

Transponder FAQ

Q – What is a Transponder?

A – Transponders are electronic screening tools used in the State of Alaska to help identify vehicles or carriers who have been recently inspected, met State and Federal safe operation requirements and have verifiable credentials. Specific data related to the vehicle and the motor carrier is attached to the transponder. This information will be used in conjunction with the vehicle size and weight information gathered while crossing the WIM to determine whether or not the vehicle will be given permission to bypass the weigh station. This technology is currently being implemented at the Glenn Highway weigh station.

Q – How will installing a transponder benefit me?

A – Once you have an acceptable safety record and credentials, you will have the opportunity to bypass the weigh stations as long as all size and weight data gathered indicates that you are traveling legally (i.e., you are not over-height or overweight).

Q – What information is verified by the Electronic Sorting System?

A – Vehicle identification, carrier identification, credential information and possible load information.

Q – What is being recorded by the Electronic Sorting System?

A – The lane a vehicle is in, the vehicle class, vehicle speed, total number of axles and axle spacing, vehicle length, vehicle weight, vehicle height, and photo documentation.

Q – What does the Electronic Sorting System do with the recorded information?

A – The Electronic Sorting System processes the information and forwards the information to a control station (weigh station), currently the Glenn Highway Weigh Station.

Q – If a carrier moves a transponder from one vehicle to another, what happens?

A – Each transponder is assigned to a VIN number and license plate number. The adhesive on the transponder is meant to be permanent and should prevent reattachment to another vehicle. Transponder and vehicle information can be verified at the weigh station. Transponders are the property of MSCVC and must be returned if removed after installation in a vehicle.

Q – How should transponders be installed?

A – They should be installed by the vehicle drivers or by the company representative in accordance with instructions provided with transponders.

Q – How long will the battery last in the transponder?

A – The battery will last about 4 years but varies depending on the number of time the transponder is signaled from passing a roadside sensor. The batteries are not replaceable and the transponder should not be opened for any reason by the carrier/driver.

Q – What do the transponder lights mean?

A – **Green** - The driver is free to pass by (bypass) an open weigh station.

Red - The vehicle is required to pull into the open weigh station.

Yellow - Not used in the State of Alaska and should be ignored in Alaska.

****NOTE** - Failure to stop at an open weigh station when signaled by a red transponder light may result in the driver being cited for bypassing an open weight station.

Q – I receive a red light on my transponder but the weigh station sign says closed. What should I do?

A – Bypass the closed weigh station, when the weigh station sign says closed it means vehicles should stay on the highway.

Q – Does having the transponder mean that I won't be required to pull into the weigh station unless my vehicle is overweight?

A – No. Having the transponder allows vehicles with appropriate credentials to bypass an open weigh station if a green light is displayed on the transponder. All other commercial vehicles must stop at an open weigh station.

Q – I have a transponder but never get a green light, is something wrong with the transponder?

A – You should have it checked at the weigh station to make sure it is registered. There are several reasons you may not get a green light on your transponder. Some examples are: you are close to being overweight, your credentials are not current, i.e. vehicle not registered properly, insurance not valid, high safety score, etc.

Q – How long will the transponder light stay illuminated?

A – After receiving a signal from the screening system the red/green light will remain illuminated for 8-12 minutes.

Q – The light changed from one color to the other, which signal should I follow?

A – You should follow the last signal given, this could be caused by an override by the weigh station operator.

Q – Will my transponder work outside Alaska?

A – There are different screening systems used in North America. If you are not sure if your transponder is compatible with another state or country, you should stop at any weigh station and ask. Transponders issued in Alaska are compatible with all screening systems in Alaska.