



An evaluation of Montanas state truck activities reporting system (stars)  
by Danielle Marie Reagor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Civil Engineering  
Montana State University  
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**Abstract:**

Since the introduction of weigh-in-motion (WIM) and automatic vehicle classification (AVC) technologies, the collection of commercial vehicle operations data has been greatly enhanced. WIM/AVC information can be used to achieve long-term infrastructure preservation by supporting overweight enforcement efforts. With this application in mind, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has recently completed a pilot project referred to as the State Truck Activities Reporting System or STARS.

This program consists of a series of WIM/AVC systems deployed across the Montana highway system. The objectives of the program are to improve the efficiency of MDT's commercial vehicle enforcement program and to improve the quality and quantity of truck weight and classification data. One year of historical data was used to establish a baseline of overweight commercial vehicle activity. In the following year, mobile enforcement efforts were dispatched based on the WIM/AVC data collected from the STARS sites the previous year.

The findings of this investigation suggest that the program has been a success. Generally, a reduction in the proportion of overweight vehicles during months of STARS focused enforcement was observed. The findings also show that pavement damage (ESALs) was effectively reduced when this method for scheduling enforcement activities was used. The overall reduction in pavement damage attributable to the STARS program statewide in 2001-2002 was on the order of magnitude of 10 million ESAL-miles of travel. The cost savings associated with this change in pavement damage was approximately \$1 million.

This program would possibly provide greater benefits if an increased number of years of historical data were available on which to base focused enforcement efforts. Another issue to consider is whether or not the same techniques used in this pilot project to select enforcement sites can be used in the future. The effects of this program may in fact decrease future effectiveness as the motor carrier industry adjusts their loading behavior. With this in mind, the MCS Division of MDT is committed to continuing to investigate techniques to improve their effectiveness and strongly believe that WIM will continue to have a role in their future enforcement activities.

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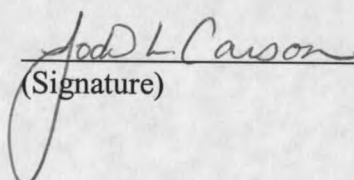
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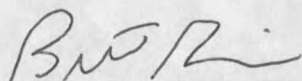
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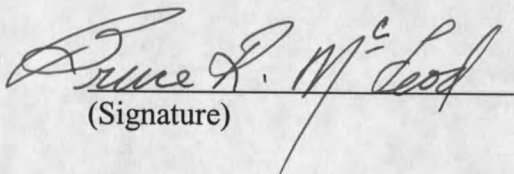
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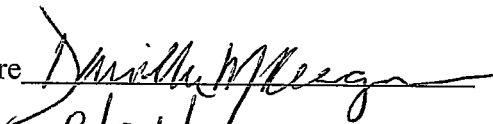
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## ABSTRACT

Since the introduction of weigh-in-motion (WIM) and automatic vehicle classification (AVC) technologies, the collection of commercial vehicle operations data has been greatly enhanced. WIM/AVC information can be used to achieve long-term infrastructure preservation by supporting overweight enforcement efforts. With this application in mind, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has recently completed a pilot project referred to as the *State Truck Activities Reporting System* or *STARS*.

This program consists of a series of WIM/AVC systems deployed across the Montana highway system. The objectives of the program are to improve the efficiency of MDT's commercial vehicle enforcement program and to improve the quality and quantity of truck weight and classification data. One year of historical data was used to establish a baseline of overweight commercial vehicle activity. In the following year, mobile enforcement efforts were dispatched based on the WIM/AVC data collected from the STARS sites the previous year.

The findings of this investigation suggest that the program has been a success. Generally, a reduction in the proportion of overweight vehicles during months of STARS focused enforcement was observed. The findings also show that pavement damage (ESALs) was effectively reduced when this method for scheduling enforcement activities was used. The overall reduction in pavement damage attributable to the STARS program statewide in 2001-2002 was on the order of magnitude of 10 million ESAL-miles of travel. The cost savings associated with this change in pavement damage was approximately \$1 million.

