

District of Columbia:

Trailer Summary:

Dimensions: Dimensions shall not exceed: a total overall length of 55 feet; a trailer length of 40 feet; a height of 13 Feet 6 inches; a width of 102 inches.

Brakes: Each trailer, with a gross weight in excess of 3,000 lbs. shall be equipped with brakes acting on all wheels. Brakes must remain applied for at 15 minutes, upon breakaway from the towing vehicle.

There shall be a manually controlled device for applying and releasing the brakes that is readily operable by a person seated in the driving seat.

Lighting/Reflectors: Trailers have the same headlamp and tail lamp requirements as other motor vehicles.

On each trailer or semi-trailer having a gross weight in excess of three thousand pounds (3,000 lbs.), there shall be the following: On the front, two clearance lamps, one at each side; On each side, two side marker lamps, one at or near the front and one at or near the rear; and on the rear, two clearance lamps, one at each side, and two reflectors, one at each side, and two stop lights.

Hitch/Signals: Any time a vehicle is being towed by use of a hitch, safety chains shall also be used to secure the vehicles.

Any motor vehicle may be equipped; and when required, shall be equipped; with lamps showing to the front and rear for the purpose of indicating an intention to turn either to the right or left.

Mirrors: Each motor vehicle shall be equipped with a mirror or mirrors so located as to reflect a view of the highway for a distance of at least 200 feet.

Speed Limits: As posted

Towing: N/A

Other: N/A

Definitions:

9900 GENERAL PROVISIONS

9900.1 The terms and phrases used in this title shall have the meanings set forth in this chapter, unless the text or context of the particular chapter, section, subsection, or paragraph provides otherwise.

9901.1 When used in this chapter, the following terms and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed:

Commercial Vehicle - any vehicle with more than three (3) wheels and:

- (a) Greater than twenty-two (22) feet in length; or
- (b) Used or maintained for transporting freight, merchandise, or other commercial loads or property; or
- (c) Described as a “commercial” vehicle on its certificate of title in accordance with 18 DCMR § 403.4; or
- (d) Considered a commercial vehicle by the Director pursuant to 18 DCMR § 413.13 because it has an irremovable commercial advertisement or insignia.

Motor Vehicle - any vehicle propelled by internal-combustion engine, electricity, or steam, including any non-operational vehicle that is being restored or repaired. The term "motor vehicle" shall not include road rollers, farm tractors, vehicles propelled only upon stationary rails or tracks, electric personal assistive mobility devices, and battery-operated wheelchairs when operated by a handicapped person at speeds not exceeding 10 miles per hour.

Trailer - a vehicle with or without motor power intended to be used for carrying property or persons and drawn or intended to be drawn by a motor vehicle, whether such vehicle without motor power carries the weight of the property or persons wholly on its own structure or whether a part of such weight rests upon or is carried by a motor vehicle.

Vehicle - any of the following:

- (a) A motor vehicle or trailer;
- (b) An appliance moved over a highway on wheels or traction tread including draft animals and beasts of burden.

2502 LENGTH OF VEHICLES, TRAILERS, COMBINATIONS, AND LOADS

2502.1 Except as provided in § 2502.7, no single unit vehicle, including any load on the vehicle, shall have an overall length in excess of forty feet (40 ft.), inclusive of the front and rear bumpers.

2502.2 Except as provided in §§ 2502.3, 2502.4 and 2502.10, no combination of vehicles, including the length of any load on such combination, shall exceed

a total overall length of fifty-five feet (55 ft.), inclusive of the extreme front and rear bumpers of the combination.

