

Pennsylvania

Trailer Summary:

Dimensions:

Dimensions shall not exceed: a width of 102 inches; a total height of 13 feet 6 inches.

The overall length of a towaway trailer transporter combination shall not exceed 82 feet.

An automobile or boat transporter does not exceed 45 feet in length.

The overall length of a stinger-steered auto transporter combination shall not exceed 80 feet.

Brakes: Every combination operated on a highway, the towed vehicle of which is equipped with brakes or which has a gross weight in excess of 3,000 pounds, shall be so equipped that, upon breakaway of the towed vehicle, the towed vehicle shall be stopped and held automatically, and the towing vehicle shall be capable of being stopped and held by use of its own service braking system.

Lighting/Reflectors: Every vehicle operated on a highway shall be equipped with a rear lighting system including, but not limited to, rear lamps, rear reflectors, stop lamps and license plate light. Headlights not required for trailers.

Every motor vehicle, trailer and combination operated on a highway shall be equipped with a system of lights which may include retroreflective reflectors, identification, clearance and side marker lights in conformance with regulations of the department.

Hitch/Signals: Whenever two vehicles are connected by a ball-and-socket type hitch, or pintle hook without a locking device, they shall also be connected by two safety chains of equal length, each safety chain having an ultimate strength at least equal to the gross weight of the towed vehicles. The safety chains shall be crossed and connected to the towed and towing vehicle and to the tow bar so as to prevent the tow bar from dropping to the ground in the event the tow bar fails or becomes disconnected. The safety chains shall have no more slack than is necessary to permit proper turning.

Mirrors: No person shall operate a motor vehicle or combination on a highway unless the vehicle or combination is equipped with at least one mirror, or similar device, which provides the driver an unobstructed view of the highway to the rear of the vehicle or combination.

Speed Limits: As posted.

Towing: When one vehicle is towing another, the connection shall be of sufficient strength to pull all weight towed. The distance between the vehicles shall not exceed 15 feet

If the distance between the vehicles exceeds five feet, a red flag or cloth not less than 12 inches square shall be displayed upon the connection centered between the vehicles. During hours of darkness a red light shall be displayed at the same position in lieu of the flag or cloth.

Other: N/A

VEHICLES

§ 4904. Limits on number of towed vehicles.

- (a) General rule.--No motor vehicle shall be operated upon a highway towing more than one other vehicle except as otherwise provided in this section.
- (b) Farm tractors.--Farm tractors may tow no more than two other vehicles when engaged in agricultural operations.
- (c) Towing vehicles requiring service.--
 - (1) A dolly not exceeding ten feet in length may be towed by a motor vehicle for the purpose of towing another vehicle requiring service.
 - (2) A combination requiring emergency service may be towed to a nearby garage or other place of safety.
- (d) Saddle-mount operations.--Not more than three truck tractors, empty trucks or chassis therefor, may be towed by a truck tractor, truck or the chassis thereof, provided that only the rear wheels of the drawn vehicles shall touch the road surface and the overall length of the combination does not exceed 75 feet.
- (e) Two-trailer combinations on interstate and certain other highways.--Combinations consisting of a truck tractor and two trailers may be driven only as described in section 4908 (relating to operation of certain combinations on interstate and certain other highways).
- (f) Tow dollies and converter gears.--A tow dolly or converter gear may be towed by a motor vehicle for the purpose of towing another vehicle, provided the combination meets all requirements of section 4905 (relating to safety requirements for towed vehicles) and separate lighting equipment is displayed on the rear of a towed motor vehicle. A converter gear may also be towed empty behind a combination consisting of a truck tractor and semitrailer.
- (g) Combinations permitted under section 4965(2).--Combinations permitted only to cross a highway to get from one commercial or industrial facility to another under section 4965(2) (relating to single permits for multiple highway crossings) may consist of more than two units as long as the dimensions and gross axle and wheel weight of the combination and loads do not exceed the maximums specified in this chapter.
- (h) Certain combinations permitted under section 4968.--Combinations consisting of a truck and one trailer or a truck tractor and one trailer which exceeds the maximum vehicle lengths authorized in section 4923 (relating to length of vehicles) and which shall not exceed 102 inches in width, or a truck tractor and no more than two trailers, each trailer of which shall not exceed 102 inches in width and 28 1/2 feet in length may be operated under a permit issued under section 4968 (relating to permit for movement during course of manufacture).
- (i) Portable traffic control signals or devices.--Portable traffic control signals mounted upon a trailer not exceeding 3,000 pounds gross vehicle weight may be operated in tandem as long as

the length of the two trailers combined does not exceed 300 inches and the trailers are designed by the manufacturer to be able to be towed in tandem on public roadways.