This program would possibly provide greater benefits if an increased number of years of historical data were available on which to base focused enforcement efforts. Another issue to consider is whether or not the same techniques used in this pilot project to select enforcement sites can be used in the future. The effects of this program may in fact decrease future effectiveness as the motor carrier industry adjusts their loading behavior. With this in mind, the MCS Division of MDT is committed to continuing to investigate techniques to improve their effectiveness and strongly believe that WIM will continue to have a role in their future enforcement activities.

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of weigh-in-motion (WIM) and automatic vehicle classification (AVC) technologies, the collection of commercial vehicle operations data has been greatly enhanced. Most commonly, the information available from WIM/AVC has been used to prescreen overweight commercial vehicles to optimize static weigh station efficiency and to support the calculation of traffic loading demands for roadway design. Beyond these common applications, WIM/AVC information can be used to achieve long-term infrastructure preservation by supporting commercial vehicle weight enforcement efforts. With this application in mind, the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has recently completed a pilot project referred to as the *State Truck Activities Reporting System* or *STARS*.

In cooperation with Montana State University (MSU), the impact of STARS on various MDT activities is being comprehensively evaluated. STARS consists of a series of WIM/AVC systems deployed across the Montana highway system that feed data to customized software programs. The software can subsequently be used to characterize commercial vehicle operations by classification and weight, and to further perform extensive analyses specifically addressing overweight commercial vehicle operations.

### Background

The Motor Carrier Services (MCS) Division of the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is the entity responsible for truck size and weight enforcement in Montana. MCS currently operates a network of 21 permanent weigh stations equipped with static scales and maintains a staff of 18 mobile enforcement officers who work out of their vehicles using portable weighing equipment. Montana's weigh stations generally provide an effective enforcement presence on the routes where they are located (primarily Interstate and strategic non-Interstate highways) and at the times that they are open (24 hours a-day on busy routes and fewer hours on routes with less traffic).

MCS mobile officers currently spend most of their time (approximately 70 percent) patrolling local roads and highways that are not serviced by weigh stations. Currently, each Patrol Officer, within his or her assigned geographic area, exercises considerable discretion when deciding which roads to travel and how to be most productive. Hence the officers' effectiveness in capturing illegally overweight trucks is based on their experience, knowledge of truck traffic patterns, enforcement intuition and follow-up on public "tips" or complaints. Because a mobile officer's effectiveness is based largely on experience, new officers or staffing changes cause temporary inefficiencies in Montana's weight enforcement program. A new Patrol Officer experiences a significant learning curve while developing his or her skills, and Patrol Officers may inadvertently devote considerable time and energy to non-productive pursuits. These inefficiencies could easily be negated if pertinent information was available on chronically overweight vehicle operations.



Previously, the effectiveness of Montana's truck weight enforcement program has been evaluated using the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) PLAN/CERT process, in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 23, Part 657. MCS prepares the Federal Truck Size and Weight Enforcement Plan (PLAN) and the Federal Certification of Accomplishment (CERT). At the beginning of the reporting period, the PLAN establishes Montana's numerical commercial vehicle enforcement goals. At the end of the reporting period, the CERT documents Montana's success in achieving the numerical goals stated in the PLAN. FHWA then judges Montana's commercial vehicle enforcement program on whether the actual numbers in the CERT meet or exceed the projected numbers in the PLAN. Although this PLAN/CERT approach standardizes the reporting process, its utility for objectively judging state enforcement program performance and comparing the effectiveness of one state program with another state program has been questioned. This pilot project provides FHWA with the documentation and the opportunity to evaluate and consider STARS as a performance-based alternative to the Federal PLAN/CERT process.

With respect to road design, MDT's Data and Statistics Bureau currently collects and processes truck weight and classification data at 11 WIM/AVC sites across the state. This data is then used to support Equivalent Single Axle Load (ESAL) projections for pavement preservation and construction projects, support engineering decisions at the project level for long range planning, and to meet FHWA Traffic Monitoring Guide (TMG) and Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) requirements.

### Objectives

The STARS program has two primary objectives. The first is to improve the efficiency of MDT's commercial vehicle enforcement program and to document this improvement through a noted reduction in the number of overweight trucks and the average size of the overweight load. The second is to improve the quality and quantity of truck weight and classification data available for use by MDT and to provide a means to effectively and efficiently utilize this data to achieve long-term infrastructure preservation.