- 2502.3 A semi-trailer (single) when operated in combination with a truck-tractor and when operated on a street, road, highway, or route specified in § 2511 shall not be subject to the limitations specified in §§ 2502.1 and 2502.2; Provided, that the semi-trailer shall not exceed forty-eight feet (48 ft.) in length.
- 2502.4 A semi-trailer and a trailer (double) where operated in combination with a truck-tractor and when operated on a route specified in § 2511 shall not be subject to the limitations specified in §§ 2502.1 and 2502.2; Provided, that each semi-trailer or each trailer operated in this combination shall not exceed twenty-eight feet (28 ft.) in length.
- 2502.5 Except as provided in § 2502.6, no combination of vehicles coupled together shall consist of more than two (2) units, except that four (4) units may be coupled together by the double saddle-mount method.
- 2502.6 A tractor-trailer combination may consist of three (3) units coupled together when operated on a route specified in § 2511.
- 2502.7 A bus, including the length of any load on the vehicle, shall have an overall length not to exceed sixty feet (60 ft.), if travel is restricted to a route approved by the Director.
- 2502.8 The limitations on length of vehicles and loads set forth in this section shall not apply to any load upon a pole-trailer operating in the daytime when transporting poles, pipes, or structural materials which cannot be dismembered, nor to vehicles transporting objects at night when required for emergency repair of public utility or public service facilities.
- 2502.9 No pole, pipe, or other material exceeding eighty feet (80 ft.) in length shall be transported, either in the daytime or at night, unless a permit has first been obtained as provided for in § 2508.
- 2502.10 With respect to night transportation, each vehicle listed under §§ 2502.8 and 2502.9, and the load on that vehicle shall have a sufficient number of clearance markers on both sides and marker lamps upon the extreme ends of any projecting load to clearly mark the dimensions of the load.
- 2502.11 Commercial motor vehicles with semi-trailers with a kingpin distance of forty-one feet (41 ft.) or less (measured from the kingpin to the center of the rear axle, if single, or the center of a group of rear axles), shall not be

subject to the limitations specified in §§ 2502.1, 2502.2 and 2511.3.

SOURCE: Final Rulemaking published at 33 DCR 3716 (June 20, 1986); and as amended by Final Rulemaking published at 38 DCR 6646 (November 1, 1991).

703 LAMPS AND OTHER LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

- 703.1 Each vehicle operated on a highway at any time from one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour after sunset to one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour before sunrise, and at any other time when, due to insufficient light or unfavorable atmospheric conditions, persons and vehicles on the highway are not clearly discernible at a distance of five hundred feet (500 ft.) ahead shall display lighted lamps and illuminating devices as required in this chapter for different classes of vehicles, subject to exceptions with respect to parked vehicles.
- 703.2 The provisions of this chapter which set forth specific distances from which certain lamps and devices shall render objects visible, or distances within which such lamps or devices shall be visible, shall apply during the times stated in this section with respect to a vehicle without load when upon a straight, level, unlighted highway under normal atmospheric conditions, unless a different time or condition is expressly stated.
- 703.3 The provisions of this chapter which require a specific mounted height of lamps or devices shall mean a distance measured from the center of the lamp or device to the level ground upon which the vehicle stands when the vehicle is without a load.
- 703.4 The sections of this chapter which relate to clearance and marker lamps, reflectors, and stop lights shall apply as stated in those sections to vehicles of the type enumerated in those sections; namely, passenger buses, trucks, truck trailers, and certain trailers, semi-trailers, and pole trailers, respectively, when operated upon any street or highway.
- 703.5 The vehicles cited in § 703.4 shall be equipped as required and all lamp equipment required shall be lighted at the times mentioned in this section, Provided, that clearance and side marker lamps need not be lighted on any such vehicle when operated where there is sufficient light to render clearly discernible persons and vehicles on the highway at a distance of five hundred feet (500 ft.).
- 703.6 Whenever motor vehicles and other vehicles are operated in combination during the time when lights are required, any lamp (except tail lamps) need not be lighted which, by reason of its location on a vehicle of the

combination, would be obscured by another vehicle of the combination; Provided, that this shall not affect the requirement that lighted clearance lamps be displayed on the front of the foremost vehicle required to have clearance lamps, nor that all lights required on the rear of the rear most vehicle of any combination shall be lighted.

703.7 Whenever the load upon any vehicle extends to the rear four feet (4 ft.) or more beyond the bed or body of the loaded vehicle, there shall be displayed at the extreme rear end of the load, at the times specified in this section, a red light or lantern plainly visible from distance of at least five hundred feet (500 ft.) to the sides and rear.

703.8 The red light or lantern required in this section shall be in addition to the red rear light required upon every vehicle.

703.9 At any other time when lights are not required, there shall be displayed at the extreme rear end of the extended load a red flag or cloth not less than twelve inches square (12 in.) which is so hung that the entire area is visible to the driver of a vehicle approaching from the rear.

703.10 In addition to the requirements of subsection 703.1, whenever a motor vehicle's windshield wipers are operated for a continuous period of time because of impaired visibility resulting from unfavorable atmospheric conditions, the vehicle headlamps shall also be lighted. Provided, however:

- (a) A violation of this subsection shall not constitute or be used as evidence of negligence or contributory negligence, limit liability of any party or insurer, or diminish the recovery for damages arising out of the ownership, maintenance, or operation of a motor vehicle.
- (b) A police officer may enforce the provisions of this subsection only as a secondary action when the police officer detains a driver of a motor vehicle for a suspected violation of another traffic regulation.

