

2.22 Special Permits and In-Transit Permits

The Motor Registration Division (MRD) of the Department of Government Services is responsible for licensing, registration and operation of all vehicles and equipment operating on the Province's roads. Standards relating to the licensing, registration and operation of vehicles are legislated under the *Highway Traffic Act* and the *Vehicle Regulations*. These *Regulations* provide specific limits relating to vehicle weight, dimensions, configurations and cargo load.

Special Permits

In 2003, there were 165 Special Permits issued to permit mobile cranes and construction equipment, which exceeded the defined limits for weight and/or dimensions, to travel on the Province's roads. However, these vehicles are not required to have an annual inspection performed by an Official Inspection Station. As a result, the issuance of these Special Permits may contribute to the existence of unsafe vehicles on the Province's roads.

Although Highway Enforcement Officers at MRD, from time to time, stop mobile cranes and construction equipment to ensure that these vehicles have the required Special Permit and that they are operating in accordance with the requirements of the permit (e.g. route, lights, escorts, and signage), the vehicles are not subjected to any mechanical inspection.

In-Transit Permits

In 2003, there were 2,817 In-Transit Permits issued for unlicensed and/or unregistered vehicles. However, these vehicles are not required to be inspected; instead, applicants are informed that the vehicle operation is subject to restrictions of the *Highway Traffic Act* (i.e. the vehicle must be safe). Not requiring an inspection is significant in that one of the reasons for which an In-Transit Permit could be issued is to drive the vehicle from one place to another for repairs. Therefore, the type and/or extent of repairs may have safety implications. As a result, the issuance of these permits may contribute to the existence of unsafe vehicles on the Province's roads.

Certain mobile crane operators may be obtaining In-Transit Permits because the cumulative cost of these permits is cheaper than the annual licensing fee. Of the 138 Special Permits issued to mobile cranes in 2003, 73 also required an In-Transit Permit because they weren't licensed.

2.23 Gambling Rehabilitation Services

In 2004 the Province received \$108 million from the Atlantic Lottery Corporation (ALC), an increase of \$38.8 million or 56% from the \$69.2 million received in 1995. Of this amount, \$76 million was from Video Lottery Terminals (VLT), an increase of \$44 million or 137% from the \$32 million received in 1995.

A Statistics Canada report issued in December 2003 indicated that one in four gamblers, whose playing includes VLTs, are at risk to become or are already problem gamblers. The report went on to state that “...VLTs are the ‘crack cocaine’ of gambling.” Furthermore, correspondence from five of the six health boards providing addiction services in the Province indicated that the vast majority of individuals being treated for problem gambling were addicted to VLTs.

There are a number of significant issues relating to Government's involvement with the identification and treatment of gambling addiction. For example:

- Newfoundland and Labrador is the only Province in Canada that has not conducted its own prevalence study to determine the extent of the gambling problem.
- The four health and community services boards and the two integrated boards charged with administering the gambling addiction program are unable to provide complete or comparable statistics on the numbers of clients with gambling addictions who were referred, treated and waitlisted. Furthermore, the boards do not have systems in place to capture information on the costs of providing each of the various addiction programs and the amount of time spent by staff on each program.