

New Hampshire Statutes

Trailer Summary:

Dimensions: Dimensions shall not exceed: a trailer length of 48 feet; a width of 102 inches; and a height 13 feet 6 inches.

Brakes: No motor vehicle trailer or semi-trailer shall be driven on the ways of this state unless equipped with adequate brakes in good working order and sufficient to control the said vehicle at all times.

Lighting/Reflectors: Every trailer shall have on the rear, 1 lamp, displaying a red light visible for a distance of at least 1000 feet, and a white light illuminating the registration plate of such vehicle so that the characters thereon shall be visible for a distance of at least 50 feet.

Every trailer having a width including load in excess of 80 inches, when on the ways of this state at night, shall have displayed on the front thereof 2 amber clearance lamps. Every such vehicle shall have displayed on the rear thereof, in addition to the tail lamp and reflectors, 2 red clearance lamps.

It shall be unlawful for any person to drive any trailer in this state unless it is equipped with one or more stop lamps in working order at all times.

Every trailer provided the weight of said trailer, including load, is 3,000 pounds or more, shall in addition to reflectors required, when driven upon the ways of this state at night, have displayed on the body or load carrying portion of said vehicle, the following: on each side one amber reflector, located at or near the front, and one red reflector located at or near the rear.

Hitch/Signals: Every trailer or semi-trailer including farm and agricultural vehicles shall have, in addition to the tow-bar or coupling device, a safety chain or cable to prevent breakaway from the towing vehicle. Each chain or cable shall have an ultimate strength at least equal to the gross weight of the trailer and load being towed. Chains or cables shall be connected to the towed and towing vehicle to prevent the tow-bar from dropping to the ground in the event the tow-bar fails.

Mirrors: No person shall drive upon a motor vehicle so that the driver is prevented from having a constantly free and unobstructed view of the way immediately in the rear, unless there is attached to the vehicle a mirror or reflector so placed and adjusted as to afford the driver a clear, reflected view of the way in the rear of the vehicle

Speed Limits: As posted.

Towing: No motor vehicle shall be used to tow another motor vehicle upon any way unless the 2 vehicles shall be connected by a tow bar of sufficient strength to control the movement of the vehicle being towed without manual steering of said towed vehicle.

Other: N/A

TITLE XXI: MOTOR VEHICLES

259:5 Automobile Utility Trailer. – "Automobile utility trailer" shall mean any trailer suitable for towing by a passenger automobile or pick-up truck, and which is being towed by such vehicle for the purpose of hauling personal property intrastate or interstate; excepting such trailers when hauling livestock.

259:37-a Full Trailer. – "Full trailer" shall mean any trailer being towed behind a semi-trailer as part of a combination vehicle also known as twin-trailers or "double bottoms."

259:98 Semi-trailer. – "Semi-trailer" shall mean a vehicle of the trailer type so designed and used in conjunction with a self-propelled vehicle that a considerable part of its own weight or that of its load rests upon and is carried by the towing vehicle, and not including a pair or set of wheels commonly used as an implement for other purposes than transportation, provided, however, that the word "semi-trailer" shall not include any vehicle as described in this section if used exclusively for agricultural purposes unless said vehicle be of the type constructed specifically to be towed by a tractor-type truck.

259:113 Trailer. – "Trailer" shall mean any vehicle without motive power designed for carrying property or passengers wholly on its own structure and for being drawn by a self-propelled vehicle, except those running exclusively on snow or on stationary tracks and vehicles used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

266:1-b Inspection of Trailers, Exemptions. –

I. Notwithstanding any law or rule to the contrary, trailers of 10,000 pounds or less gross vehicle weight rating not used in interstate commerce shall be exempt from periodic vehicle inspection requirements, but shall be subject as other vehicles are to periodic roadside inspection by law enforcement officers to determine that they have the proper required and fully functional safety equipment.

II. The director may authorize properly qualified dealers holding utility dealer registrations to inspect trailers of more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, to determine whether they are fit to be driven, and to issue inspection stickers, under rules adopted for this purpose pursuant to RSA 541-A. This section shall not apply to full trailers as defined in RSA 259:37-a or semi-trailers as defined in RSA 259:98, and shall not prohibit other official inspection stations from inspecting trailers.

266:10 Height. –

I. No vehicle, except a vehicle transporting manufactured housing or modular buildings, whose total height including load is greater than 13 feet, 6 inches, shall be driven on the ways of this state.

