

**New York:**  
**Equipment Required for Trailers**  
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New York State Department of Motor Vehicles  
 Division of Vehicle Safety Services

**EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR TRAILERS**

[www.dmv.ny.gov](http://www.dmv.ny.gov)

REQUIRED LIGHTING DEVICES & REFLECTORS. . . . . **All devices must be of a type approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.**  
 . . . . . A combination lighting unit may be used to satisfy more than one purpose.

ITEM	NUMBER REQUIRED	LOCATION (Heights specified are measured in inches from road surface to center of item).
Red Tail Lamps	2	Rear - One each side, at the same height (not less than 15" nor more than 72"), and as far apart as practicable.
Red Stop Lamps	2	Rear - Same as tail lamp above.
White Number Plate Lamp	1	Rear - Located to illuminate registration number plate from top or side.
Red Reflex Reflectors*	2	Rear - One each side of the vertical centerline, as far apart as practicable.
	2	Sides- As far to the rear as practicable.
Amber Reflex Reflectors*	2	Sides- As far to the front as practicable.
	2	Sides- At or near the center, only on vehicles 30 feet or more in length.
Red Side Marker Lamps**	2	Sides- As far to the rear as practicable.
Amber Side Marker Lamps**	2	Sides- As far to the front as practicable.
	2	Sides- At or near the midpoint, only on vehicles 30 feet or more in length.
Red or Amber Turn Signal Lamps	2	Rear- As far apart as possible, not less than 15" or more than 83" high.
Identification Lamp (3 lamp cluster) for vehicles 80" or more in width (including wheels)	1	Rear- As close as practicable to the top of vehicle at vertical centerline. Lamp centers should be spaced not less than 6" or more than 12" apart.
Red Clearance Lamps for vehicles 80" or more in width (including wheels)	2	Rear- As near to top and as far apart as practicable.
Amber Clearance Lamps for vehicles 80" or more in width (including wheels)	2	Front- As near to top and as far apart as practicable.

\* Note: Red and amber reflex reflectors should be mounted at same height, not less than 15" nor more than 60" high.  
 \*\*Note: Red and amber side marker lamps should be mounted at same height, not less than 15" nor more than 60" high.

HAZARD WARNING..... 1966 and newer trailers must have two rear turn signal lamps that operate in conjunction with the towing vehicle hazard warning system.

SPLASH GUARDS..... Trailers towed by commercial vehicles must be constructed or equipped with splash guards to prevent water or other road surface substances from being thrown by the rearmost wheels beyond the extreme rear of the trailer, and to minimize side spray.

TRAILER ATTACHMENT..... Every trailer must be attached to prevent its wheels from being deflected more than six inches from the path of the towing vehicle's wheels.  
 Every trailer, except semi-trailers, must be attached to the towing vehicle by a device, including safety chains, of a type approved by the Commissioner.

TIRES ..... Trailers must be equipped with tires in safe operating condition. A tire is deemed to be in unsafe operating condition if there is a visual break, a cut in excess of one inch, a bump, a bulge, ply or cord exposure, tread design completely worn or tread depth (when measured with a tire gauge) is less than 2/32 of an inch.

BRAKES ..... Trailers weighing over 1,000 pounds unladen, and trailers having a maximum gross weight in excess of 3,000 pounds, must be equipped with brakes.

Brakes must be adequate to control the vehicle at all times, be in good working order and must comply with the standards set by the Commissioner for brake efficiency.

Commercially used trailers must have an emergency breakaway system, which will hold the trailer stationary for at least 15 minutes.

## **NY Code - Vehicle and Traffic:**

§ 143. Semitrailer. Any trailer which is so designed that when operated the forward end of its body or chassis rests upon the body or chassis of the towing vehicle.

§ 156. Trailer. Any vehicle not propelled by its own power drawn on the public highways by a motor vehicle as defined in section one hundred twenty-five operated thereon, except motorcycle side cars, vehicles being towed by a non-rigid support and vehicles designed and primarily used for other purposes and only occasionally drawn by such a motor vehicle.