The STARS program was also developed with two secondary objectives in mind. The first is to provide FHWA with both the documentation and the opportunity to consider STARS as an alternative to the Federal Truck Size and Weight Plan (PLAN) and Certification of Accomplishment (CERT) process, in which all states are currently required to participate. Second, STARS will support Montana's long-term Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) goals of automating the states priority weigh stations and the objectives of both the national Long Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) of the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) and the Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks (CVISN) initiative.

### Scope

The scope of this project incorporates two full years of data collection. One year of historical data (May 2000 through April 2001) was used to establish a baseline of

overweight commercial vehicle activity at each of 16 STARS sites located across the state. In the following year (May 2001 through April 2002), mobile enforcement efforts across the state were dispatched based on the WIM/AVC data collected from the STARS sites the previous year. Naturally, it would have been preferable to have several years of historical data to more reliably characterize overweight vehicle activity prior to implementing the WIM/AVC-based enforcement, but there was considerable interest in taking advantage of STARS data as soon as possible after its deployment (which was substantially completed by May 2000) for MDT's enforcement and other activities.

## CHAPTER 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the advent of WIM/AVC technologies, their application and performance has been extensively studied. This Chapter details the findings of related literature categorized by: (1) use of WIM/AVC systems in enforcement, including pavement preservation and (2) use of these systems in engineering and planning efforts.

Enforcement

Several studies have been conducted that consider efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of truck weight enforcement programs and the feasibility of using WIM/AVC technologies to aid in these efforts. These studies consider various aspects of enforcement, including appropriate measures of effectiveness for monitoring changes in enforcement activities, weigh station bypass operations, weigh station avoidance and mobile enforcement activities.

Measures of Effectiveness

Hanscom and Goelzer (1998) comprehensively defined measures of effectiveness (MOEs) for truck weight enforcement. Traditionally applied measures (i.e., number of trucks weighed and citations issued) have failed to provide results in terms of real enforcement objectives, such as deterring overweight trucks and minimizing pavement damage. Hanscom and Goelzer developed and subsequently validated alternate MOEs in

a comprehensive four-state field evaluation. Matched WIM/AVC data sets, collected under controlled baseline and enforcement conditions, were analyzed and the following MOEs were validated on the basis of their demonstrated sensitivity to truck weight enforcement objectives and the presence of enforcement activity: (1) severity of overweight violations, (2) proportion of overweight trucks, (3) average equivalent single-axle loads (ESALs), (4) excess ESALs and (5) bridge formula violations. These measures were proven sensitive to both legal load-limit compliance objectives of truck weight enforcement procedures and the potential for pavement deterioration.

#### Weigh Station Bypass Operations

Several studies have considered the application and performance of WIM/AVC for weigh station bypass operations; under such operations, trucks that are weight and credential compliant could be identified as such (in part, by WIM) and permitted to bypass the weigh station without stopping.

A study conducted by Bergan, et al. (1998) demonstrated the importance of WIM scale calibration for successful weigh station bypass operations. Statistical analyses revealed that calibrating a WIM scale to read 5 percent light decreased the probability of a legally loaded truck being recognized as overweight and being called into a weigh station, from 50 percent to anywhere between 31 and .04 percent, depending on the type of WIM scale utilized. The report concluded that the use of use of WIM/AVC technology as a pre-sorting device would dramatically improve enforcement efficiency in that delays experienced by trucks of legal weight would significantly decrease, while the probability of identifying and citing overweight trucks would increase.

Looking in more detail at the use of WIM/AVC for legal weigh station bypass operations, Chou and Tsai (1999) derived relationships that allow for the determination of appropriate overload thresholds for bypass operations given the maximum allowable reduction in pavement service life and the maximum allowable rate of misjudged overloading. The rate of correct inspection and the required WIM accuracy can also be obtained through these derived relationships.

### Weigh Station Avoidance

Jessup and Casavant (1996) conversely considered the problem of illegal bypass operations around weigh stations (i.e., avoidance). The authors utilized a WIM scale in proximity to a static scale to quantify differences in time of day/day of week violation and capture rates of large trucks. Conclusions drawn were that (1) overweight and avoidance activity by the trucking industry is heavily driven by business forces, (2) an increase in the proportion of long distance trucks in the traffic stream corresponds to an increase in the average gross vehicle weight (GVW) and axle weight, (3) short distance trucks are generally the trucks that are overweight and (4) an understanding of the influence of business and economic activities on truck traffic flows is important in overweight enforcement strategies and in choosing optimal hours of weigh station operation.