707 ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED ON CERTAIN VEHICLES

707.1 In addition to other equipment required in these regulations, all vehicles manufactured or assembled on and after September 15, 1957, shall be equipped as set forth in this section in accordance with the conditions stated in § 703.4.

707.2 On each bus or truck, whatever its size, there shall be the following: On the

rear, two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side; and two (2) stop lights.

707.3 On each bus or truck eighty inches (80 in.) or more in overall width, in addition to the requirements in § 707.2, there shall be the following:

- (a) On the front, two (2) clearance lamps, one (1) at each side;
- (b) On the rear, two (2) clearance lamps, one (1) at each side;
- (c) On each side, two (2) side marker lamps, one (1) at or near the front and one (1) at or near the rear; and
- (d) On each side, two (2) reflectors, one (1) at or near the front and one (1) at or near the rear.

707.4 On each truck tractor, there shall be the following:

- (a) On the front, two (2) clearance lamps, one (1) at each side; and
- (b) On the rear, one (1) stop light.

707.5 On each trailer or semi-trailer having a gross weight in excess of three thousand pounds (3,000 lbs.), there shall be the following:

- (a) On the front, two (2) clearance lamps, one (1) at each side;
- (b) On each side, two (2) side marker lamps, one (1) at or near the front and one (1) at or near the rear; and
- (c) On the rear, two (2) clearance lamps, one (1) at each side, and two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side, and two (2) stop lights.

707.6 On each pole trailer in excess of three thousand pounds (3,000 lbs.) gross weight, there shall be the following:

- (a) On each side, one (1) side marker lamp and one (1) clearance lamp which may be in combination, to show to the front, side, and rear; and
- (b) On the rear of the pole trailer or load, two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side.

707.7 On each trailer, semi-trailer, or pole trailer weighing three thousand pounds (3,000 lbs.) gross or less, there shall be the following:

- (a) On the rear, two (2) reflectors, one (1) on each side; and
 - (b) If any trailer or semi-trailer is so loaded or is of such dimensions as to obscure the stop light on the towing vehicle, then that vehicle shall also be equipped with two (2) stop lights.
- 707.8 Each tow crane or tow truck shall be equipped with flashing, blinking, or alternating warning lamp or lamps and the lamp or lamps shall be operated only while at the scene of a disabled vehicle or while actually towing a disabled vehicle.
- 707.9 Each warning lamp shall be of a type approved by the Director.
- 707.10 When two (2) lamps are used to display the warning on a tow crane or tow truck, they shall be mounted at the same level on the top of the cab and as widely spaced laterally as practicable and shall display a flashing, blinking, or alternating white or amber light or any shade of color between white and amber to the front.
- 707.11 The lamps used to display the warning to the rear on a tow crane or tow truck shall be mounted at the same level on the top of the cab and as widely spaced laterally as practicable and shall display a flashing, blinking, or alternating amber or red light or any shade of color between amber and red.
- 707.12 When a single warning lamp is used on a tow crane or tow truck, it shall be mounted on the top of the cab as near center as practicable and shall display a flashing, blinking, or alternating white or amber light or any shade of color between white and amber to the front, and an amber or red light or any shade of color between amber and red to the rear.
- 707.13 The warning light or lights on a tow crane or tow truck shall be visible from a distance of not less than five hundred feet (500 ft.) under normal atmospheric conditions.

721 TRACTOR AND TRAILER BRAKES

- 721.1 Each trailer, semi-trailer, and pole trailer equipped with air or vacuum actuated brakes and every trailer, semi-trailer, and pole trailer with a gross weight in excess of three thousand pounds (3,000 lbs.), manufactured or assembled after September 15, 1963, shall be equipped with brakes acting on all wheels which will be applied automatically and promptly, and remain

applied for at least fifteen (15) minutes, upon breakaway from the towing vehicle.