§ 4905. Safety requirements for towed vehicles.

(a) Connecting devices and distances.--When one vehicle is towing another, the connection shall be of sufficient strength to pull all weight towed. The distance between the vehicles shall not exceed 15 feet except between any two vehicles transporting poles, pipes, machinery or other objects of a structural nature such that they cannot readily be dismembered.

(b) Red flags and lights.--If the distance between the vehicles exceeds five feet, a red flag or cloth not less than 12 inches square shall be displayed upon the connection centered between the vehicles. During hours of darkness a red light shall be displayed at the same position in lieu of the flag or cloth.

(c) Deflection of trailer wheels.--Every trailer shall be attached to the vehicle drawing it so as to prevent the wheels of the trailer from deflecting more than six inches from the path of the drawing vehicle's wheels.

(d) Safety chains.--Whenever two vehicles are connected by a ball-and-socket type hitch, or pintle hook without a locking device, they shall also be connected by two safety chains of equal length, each safety chain having an ultimate strength at least equal to the gross weight of the towed vehicles. The safety chains shall be crossed and connected to the towed and towing vehicle and to the tow bar so as to prevent the tow bar from dropping to the ground in the event the tow bar fails or becomes disconnected. The safety chains shall have no more slack than is necessary to permit proper turning.

(e) Obstructed lighting equipment.--Whenever the rear running lights, stop lights, turn signals or hazard warning lights required by the provisions of Chapter 43 (relating to lighting equipment) are obstructed by the load on a vehicle or by a towed vehicle or its load, lighting equipment shall be displayed on the rear of the towed vehicle or load equivalent to the obstructed lights or signals, except in the case of implements of husbandry or commercial implements of husbandry displaying the slow-moving vehicle emblem and operating between sunrise and sunset.

(f) Penalty for violation of subsection (e).--

(1) A person who operates a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in section 1603 (relating to definitions), in violation of subsection (e) commits a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of \$300 for each violation.

(2) A person who operates a motor vehicle other than a commercial motor vehicle, as defined in section 1603, in violation of subsection (e) commits a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$100.

§ 4908. Operation of certain combinations on interstate and certain other highways.

(a) General rule.--Combinations authorized by section 4904(e) (relating to limits on number of towed vehicles) to have two trailers may be driven only on the types of highways and under the limitations set forth below:

(1) On the designated national network consisting of all interstate highways and portions of Federal aid primary highways having at least a 48-foot-wide roadway or two 24-foot-wide roadways and designated by the department as capable of safely accommodating such vehicles.

(2) Between the designated national network and a terminal or a facility for food, fuel, repair or rest having an entrance within the access limitation prescribed by Federal Highway Administration regulation of the nearest ramp or intersection, but only on highways having lanes at least ten feet wide.

(3) On highways marked with traffic route signs having travel lanes at least ten feet in width unless prohibited by the department on State highways or the municipality on local highways based on safety reasons and marked with signs prohibiting such vehicles.

(4) Between the highways authorized under paragraph (3) and a terminal or facility for food, fuel, repair or rest having an entrance within one-half road mile of the nearest ramp or intersection, but only on highways having lanes at least ten feet wide.

(5) Approval of a highway other than as designated under paragraphs (1) through (4) shall be obtained from the:

(i) City in the case of a highway in a city.

(ii) Department in the case of a State highway not in a city, except that the department will, upon request, delegate authority to approve routes under this subsection to a municipality which has been delegated authority to issue permits under section 420 of the act of June 1, 1945 (P.L. 1242, No. 428),¹ known as the State Highway Law.

(iii) Municipality in the case of a local highway not in a city.

(b) Household goods carriers.--In addition to the operations authorized in subsection (a), a household goods carrier, consisting of a truck tractor and two trailers may be driven between the designated national network and a point of loading or unloading which can safely and reasonably be accessed using highways approved under subsection (a)(2) through (5) for the particular movement.

(b.1) Deleted by 2018, June 12, P.L. 204, No. 31, § 1, effective in 180 days [Dec. 10, 2018].

(c), (d) Deleted by 1997, April 17, P.L. 6, No. 3, § 9, effective in 60 days.

(e) Notice.--

(1) The department shall publish the designated network established in subsection (a)(1) in the Pennsylvania Bulletin as a notice under 45 Pa.C.S. § 725(a)(3) (relating to additional contents of Pennsylvania Bulletin) and will also forward the designated network to trucking companies and associations and other interested parties, upon request.

(2) Approval of a route under subsection (a)(5) shall be effective upon notice by the approving authority to the person who requested it. Notice of the approval shall also be given to State and affected local police and shall be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin in a timely manner as a notice under 45 Pa.C.S. § 725(a)(3).