Similarly, Cunagin, et al. (1997) considered the problem of weigh station avoidance for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The objective of this study was to assess the magnitude of weigh station avoidance by overweight trucks expressed in ESALs. Results of the study indicated that with increased enforcement activity, the

number of overweight vehicles decreased. However, this reduction may be attributable to the illegal bypass of overweight vehicles around permanent weigh stations.

### Mobile Enforcement

Most closely related to the STARS investigation, a study performed by Ruback and Middleton (1999) demonstrated a direct approach for using WIM/AVC data to improve the efficiency of vehicle weight enforcement efforts. In this study, a mobile enforcement officer was equipped with a computer that received WIM data directly via an Internet connection. When an overweight truck passed over a WIM scale, an enforcement officer in the vicinity was notified almost immediately. Hence, a greater portion of the enforcement officer's time was spent capturing overweight trucks rather than searching for violators based on experience and intuition, thus improving enforcement efficiency. This mobile enforcement system can be implemented using relatively inexpensive equipment, but it requires fast and reliable hardware and software to accommodate the required rapid information exchange between the WIM system and the mobile computer.

Though not formally documented, the State of New York (2002) is reportedly using a similar approach to that investigated by Ruback and Middleton (1999) for WIM-based weight enforcement. State troopers can identify overweight vehicles in real-time using laptop computers connected to WIM systems. The lane of travel, the number of axles and each axle's weight are transmitted to a mobile officer.

### Pavement Preservation

Enforcement-related benefits attributable to the use of WIM/AVC technology are accompanied by pavement preservation benefits. A reduction in the proportion of overweight vehicles or the severity of the overweight violations results in a reduction in the overall traffic loading (ESALs) experienced by a pavement over its service life.

In a study of an augmented WIM system in Texas, trucks accounted for nearly 90 percent of the ESALs subjected to the pavement, but made up less than 16 percent of the traffic stream (Garner and Lee 1995). The study was comprehensive and considered nearly all trucks, both legal and overweight; data was collected 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for all but a few days per year.

In a study performed by Najafi, et al. (1996) for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), WIM data was analyzed to generate average truck damage factors and average weights for each truck classification. They calculated the volume; average weight and minimum, maximum and average damage factors for seven classes of trucks at nine sites. The calculated damage factors for each type of truck show that roadway damage caused by trucks increases proportionately to the load in ESALs raised to the fourth power. Results also indicate the Class 9 trucks had the highest representation and result in the greatest pavement damage though the damage factor for Class 7 trucks is much higher than that of other truck types.

Hicks, et al. (1999) considered the impacts of increased truck loads on both existing and new roads. The authors concluded that if truck size and weight increased and pavement maintenance does not change, as much as 80 percent of the pavement life could



be lost. If pavement maintenance practices are in fact, altered to accommodate the increase in loads, both new and reconditioned pavements would require up to 2.5 inches of additional thickness.

An earlier study conducted by Fekpe, et al. (1995) suggested that efforts to compare pavement loading impacts of alternative truck weight limits have met with limited success because of uncertainty in inputs. Further, the effects of enforcement on the resulting vehicle weights have not been adequately addressed; enforcement is a critical factor in assessing pavement impacts. Fekpe, et al. suggested alternative parameters for evaluating pavement-loading impacts of alternative truck weight limits and enforcement levels including equivalent pavement loadings, truck load factors (average ESALs per truck), ESALs per payload, ESAL-kilometers, and ESAL-kilometers per payload. Parameters considering total pavement loading and the amount of payload provide a more objective assessment than the average load per truck alone. Pavement cost implications of alternative weight limits and enforcement levels were illustrated using costs per ESAL-kilometer for representative conditions in Ontario, Canada; in terms of pavement costs resulting solely from axle loads, substantial savings are achievable if strict enforcement schedules are implemented.

#### Engineering and Planning

For engineering and planning applications, WIM/AVC technologies provide a large amount of data for individual highway vehicles, such as axle spacing and weights,

vehicle length, speed and headway. Because of their unobtrusiveness and continuous operation, unbiased, statistically reliable data can be easily obtained.