- 721.2 Every motor vehicle manufactured or assembled after September 15, 1963, and used to tow a trailer, semi-trailer or pole trailer equipped with brakes, shall be equipped with means for providing that, in case of breakaway of the towed vehicle, the towing vehicle will be capable of being stopped by the use of its service brakes.
- 721.3 Air brake systems installed on trailers manufactured or assembled after September 15, 1963, shall be so designed that the supply reservoir used to provide air for the brakes shall be safeguarded against backflow of air from the reservoir through the supply line.
- 721.4 Each towing vehicle, when used to tow another vehicle equipped with air controlled brakes in other than driveway or towaway operations, shall be equipped with two (2) means for emergency application of the trailer brakes.
- 721.5 One of the means for emergency application of trailer brakes shall apply the brakes automatically in the event of a reduction of the towing vehicle air supply to a fixed pressure which shall not be lower than twenty pounds per square inch (20 lbs./in.) or higher than forty-five pounds per square inch (45 lbs./in.).
- 721.6 The other means for emergency application of the trailer brakes shall be a manually controlled device for applying and releasing the brakes, readily operable by a person seated in the driving seat and its emergency position or method of operation shall be clearly indicated. In no instance may the manual means be arranged to permit its use to prevent operation of the automatic means. The automatic and manual means required by this section may be separate, but are not required to be separate.
- 721.7 Each towing vehicle used to tow other vehicles equipped with vacuum brakes in operations other than driveway or towaway operations, shall have, in addition to the single control device required by § 720.10, a second control device which can be used to operate the brakes on towed vehicles in emergencies.
- 721.8 The second control required by § 721.7 shall be independent of other controls, unless the braking system be so arranged that failure of the pressure on which the second control depends will cause the towed vehicle brakes to be applied automatically. The second control is not required to provide modulated braking.

731 WINDSHIELDS AND MIRRORS

- 731.1 No person shall drive any motor vehicle with any sign, poster, or other non-transparent material upon the front windshield, sidewings, or side or rear windows of the vehicle, except a sticker authorized by the Mayor, Public Service Commission, the Joint Board, or the Director.
- 731.2 The windshield on a motor vehicle shall be equipped with a mechanically operated device for cleaning rain, snow, or other moisture from the windshield. This device shall be constructed to be controlled by the driver of the vehicle.
- 731.3 No motor vehicle manufactured after January 1, 1938, shall be operated in the District unless the same is equipped with windshield wipers capable of wiping the right and left hand sides of the windshield.
- 731.4 Each windshield wiper shall be maintained in good working order.
- 731.5 No motor vehicle shall be operated when the windshield is cracked, scarred, clouded, or otherwise defective so as to obstruct vision.
- 731.6 Each motor vehicle shall be equipped with a mirror or mirrors so located as to reflect to the driver, under all conditions of loading, a view of the highway for a distance of at least two hundred feet (200 ft.) to the rear of the vehicle; Provided, that all vehicles licensed under the provisions of paragraph 31(b) and (c) of the Act of July 1, 1932, shall be equipped with two (2) adjustable rear-view mirrors installed to enable the driver to obtain a reasonably clear view toward the rear.

2501. WIDTH AND HEIGHT OF VEHICLES

- 2501.1 Except as provided in §§ 2501.2 and 2501.3, the total outside width of any vehicle shall not exceed eight feet (8 ft.).
- 2501.2 Buses may have an overall width not to exceed eight feet, six inches (8 ft. 6 in.), if travel is restricted to a route approved by the Director.
- 2501.3 Tractor-trailer combinations may have an overall width not to exceed eight feet, six inches (8 ft 6 in.), if the tractor-trailer combination travels on a route, street, road, or highway specified in § 2511.

2501.4 No passenger vehicle shall be operated on any public District highway, street, or road with any load carried on the vehicle extending laterally beyond the line of the fenders on the left side of the vehicle or extending laterally more than six inches (6 in.) beyond the line of the fenders on the right side.

2501.5 No vehicle which is higher than thirteen feet, six inches (13 ft. 6 in.), including the height of any load on that vehicle, shall operate on a public District highway, street, or road.

2501.6 The intent and purpose of § 2501.5 is to regulate vehicle height only, and nothing in this title shall be construed to require the District government, any railroad, or any private corporation to do the following:

- (a) To provide sufficient vertical clearance to permit the operation of regulated vehicles; or
- (b) To make any changes in or about existing structures now crossing streets, roads, or other public thoroughfares in the District.

2504. TOWING VEHICLES

2504.1 Trailer and semi-trailer hitches and couplings shall be of such design and strength values as to conform to the requirements of this title.