(3) Approval of a route under subsection (b)(2) shall be effective upon notice by the approving authority to the person who requested it. Notice of the approval shall also be given to State and affected local police and shall be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin in a timely manner.

(f) Revocation of route approval.--The authority which approved a route under subsection (a)(5) may revoke the route approval if it determines that the route or some portion of it cannot safely and reasonably accommodate combinations authorized to exceed length or number of trailer limitations. Notice of the revocation shall be published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin as a notice under 45 Pa.C.S. § 725(a)(3) and shall be effective 15 days after such publication, except that the posting authority may effect an earlier revocation by posting signs to indicate the revocation. Written notice of the revocation shall also be given to the person who requested the route approval and to State and affected local police.

(g) Penalty.--A person who operates a combination in violation of this section on a highway which is not marked with signs prohibiting the operation of such a combination commits a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of \$50 for each violation. A person cited under this subsection shall not be subject to citation under section 4904.

§ 4921. Width of vehicles.

(a) General rule.--The total outside width of a vehicle, including any load, shall not exceed eight feet except as otherwise provided in this section.

§ 4922. Height of vehicles.

(a) General rule.--No vehicle, including any load, shall exceed a height of 13 feet 6 inches. This provision shall not be construed to require public authorities to provide sufficient vertical clearance to permit the operation of such vehicles.

(b) Buses.--Any bus operated wholly within a municipality, where permitted by the municipality, or in more than one municipality, where approved by the Public Utility Commission, may be of a total height, including load, not to exceed 14 feet 6 inches.

(c) Exceptions.--The provisions of this subchapter governing the height of vehicles do not apply to fire apparatus or to vehicles used exclusively to repair overhead lights and wires.

(d) Penalty.--Any person convicted of operating a vehicle with a height greater than 13 feet 6 inches and traveling without a valid permit shall, upon conviction, pay a fine of \$500.

§ 4923. Length of vehicles.

(a) Motor vehicles.--

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), no motor vehicle, including any load and bumpers, shall exceed an overall length of 40 feet.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to the following:

(i) A motor vehicle equipped with a boom or boomlike device if the vehicle does not exceed 55 feet.

(ii) A bus, school bus or motor home which does not exceed 45 feet.

- (iii) An articulated bus which does not exceed 63 feet.
- (iv) An automobile or boat transporter which does not exceed 45 feet, exclusive of an overhang of not more than three feet on the front and four feet on the rear. An automobile transporter shall not be prohibited from the transport of cargo or general freight on a backhaul if the automobile transporter complies with the weight limitations for a motor vehicle.

(b) Excluded devices.--Devices listed in and meeting the requirements of 23 CFR Pt. 658 Appendix D (relating to devices that are excluded from measurement of the length or width of a commercial motor vehicle) are excluded from measurement of the length of a motor vehicle.

(b.1) Combinations.--

(1) The length of a single trailer being towed by a truck or truck tractor shall not exceed 53 feet. Truck or truck tractors towing trailers equipped with a kingpin shall not be operated when the distance between the kingpin and the center line of the rear axle or rear axle group exceeds 41 feet or, in the case of a trailer used exclusively or primarily to transport vehicles in connection with motor sports competition events, does not exceed 46 feet.

(2) For a double trailer, the length of each trailer being towed in combination by a truck tractor shall not exceed 28 ½ feet.

(3) The overall length of the combination of a truck tractor with a conventional fifth wheel and an auto or boat transporter shall not exceed 65 feet, exclusive of an overhang of not more than three feet on the front and four feet on the rear of the combination.

(4) The overall length of a stinger-steered auto or boat transporter combination shall not exceed 80 feet, exclusive of an overhang of not more than four feet on the front and six feet on the rear of the combination. A stinger-steered automobile transporter shall not be prohibited from the transport of cargo or general freight on a backhaul if the stinger-steered automobile transporter complies with the weight limitations for a truck tractor and semitrailer combination.

(5) The overall length of a saddle-mount combination shall not exceed 75 feet.

(6) The overall length of a maxi-cube combination shall not exceed 65 feet.

(7) A combination consisting of any tow truck towing a disabled motor vehicle to a place of repairs or other place of safety.

(8) A combination transporting articles that, themselves, do not exceed 70 feet in length and are nondivisible as to length.

(9) The overall length of a towaway trailer transporter combination shall not exceed 82 feet.

(c) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

“Automobile or boat transporter.” A truck of a total length not greater than 45 feet, exclusive of an overhang of not more than three feet on the front and four feet on the rear of the vehicle configured by the manufacturer to haul either automobiles, light trucks or boats.