### Data Applications and Sharing

While numerous studies have been published recently expressing the benefits of WIM/AVC data for non-pavement or enforcement related applications, a second area for publication addresses the handling of this data with respect to sharing and processing.

The data-related needs of various Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) offices and bureaus were first identified through a survey questionnaire conducted by Sebaaly, et al. in 1991. PennDOT uses WIM/AVC data to perform several analyses, including number of vehicles weighed versus number counted; average gross, loaded and cargo weights; ESALs by truck type; twenty-year ESAL estimates; distribution of gross vehicle weights and number of trucks exceeding standard load limits. The various PennDOT offices and bureaus requested WIM/AVC data monthly and semiannually and reported graphically and tabularly by hours, days and months.

Similarly, Hajek, et al. (1992) identifies a number of specific application areas include planning and programming of transportation facilities, pavement design and rehabilitation, apportionment of pavement damage, compliance with vehicle weight regulations, development of geometric design standards, compliance and regulatory policy development of truck dimensions, safety analysis, traffic operation and control and analysis related to highway bridges. The usefulness of WIM/AVC data crosscuts the organizational structure of transportation agencies. Hajek, et al. suggests that WIM/AVC

data should be considered "corporate" data and should be managed accordingly with facilitated data storage and retrieval as a service to potential users.

A second report by Hajek, et al. (1994) demonstrates the potential of WIM/AVC data specifically for traffic safety analysis. The objective was to show, by practical examples, that WIM/AVC data are useful and indeed indispensable for fundamental safety-related traffic analysis. Examples include determination of truck exposure rates and evaluation of vehicle speed and headway distributions as a function of highway facility, vehicle type, daytime and nighttime conditions and truck load. WIM/AVC technologies have also been used as a primary component of speed advisory systems for potentially hazardous conditions, such as long steep downgrades or sharp curves. According to the authors, it is imperative that those working in the traffic safety area are made aware of the potential of WIM/AVC data for traffic-related safety analysis and that this potential is further pursued.

Liu, Sharma and Anderson (2002) considered data shortcomings for the Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Transportation. With a focus on operations and planning, individual interviews revealed that the most important traffic data included average annual daily traffic (AADT), percent trucks in the traffic stream and truck volume growth rates; separate growth rates for different types of trucks were desirable. More detailed data on vehicle classification, truck weight and configuration, truck traffic seasonal variation and goods movements was also requested. Goods movement data includes origin-destination and truck route data, commodity transported, cargo value crossing the border and type of truck used for grain movements in the Province. The

authors recommended installation of sufficient continuous WIM/AVC systems on the highway system to remedy the data shortcomings cited by planning and operations personnel.

Schmoyer and Hu (1996) investigated the potential for using WIM/AVC data from multiple New England states in a common resource data pool. Of particular interest were the possible analytical simplifications of combining vehicle classes or combining roadway functional classes. Adjusting for seasonal and day-of-week effects was also a concern. Preliminary conclusions suggest that from the perspective of vehicle load estimation, there is little advantage to combining vehicle classes. However, analysis of both the WIM and AVC data suggests that differences among functional classes are sufficient to warrant against combining them. The authors conclude that even without these simplifications, data sharing among states is a good idea. The analysis method used here, one-way analysis of variance, is reasonably simple to use and provides an accounting for statistical error; because data sharing means cross-state extrapolation, the combined data should not be used without a proper statistical accounting for extrapolation error.

Most recently, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (2000) investigated the potential for data sharing between planning and enforcement divisions. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) has a long history of using WIM/AVC technology for planning purposes. Within WDOT, the Division of State Patrol also uses WIM/AVC technology for weight enforcement of commercial vehicles. The Planning Division of WDOT has been reluctant to allow shared use of WIM/AVC sites; if these

sites are used jointly for enforcement, commercial vehicles may avoid these locations resulting in unrepresentative data samples. According to the same study, national experience suggests considerable success in sharing WIM/AVC technology and data. WDOT reported that Michigan effectively uses the same data resources for varied purposes without adverse effects on the data collected for planning. They reported that Indiana also found that a cooperative partnership between planning and enforcement benefits the entire program. Commercial vehicles can be screened real-time; overweight violations can be acted upon at the time of the violation; further damage to the infrastructure can be avoided by removing the overload from the roadway. Both planning and enforcement are able to achieve their respective goals and objectives.