### **Vehicle and Traffic**

§ 385. Dimensions and weights of vehicles. No person shall operate or move, or cause or knowingly permit to be operated or moved on any highway or bridge thereon, in any county not wholly included within a city, any vehicle or combination of vehicles of a size or weight exceeding the limitations provided for in this section. Except as otherwise specifically provided in subdivision fifteen of this section, no person shall operate or move, or cause or knowingly permit to be operated or moved on any highway or bridge thereon, in any city not wholly included within one county, any vehicle or combination of vehicles of a size or weight exceeding the limitations provided for in the rules and regulations of the city department of transportation of such city adopted pursuant to section sixteen hundred forty-two of this chapter.

1. (a) (i) The width of a vehicle, inclusive of load, shall be not more than ninety-six inches plus safety devices, except that the maximum width of a vehicle, inclusive of load, shall be one hundred two inches, plus safety devices, on any qualifying or access highway. Except in a city not wholly included within one county, the maximum width of a vehicle, inclusive of load shall not be more than one hundred two inches plus safety devices on any other highway with traffic lanes designed to be a width of ten feet or more.
2. The height of a vehicle from under side of tire to top of vehicle, inclusive of load, shall be not more than thirteen and one-half feet. Any damage to highways, bridges or highway structures resulting from the use of a vehicle exceeding thirteen feet in height where such excess height is the proximate cause of the accident shall be compensated for by the owner and operator of such vehicle.
3. (a) The length of a single vehicle, inclusive of load and bumpers,

shall be not more than forty feet unless otherwise provided in this subdivision.

(b) The length of a semitrailer or trailer shall not exceed forty-eight feet provided, however, that the length of any trailer or semitrailer being operated in combination with another trailer or semitrailer shall not exceed twenty-eight and one-half feet. A B-train assembly shall be excluded from the measurement of the length of a semitrailer when such semitrailer is in use between the tractor and the second semitrailer in a tractor-semi-trailer-semi-trailer combination of vehicles.

(c) The length of buses having a carrying capacity of more than seven passengers shall not exceed forty-five feet, except that the length of articulated buses shall not exceed sixty-two feet. A house coach shall not exceed forty-five feet in length, provided however, that if a house coach exceeds forty feet in length, its wall-to-wall turning diameter shall not exceed ninety feet three inches and moreover, such house coach shall have permanently affixed to its body on the front passenger side door jamb, a data-plate on which the house coach manufacturer indicates the vehicle identification number and wall-to-wall turning diameter and attests to the fact that the wall-to-wall turning diameter is calculated in accordance with the Society of Automotive Engineers J-695 Standard as such standard existed on June first, two thousand three, regarding turning capability. In the event such a house coach exceeds either twenty-six thousand pounds gross vehicle weight rating, is greater than forty feet in length or exceeds both, the operator of such house coach must have a driver's license with a personal use vehicle endorsement as set forth in subparagraph (vii) of paragraph (b) of subdivision two of section five hundred one of the this chapter. This provision shall not apply to any city not wholly included within one county except such house coaches and fifth wheel trailers used for non-commercial purposes may be operated on that portion of interstate ninety-five which connects interstate two hundred eighty-seven with interstate two hundred ninety-five, that portion of interstate two hundred ninety-five which connects interstate ninety-five with interstate four hundred ninety-five and that portion of interstate four hundred ninety-five between interstate ninety-five and the Nassau-Queens county line.

(d) The provisions of this subdivision shall not apply to fire vehicles.

(e) Except in any city not wholly included within one county, any semitrailer with a length in excess of forty-eight feet, but not exceeding fifty-three feet, may be operated on any qualifying highway or specifically designated access highway if the distance between the kingpin of the semitrailer and the centerline of the rear axle does not exceed forty-three feet and if the semitrailer is equipped with a rear-end protective device of substantial construction consisting of a continuous lateral beam extending to within four inches of the lateral

extremities of the semitrailer and located not more than twenty-two inches from the surface as measured with the vehicle empty and on a level surface. In addition, such vehicles may be operated on that portion of interstate ninety-five which connects interstate two hundred eighty-seven with interstate two hundred ninety-five, that portion of interstate two hundred ninety-five which connects interstate ninety-five with interstate four hundred ninety-five and that portion of interstate four hundred ninety-five between interstate ninety-five and the Nassau-Queens county line.