“Towaway trailer transporter combination.” As follows:

(1) a combination of vehicles consisting of a trailer transporter towing unit and two trailers or semitrailers with a total weight that does not exceed 26,000 pounds; and

(2) the trailers or semitrailers carry no property and constitute inventory property of a manufacturer, distributor or dealer of the trailers or semitrailers.

“Trailer transporter towing unit.” A power unit that is not used to carry property when operating in a towaway trailer transporter combination

§ 4502. General requirements for braking systems.

(a) *Parking brakes.* — Every vehicle or combination, except a motorcycle, operated on a highway shall be equipped with a parking brake system adequate to hold the vehicle or combination on any grade on which it is operated, under all conditions of loading, on a surface free of ice or snow. The system shall not be designed to require a continuous or intermittent source of energy for full effectiveness after initial application.

(b) *Service brakes.* — Every vehicle and combination operated on a highway shall be equipped with a service brake system adequate to control the movement of and to stop and hold the vehicle or combination on any grade on which it is operated, under all conditions of loading, and adequate to meet the braking performance standards established by regulation of the department.

(c) *Breakaway systems.* — Every combination operated on a highway, the towed vehicle of which is equipped with brakes or which has a gross weight in excess of 3,000 pounds, shall be so equipped that, upon breakaway of the towed vehicle, the towed vehicle shall be stopped and held automatically, and the towing vehicle shall be capable of being stopped and held by use of its own service braking system.

(d) *Exceptions.* — This section does not apply to towed instruments of husbandry and such items or types of special mobile equipment or commercial implements of husbandry as are specifically exempted from compliance by regulations promulgated by the department.

§ 4303. General lighting requirements.

(a) *Head lamps.* — Every vehicle, except trailers, operated on a highway shall be equipped with a head lamp system in conformance with regulations of the department. The regulations shall not prohibit a bus from being equipped with devices used to carry pedalcycles on the front of the bus.

(b) *Rear lighting.* — Every vehicle operated on a highway shall be equipped with a rear lighting system including, but not limited to, rear lamps, rear reflectors, stop lamps and license plate light, in conformance with regulations of the department. If a vehicle is equipped with a centrally mounted rear stop light, a decal or overlay may be affixed to the centrally mounted rear stop light if the decal or overlay meets all applicable State and Federal regulations.

(c) *Turn signals and hazard warning lights.* — Every motor vehicle, except motorcycles and pedalcycles, and every trailer operated on a highway shall be equipped with a system of turn signal lights and hazard warning lights in conformance with regulations of the department.

(d) *Identification, clearance and side marker lights.* — Every motor vehicle, trailer and combination operated on a highway shall be equipped with a system of lights which may include

retroreflective reflectors, identification, clearance and side marker lights in conformance with regulations of the department.

(e) *Equipment exempted by regulation.* — Antique motor vehicles, animal-drawn vehicles, implements of husbandry, commercial implements of husbandry and special mobile equipment, if operated exclusively between the hours of sunrise and sunset and not during periods of reduced visibility or insufficient illumination, may be exempted from certain lighting equipment requirements of this part by regulations of the department.

(f) *Off-road lighting.* — Off-road lighting lamps may be mounted on the roof or roll bar of a vehicle and shall be covered with an opaque covering that prohibits any light from being emitted when the vehicle is being operated on a highway or trafficway. Any person who illuminates an off-road lighting lamp while the vehicle is being operated on a highway or a trafficway commits a summary offense and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of \$ 100.

(g) *Snow plow lamps.* — Snow plow lamps shall be installed as follows:

- (1) Snow plow lamps shall be wired through a double throw switch so that both sets of lights will not operate at the same time.
- (2) Snow plow lamps shall be aimed so that the high intensity beam does not project to left of extreme left side of vehicle nor higher than center of lamp at a distance of 25 feet in front of vehicle. In no case shall the high intensity portion of the beam be higher than 42 inches above level surface at a distance of 75 feet ahead. The lamps shall be spaced at a distance not less than 20 inches apart and shall be symmetrically located on each side of the vehicle centerline.
- (3) Fog lamps, if installed on a vehicle equipped with snow plow lamps, may be substituted for snow plow lamps anytime when, due to unfavorable atmospheric conditions, including rain, snow, sleet, hail, fog, smoke or smog, persons or vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernible to the operator for a distance of 1,000 feet ahead. Fog lamps that are used in lieu of snow plow lamps shall meet the same aiming requirements as snow plow lamps.

§ 4534. Rearview mirrors.

No person shall operate a motor vehicle or combination on a highway unless the vehicle or combination is equipped with at least one mirror, or similar device, which provides the driver an unobstructed view of the highway to the rear of the vehicle or combination. This section shall not apply to any special mobile equipment, commercial implement of husbandry or implement of husbandry that is not so equipped by the original manufacturer.