multco.us/transportation-planning/weight-limits-county-bridges for details for Multnomah County bridges.



150 Beaver Creek Road | Oregon City, OR 97045
www.clackamas.us/motorcarrier.html

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Frequently Asked Questions

Is the bridge safe to travel on?

Yes, for vehicles that weigh less than 12 tons. While the bridge needs to be replaced because of age, usage and vehicle load restrictions, recent engineering calculations show the bridge is adequate to carry the posted weight. It is still safe to cross the bridge within the weight limit restrictions, but it is deficient in many other respects and may need to be closed within the next 5 to 10 years.

How do heavy loads damage the bridge?

Heavy loads can impact the structure and safety of bridges by causing significant stresses to the bridge components resulting in cracking or structural failure. To reduce the stresses of the wrought iron components of the Bull Run Bridge, we must limit heavy loads from crossing until the bridge can be replaced. If we do not limit the heavy loads from trucks, we risk closing the bridge entirely until funds can be found to replace it.

Why is traffic restricted to one lane?

One vehicle crossing Bull Run Bridge at a time in the center of the bridge reduces the weight of traffic, has less impact on the structure and will help preserve the remaining life of the bridge. This change is expected to be permanent.

Why the new weight restrictions?

A recent inspection of the bridge identified some components in worse condition compared to the prior inspection. The Oregon Department of Transportation developed a new load rating for the bridge based on the latest conditions of the bridge, resulting in new weight restrictions.

Over time, the natural processes of deterioration and constant use take their toll on bridges. The deterioration and use can leave a bridge with less capacity than it was originally designed and built. Also, the size and weight of freight and emergency vehicles has been increasing steadily. Because most of Oregon's bridges were not designed for current vehicle sizes and weights, many of our aging bridges cannot safely carry all modern loads. These bridges must be posted to limit traffic to the loads they can safely carry without impairing structure or safety.

When will the bridge be replaced?

We don't know. There are limited funding sources to replace bridges on the county system. We've applied for several federal grants to replace the bridge, but have not been awarded any grant funds to date. A grant application is pending, and we expect to find out if the project will be chosen for federal funding. In addition, the Board of County Commissioners approved the Bull Run Bridge replacement project as a county priority for federal earmark funding. The cost to replace the bridge is estimated at \$14 million.

What are the chances of the bridge failing?

We will continue to monitor the structural integrity of the bridge along with the Oregon Department of Transportation. Further restrictions are possible. If the bridge is found to be unsafe in an upcoming inspection, we will close the bridge.

Will emergency vehicles still be able to cross?

County staff will be coordinating with the various emergency response agencies and our structural engineers to determine which emergency vehicles will be able to cross the bridge.

How long will it take to route through the detour?

The detour from Sandy to the Bull Run Bridge is 35 miles long and takes about 60 minutes traveling from US 26, to Burnside Road, to 232nd Ave, to OR 84/30, to Corbett Hill Road, to Evans Road, to Gordon Creek Road to Bull Run Road.

Questions or concerns?

Contact Motor Carrier Safety Coordinator Kevin Hutchison at KHutchison@clackamas.us or 503-742-4772.

Our Motor Carrier Safety teams works to prevent fatalities and injuries related to the movement of large trucks by enforcing safety regulations, issuing permits in Clackamas County and Oregon, and working with the motor carrier industry and the public to increase safety awareness. For more information, visit www.clackamas.us/transportation/motorcarrier.html.