II. No manufactured housing or modular building whose total height is greater than 14 feet, 6 inches, shall be transported on the ways of this state. Transport of a manufactured housing unit or modular building that exceeds a total height of 13 feet, 6 inches shall require a non-police escort,

equipped in accordance with any rules established by the department of transportation under RSA 21-L:12-a.

266:11 Length. – The driving on ways of this state of any vehicle or combination of vehicles whose length including load exceeds the limitations of this section is hereby prohibited:

I. For a single unit vehicle or a bus, 45 feet including front and rear bumpers.

II. For a semi-trailer in a truck-tractor, semi-trailer combination, 53 feet, except that any semi-trailer in excess of 48 feet shall not be operated if:

(a) The distance between the kingpin and the centerline of the rear axle or the midpoint of a tandem axle of the semi-trailer exceeds 41 feet;

(b) The semi-trailer is not equipped with a rear end protection device of substantial construction consisting of a continuous lateral beam extending to within 4 inches of the lateral extremities of the semi-trailer and located not more than 22 inches from the surface as measured with the semi-trailer empty and on a level surface; and

(c) Operated on highways other than any interstate or defense highway, unless such highway is designated by the commissioner. This shall not preclude movements on highways other than interstate, defense and designated highways for a distance of one mile to terminals, points of pickup and delivery, fuel, repairs, food or rest using the most direct, practical route except if the commissioner precludes such travel for specific safety reasons on individual routes. The commissioner may designate other roads or highways in the state where semi-trailers 53 feet in length or less may be operated. The commissioner may adopt rules pursuant to RSA 541-A to impose further requirements or limitations on semi-trailers of this length.

III. For a semi-trailer or full trailer being driven as part of a combination vehicle with 2 trailing units, 28 feet.

IV. For manufactured housing or modular building transport, 110 feet including the transport vehicle.

266:11-a Length Exceptions. – Notwithstanding the provisions of RSA 266:11, it shall be lawful to drive on the ways of this state:

I. A vehicle or a combination of vehicles that exceeds the length limits in RSA 266:11 if such vehicle or combination is transporting poles, logs, timbers or metal in a case in which the load is not readily divisible and such overhang does not interfere with steering the vehicle.

II. A conventional automobile transporter combination not in excess of 65 feet exclusive of a 3-foot front overhang and a 4-foot rear overhang.

III. Saddle-mount plus full-mount combinations not in excess of 65 feet.

IV. A stinger-steered automobile transporter combination not in excess of 75 feet exclusive of a 3-foot front and 4-foot rear overhang.

V. An emergency fire fighting vehicle.

266:12 Width. – The driving on ways of this state of any vehicle whose width including load exceeds the limitations of this section is hereby prohibited:

I. A vehicle in excess of 102 inches in width.

II. A passenger type vehicle that is carrying a load which extends over the sides of the vehicle beyond the line of the fenders on the left side or extends more than 6 inches beyond the line of the fenders on the right side of the vehicle.

266:63 Trailer Breakaway Safety Chains. – Every trailer or semi-trailer including farm and agricultural vehicles shall have, in addition to the tow-bar or coupling device, a safety chain or cable to prevent breakaway from the towing vehicle. Each chain or cable shall have an ultimate strength at least equal to the gross weight of the trailer and load being towed. Chains or cables shall be connected to the towed and towing vehicle to prevent the tow-bar from dropping to the ground in the event the tow-bar fails. This provision shall not apply to:

I. Truck-tractor and semi-trailer units equipped with fifth wheel mechanisms;

II. Full trailers being driven as part of a truck-tractor, semi-trailer, or full trailer unit when the full trailer is attached to the semi-trailer by means of a converter dolly or fifth wheel mechanism;

III. Trailers being towed by motorcycles; or

IV. Farm implements towed behind farm tractors, if the hitch pin used to connect such implement to the tractor has an ultimate strength at least equal to the gross weight of the implement and is fitted with a safety clip or lock mechanism to prevent dislodging of the pin by vibration or shock in conformance to standards of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.

266:30 Trailer Brakes.

I. No motor vehicle trailer or semi-trailer shall be driven on the ways of this state unless equipped with adequate brakes in good working order and sufficient to control the said vehicle at all times. No house trailer weighing in excess of 1,500 pounds shall be driven on the ways of this state unless so equipped.

II. This section shall not apply to:

(a) A motor vehicle trailer or semi-trailer with a gross weight of less than 3,000 pounds if the axle weight of the towed vehicle does not exceed 40 percent of the sum of the rated axle weights of the towing vehicle.