#### Data Storage and Processing

In the previously described study conducted for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Sebaaly, et al. (1991) also considered the issue of processing, analyzing and storing WIM/AVC data. WIM/AVC systems generate large amounts of data that require tremendous time and effort to convert it into appropriate formats. The authors recommended development of five computer programs to analyze and report the WIM/AVC data.

In a more focused application, Wu (1996) used truck weight data collected from WIM/AVC sites to estimate truck load factors for pavement design purposes. Wu presents a conceptual procedure that uses WIM data to derive ESAL factors for different types of trucks.

Similarly, Folwell and Stephens (1997) developed a computer program that processes WIM/AVC data into a format usable by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). The program calculates ESAL factors by vehicle configuration, average vehicle weights by configuration and indicators of WIM system performance for WIM/AVC sites. This information is available both annually and for select time windows. The program also identifies and describes the overweight vehicles found in the data; routines could be developed to directly support weight enforcement efforts. For example, reports showing the correlation between weight enforcement activities and observed volumes of overweight vehicle traffic can be made.

The Maine State Police are identifying chronic overweight vehicle situations by graphically analyzing WIM data using American Image, Inc. (2002) technologies referred to as JOHO. The Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) has recently installed 12 WIM sensors at various strategic locations around the state. JOHO updates a series of images for internal use each time data is downloaded from the WIM/AVC sensors. The State Police are still investigating methods through which the efficiency of their weight enforcement efforts can be improved using the results of their analyses.

With increased capabilities for WIM/AVC data processing, there has been an accompanying focus on the quality of WIM/AVC data. If the WIM sensors read too low, the recorded axle loads result in insufficient fatigue calculations and pavement thickness designs that are too thin leading to premature pavement failure. The reverse leads to excessive pavement thickness designs resulting in unnecessary upfront expenditures.

With data quality as the focus, Southgate (1989) initiated a study to develop a method to determine the quality of WIM/AVC data, firm guidelines for making judgment calls and a method to "adjust" the data to fit within those guidelines. Southgate's examination of data from 78 WIM sites across eight states revealed extreme differences in axle loads for 5-axle semi-trailer trucks. It was suggested that this adjustment method be used by the Long Term Pavement Performance (LTPP) of the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP) to improve the quality of the data already in the data bank as well as data sets received in the future.

Garner and Lee (1995) considered efforts to improve WIM/AVC data quality in the field rather than following data capture. Their augmented WIM system comprised an inductance loop detector, a weigh pad in each wheel path, an infrared sensor unit for each lane and two thermocouples for capturing pavement temperature data. The augmented design allowed for collection of standard WIM data, but minimized the number of vehicle presence sensors required for operation, and permitted collection of additional data including single or dual tire type on an axle and the vehicle's lateral position in the lane of travel. These new elements were collected using the infrared light beam. If a vehicle passes indirectly over a WIM sensor, erroneous readings can be recorded. When the augmented WIM system suspects that a vehicle did not pass directly over the scale, the lateral position of the vehicle can be used to calculate a reasonable estimate of both the axle weight and gross vehicle weight. Further, information pertaining to single or dual tire type results in more accurate ESAL calculations.

Most recently, Walters and Whitford (1998) investigated the WIM/AVC data accuracy required to accurately determine equivalent single axle loads (ESALs). More specifically, the authors investigated whether the ESALs calculated using axle weights and counts derived from weight and classification data were of sufficient accuracy. Regression analysis of single and tandem axle data versus ESALs showed remarkably consistent behavior and the authors concluded that all of the WIM technologies were performing within national standards. Further, the data reduction approach was consistent with the level of acceptable errors.

#### Implications for this Investigation

The historical literature reviewed in support of this investigation has been twofold in focus, considering WIM/AVC applications in both enforcement and pavement preservation activities and engineering and planning activities. With respect to enforcement activities, percent of overweight vehicles, capture and violation rates, time of day/day of week distributions and vehicle configuration are key data elements for monitoring the effectiveness of efforts. Truck weight and volume data is critical for ESAL calculations from which pavement conditions and pavement life are determined.