2504.2 When one vehicle is towing another, the drawbar or other connection shall be of sufficient strength to pull all weight towed thereby and the drawbar or other connection shall not exceed fifteen feet (15 ft.) from one vehicle to the other, except the connection between any two (2) vehicles transporting poles, pipes, machinery, or other objects of structural nature which cannot readily be dismembered.

2504.3 Where chain, rope, or cable is used as the connection between the front and rear vehicle, with no rigid coupling, there shall be a driver for both the front and rear cars, except where the rear car is towed by a crane or where the rear car is lashed to the front car.

2504.4 When one vehicle is towing another and the connection consists of a chain, rope, or cable, there shall be displayed upon the connection a white flag or cloth not less than twelve inches square (12 in.²).

2504.5 Safety chains shall be used on all trailers and trailer combinations when operated on the streets and highways of the District in addition to the hitch bar. The chains shall be connected to the tractor vehicle and the drawn vehicle and be of sufficient strength to hold the trailer on a hill if the hitching bar becomes disconnected.

706. STOP LAMPS, TURN SIGNALS, AND REFLECTORS

706.1 No motor vehicle, trailer, or semi-trailer manufactured or assembled before September 15, 1957, shall be operated in the District unless same is equipped with at least one (1) stop lamp meeting the requirements of § 713.

706.2 No motor vehicle, trailer or semi-trailer manufactured or assembled on and after September 15, 1957, shall be operated in the District unless it is equipped with at least two (2) stop lamps meeting the requirements of § 713; except that truck tractors manufactured or assembled after September 15, 1957 but prior to January 1, 1968, autocycles, motorcycles, and motor-driven cycles shall be equipped with at least one (1) stop lamp meeting the requirements of § 713.

706.3 No motor vehicle, trailer, or semi-trailer, manufactured or assembled on and after September 15, 1955, shall be operated in the District unless it is equipped with electric turn signals meeting the requirements of § 713.

706.4 Repealed.

706.5 All signal devices shall conform to the standards and specifications of the Society of Automotive Engineers applicable to such equipment current at the time such device is attached.

706.6 Each new motor vehicle sold and operated upon a street or highway, other than a truck tractor, shall carry on the rear, either as part of the tail lamps or separately, two (2) red reflectors, except that each autocycle, motorcycle, and motor-driven cycle shall carry at least one (1) reflector meeting the requirements of this section; and Provided, that vehicles of the type listed in § 707 shall be equipped with reflectors as specifically required in this chapter. Each new motorized bicycle sold and operated upon a street or highway shall carry on the rear, either as part of the tail lamp or separately, one (1) red reflector that meets the requirements of this section.

706.7 Each reflector shall be mounted on the vehicle at a height not less than fifteen inches (15 in.) or more than sixty inches (60 in.) measured asset forth in § 703.3, and shall be of such size and characteristics and so mounted as to be visible at night from all distances within three hundred feet (300 ft.) to fifty feet (50 ft.) from the vehicle when directly in front of lawful upperbeams of head lamps, except that visibility from a greater distance is required of reflectors on certain types of vehicles.

713. SIGNAL LAMPS AND SIGNAL DEVICES

713.1 Any motor vehicle may be equipped, and when required by this chapter shall be equipped, with a stop lamp or lamps on the rear of the vehicle which shall display a red or amber light, or any shade of color between red and amber, visible from a distance of not less than one hundred feet (100 ft.) to the rear in normal sunlight, and which shall be actuated upon application of the service (foot) brake and which may (but need not be) incorporated with one (1) or more other rear lamps.

713.2 Stop lamps on motor-driven cycles and motorized bicycles may be actuated upon application of the left handlebar brake.

713.3 Any motor vehicle may be equipped; and when required, shall be equipped; with lamps showing to the front and rear for the purpose of indicating an intention to turn either to the right or left.

713.4 When lamps are used for turn indicators, the lamps showing to the front shall be located on the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable, and when in use shall display a white or amber light, or any shade of color between white and amber, visible from a distance of not less than one hundred feet (100 ft.) to the front in normal sunlight. The lamps showing to the rear shall be located at the same level and as widely spaced laterally as practicable, and when in use shall display a red or amber light, or any shade of color between red and amber, visible from a distance of not less than one hundred feet (100 ft.) to the rear in normal sunlight.

713.5 When actuated, turn indicator lamps shall indicate the direction of the intended turn by flashing the light showing to the front and rear on the side toward which the turn is going to be made.

713.6 No stop lamp or signal lamp shall project a glaring light.