(b) Wood-sawing machines, log splitters, cement mixers, compressors, tar kettles, conveyors, devices of 2 wheels used by public utilities for the transportation of cables or poles not exceeding 6 in number, road rollers and sweepers, thawing devices, or refreshment booths on wheels towed not more than 2 miles at any one time, only if being driven in intrastate commerce on the ways of New Hampshire.

266:44 Tail Lamp and Reflectors.

Every motor vehicle and trailer or any combination of vehicles, when on the ways of this state at night, shall have on the rear thereof, and to the left of the axis thereof, one lamp, displaying a red light visible for a distance of at least 1000 feet to the rear of such vehicle, and a white light illuminating the registration plate of such vehicle so that the characters thereon shall be visible for a distance of at least 50 feet, except that passenger cars manufactured or assembled after January 1, 1952, shall have at least 2 tail lamps, one to either side of the axis thereof. On a combination of vehicles, only the tail lamps on the rearmost vehicle need actually be seen from the distance specified. On vehicles equipped with more than one tail lamp, the lamps shall be mounted on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable. All tail lamps on any vehicle shall be located at a height of not more than 72 inches nor less than 20 inches from the ground, measured from the ground to the center of the reflector, and shall be placed in such manner as to indicate the extreme width of the vehicle and load and to reflect rays of light thrown upon such reflector. The visibility of such reflectors shall not be impaired at any time.

Whenever a vehicle is manufactured with multiple tail lamps or multiple bulbs or filaments in the tail lamps, each of the lamps, bulbs, or filaments and any other exterior lighting equipment with which the vehicle was manufactured shall be in working order.

266:40 Clearance Lamps.

Every bus, motor truck, trailer or semi-trailer, having a width including load in excess of 80 inches, when on the ways of this state at night, shall have displayed on the front thereof, in addition to the front lights provided for in RSA 266:31, 2 amber clearance lamps. Every such vehicle shall have displayed on the rear thereof, in addition to the tail lamp and reflectors provided for in RSA 266:44, 2 red clearance lamps. All clearance lamps shall be located on the permanent part of the body, as high as possible thereon, one at the extreme left and one at the extreme right, to indicate the extreme width of said vehicle and load. Those on the front shall be visible, when lighted, for a distance of at least 500 feet from the front and the side and those at the rear shall be visible, when lighted, for a distance of at least 500 feet from the rear and the side, of said vehicle.

However, in the case of vehicles and loads in excess of 45 feet in length, the rearmost clearance lamp arrangement shall be mounted on each side of the rearmost support for the load, one combination marker lamp showing amber to the front and red to the side and rear, mounted to indicate the maximum width of the vehicle and load. Said clearance lamps shall be of such type, size and color as shall be approved by the director.

266:38 Stop Lamps.

It shall be unlawful for any person to drive any motor vehicle, including any motorcycle, moped or motor-driven cycle, full trailer, trailer, or semi-trailer in this state unless it is equipped with one or more stop lamps in working order at all times; provided, however, that stop lamps shall not be required on a farm tractor, and further provided that whenever a vehicle is manufactured

with multiple stop lamps or stop lamps with multiple bulbs or filaments, each of the lamps, bulbs, or filaments shall be in working order.

266:45 Additional Reflectors.

Every bus, motor truck, and every trailer and semi-trailer, provided the weight of said trailer or semi-trailer, including load, is 3,000 pounds or more, shall in addition to reflectors required in RSA 266:44, when driven upon the ways of this state at night, have displayed on the body or load carrying portion of said vehicle, the following: on each side one amber reflector, located at or near the front, and one red reflector located at or near the rear. Such reflectors shall be of such a type and size as shall be approved by the director and shall be located not less than 24 nor more than 48 inches from the ground. The visibility of any such reflector shall not be impaired at any time.

266:55 Mirrors.

No person shall drive upon any way any closed motor vehicle, or motor vehicle so constructed, equipped, or loaded that the driver is prevented from having a constantly free and unobstructed view of the way immediately in the rear, unless there is attached to the vehicle a mirror or reflector so placed and adjusted as to afford the driver a clear, reflected view of the way in the rear of the vehicle.

266:64 Tow Bars Required.

Except for duly registered wrecking vehicles and transporters or motor vehicles towing with a chain or cable for no more than one mile another motor vehicle which is disabled and unable to proceed under its own power, no motor vehicle shall be used to tow another motor vehicle upon any way unless the 2 vehicles shall be connected by a tow bar of sufficient strength to control the movement of the vehicle being towed without manual steering of said towed vehicle.