Few previous investigations have attempted to dispatch enforcement resources in response to WIM/AVC generated information on overweight vehicle movements. Instead, WIM/AVC technologies have been used to sort non-compliant vehicles from the traffic stream and direct them to a weigh station, thereby improving the efficiency of



existing enforcement facilities. WIM/AVC technologies have also been used to investigate the avoidance of static weigh stations.

Of the investigations focused on enforcement dispatch, the emphasis has historically been on use of real-time data with only spot location applications. STARS appears to be the first of its kind to use *historical* WIM data to redirect and improve enforcement efforts and address long-term issues related to commercial vehicles by changing their loading behaviors.

## CHAPTER 3

## METHODOLOGY

When considering the effects of the STARS program on both enforcement efforts and engineering and planning activities, the following basic five-step methodology was employed for each evaluation:

- (1) identify required data elements and sources to support performance measures of interest
- (2) examine and measure existing performance and conditions (before full implementation of STARS) to establish a baseline
- (3) examine and measure performance and conditions after STARS implementation
- (4) analyze and interpret the before and after data
- (5) document the changes attributable to STARS.

Following a description of the WIM/AVC site locations, this Chapter further details the methodologies used in this investigation.

#### WIM/AVC Site Locations

STARS is a statewide program having a network of 26 permanent WIM/AVC sites supplemented by 64 additional sites that are to be operated intermittently on a three-year cycle using fully portable WIM equipment. The portable sites were not utilized as part of this investigation, and only 16 of the 26 permanent sites were considered. Several of the permanent STARS WIM sites had various problems with the WIM equipment, resulting

in "bad" data or a loss of data. Those WIM sites with significant data problems were subsequently excluded from the final evaluation. Table 1 indicates those sites included in the STARS evaluation. These same sites are depicted graphically in Figure 1. Sites excluded from the final evaluation include Bad Route, Big Timber, Twin Bridges, Troy-Libby and both Mossmain sites.

Some of the sites included in the final analysis also experienced problems with the WIM equipment but these problems were sporadic and short-term in nature, often affecting a single month. The unaffected months provided an adequate representation of commercial vehicle activity at these sites. A detailed activity log describing each maintenance visit to the WIM/AVC sites (provided by MDT) was used to determine the source of data problems. Using this information and data from prior and subsequent months at the same site, a determination was made to include or exclude the month in question in the final STARS evaluation. None of the sites selected for inclusion had more than two questionable months.

In one case, it was decided to consider WIM/AVC data from two sites as a single site. The Four Corners site and the Gallatin site were considered singularly to account for months where there were problems with data at either site; data from the Four Corners site was used for the months of July, August and September and data from the Gallatin site was considered for all other months. This combination was thought feasible due to the close proximity of the two sites.

Table 1. Proposed WIM Site Information

Permanent WIM Site	Route	Included in Final Analysis?
Townsend	US Highway 287	Yes
Decker	Highway 314	Yes
Bad Route	Interstate 94	No
Manhattan	Interstate 90	Yes
Arlee	US Highway 93	Yes
Four Corners	US Highway 191	Combined with Gallatin
Gallatin	US Highway 191	Combined with Four Corners
Big Timber	Interstate 90	No
Galen	Highway 273	Yes
Broadview	State Route 3	Yes
Miles City East	US Highway 12	Yes
Ulm	Interstate 15	Yes
Ryegate	US Highway 12	Yes
Stanford	US Highway 87	Yes
Fort Benton	US Highway 87	Yes
Havre East	US Highway 2	Yes
Twin Bridges	State Route 41	No
Paradise	State Route 200	Yes
Mossmain	Interstate 90	No
Troy-Libby	US Highway 2	No
Culbertson	State Route 16	Yes
Lima	Interstate 15	Yes
Mossmain	Interstate 90	No

### Affected Mileage

Enforcement activities at a given STARS site were presumed to influence vehicle activities over a segment of roadway of finite length that included that site. To determine changes in pavement damage and the costs attributable to STARS enforcement efforts, it is necessary to determine the amount of mileage that is affected by STARS activities at each WIM/AVC site. The extent of affected mileage was determined























































































































