(f) The length of any center panel of an altered livery shall not exceed one hundred inches unless the owner of such vehicle can demonstrate that the livery conforms to all applicable federal and state motor vehicle safety standards at the time of registration in accordance with section four hundred one of this chapter.

(g) The length of a specialized material delivery vehicle, inclusive of load and bumpers, shall not be more than forty feet provided, however, that the portion of an attached boom or forklift that extends beyond the rear bumper by not more than five feet shall be excluded from the measurement of the length of a specialized material delivery vehicle. For the purposes of this paragraph, "specialized material delivery vehicle" shall mean a single unit truck having an attached boom or forklift for the purpose of hoisting, swinging, loading or unloading material from such truck. The provisions of this paragraph authorizing the exclusion from the measurement of the length of a specialized material delivery vehicle shall not apply unless the operator of such vehicle holds a valid commercial driver's license as defined by subdivision one of section five hundred one-a of this chapter.

\* NB There are 2 par (g)'s

\* (g) The length of a tow truck or car carrier, inclusive of load and bumpers, shall be not more than forty feet, except that a car carrier may have an overhang that extends beyond the rear bumper of such car carrier by not more than three feet and except, further, that a wheel lift that is less than fifteen feet in length shall not be included as part of the length of a tow truck or car carrier when such wheel lift is in use by such tow truck or car carrier to tow another motor vehicle.

\* NB There are 2 par (g)'s

(h) The commissioner of motor vehicles in consultation with the commissioner of transportation may promulgate such rules and regulations as shall be necessary or desirable to effectuate the provisions of this subdivision.

4. (a) The total length of a combination of vehicles, inclusive of load and bumpers, shall not be more than sixty-five feet.

(b) The provisions of paragraph (a) of this subdivision shall not apply to:

1. A combination of vehicles being operated on any qualifying highway

or access highway;

2. Vehicles of a corporation which is subject to the jurisdiction of the interstate commerce commission, the public service commission or other regulatory body and which are used in the construction, reconstruction, repair or maintenance of its property or facilities, provided that any such vehicle complies with the safety requirements of the laws and regulations of the United States and of this state pertaining to overlength vehicles;

- **a.** Every motor **vehicle**, when driven or operated upon a public highway, shall be equipped with a **mirror** or other reflecting device so adjusted that the operator of such **vehicle** shall have a clear and full view of the road and condition of traffic behind such **vehicle**.
- **b.** In addition to the above requirements, an omnibus having a capacity of ten or more passengers registered in this state and manufactured or assembled after July first, nineteen hundred seventy, shall be equipped with a **mirror** attached to the right side of such **vehicle** and so adjusted that the driver thereof shall have a clear and full view of the road and condition of traffic behind such **vehicle**.
- **c.** Every passenger motor **vehicle** registered in this state and manufactured or assembled after June thirtieth, nineteen hundred sixty-nine, and designated as a nineteen hundred seventy or subsequent year model, shall be equipped with adjustable interior **mirrors** meeting specifications established by the commissioner which specifications may provide minimum and maximum reflectance values.
- **d.** Every new passenger-type motor **vehicle**, except a motorcycle, manufactured for sale in New York state on or after January first, in the year next succeeding the effective date of this paragraph shall be manufactured with an interior rear-view **mirror** of the selective position prismatic type with a reflectance value in the night driving position of at least four percent; or its functional equivalent. For purposes of this section, "passenger-type motor **vehicle**" shall mean any motor **vehicle** with a seating capacity of not more than fifteen adults, not including the driver, that is equipped with one or more rear windows. Any violation of the provisions of this paragraph by any manufacturer shall constitute an offense and shall be punishable by a civil fine of not more than seven hundred fifty dollars for each offense.