



Agriculture Transportation Handbook

*State and federal statutes, rules,
and exemptions for transporting
agricultural goods on highways*



DISCLAIMER AND RESOURCES

The information provided in this booklet is for general information purposes only and is designed to help farmers' awareness of the various state and federal truck laws that affect farms. If you have specific questions about a particular situation, consult your attorney or contact one of the resources below:

Federal Resources

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (MN)
.....651-291-6150
Website..... www.fmcsa.dot.gov

Minnesota Resources

Department of Public Safety
Driver and Vehicle Services Division
.....651-297-3298
Website..... www.dps.state.mn.gov

Pro Rates Unit (Apportioned Registration)
.....651-205-4141

State Patrol Central Office (St. Paul)
Commercial Vehicle Enforcement651-405-6196
Website..... www.dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp

Minnesota Department of Transportation (St. Paul)
Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operators
.....651-215-6330
Vehicle Size and Weight/Permits651-296-6000
Website..... www.dot.state.mn.us

Surrounding State Transportation Resources

Iowa DOT515-239-1101
Website..... www.dot.state.ia.us
North Dakota DOT.....701-328-2500
Website..... www.dot.nd.gov
South Dakota DOT605-773-3265
Website..... www.sddot.com
Wisconsin DOT.....414-266-1000
Website..... www.dot.state.wi.us
Canada DOT613-990-2309
Website..... www.tc.gc.ca

Biodiesel Resources

Biodiesel is America's only advanced biofuel, creating jobs in rural Minnesota while helping clean our air. Made from renewable sources like soybean oil, biodiesel is helping to power America. For answers to general diesel and biodiesel questions and to provide troubleshooting fuel quality and filter plugging issues, contact the Diesel Helpline.....800-929-3437
Email..... info@biodiesel.org

CDL – Commercial Driver’s License

Commercial Motor Vehicle – A motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used to transport property in commerce if the motor vehicle has a gross vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds and greater.

Covered Farm Vehicle – A motor vehicle (including a truck tractor trailer combination) operated by a farm or ranch owner or operator, or the employee or family member of an owner or operator, and is used to transport agricultural commodities, livestock, machinery, or supplies to or from a farm or ranch. It does not include a motor vehicle used in the operations of a for-hire motor carrier. However it does allow for-hire carriage pursuant to a crop share farm lease agreement or when the tenant is transporting the landowner’s share of the crop. The vehicle must be registered with a special license plate (a “T” plate in Minnesota) allowing law enforcement officials to identify it as a farm vehicle or carry a Covered Farm Vehicle (CFV) Self Designation Form (available on the MN State Patrol’s website).
[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 390.5]

Covered Farm Vehicle Exemption – An exemption from certain regulations provided to Covered Farm Vehicles and their drivers relieving them from compliance with certain regulations. The Covered Farm Vehicle Exemption applies to a Covered Farm Vehicle operated anywhere in the United States if the gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating (whichever is greater) is 26,001 pounds or less. If the Covered Farm Vehicle has a gross vehicle weight or gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,001 pounds, the Covered Farm Vehicle Exemption applies to Covered Farm Vehicles and their drivers when operating anywhere within the state of registration or when operating within 150 air-mile radius of the farm/ranch while operating in interstate commerce (across state lines).

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 390.5]

FMCSA –
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

GVW – Gross Vehicle Weight. The greater of the GVW rating or actual weight inclusive of the load.

Farm Tractor – Every motor vehicle designed and used primarily as a farm implement for drawing plows, mowing machines, and other implements of husbandry.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.011 subdivision 29]

Farm Truck – All single-unit trucks, truck-tractors, tractors, semitrailers, and trailers used by the owner to transport agricultural, horticultural, dairy, and other farm products.
[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 168.002 subdivision 8]

Farmer – Any person who operates a farm or is directly involved in the cultivation of land, crops, or livestock, which are owned by that person or under the direct control of that person.
[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec 390.5]

First Haul – The first, continuous transportation of unprocessed or raw farm products from the place of production or on-farm storage site to any other location within 100 miles of the place of production or on-farm storage site.
[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 168.013 subdivision 3(d)(3)]

Implement of Husbandry – A self-propelled or towed vehicle designed or adapted to be used exclusively for timber-harvesting, agricultural, horticultural, or livestock-raising operations.
[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.011 subdivision 35]

Intrastate Transportation – Transportation of any load or shipment within the boundaries of the state of Minnesota (except river ports).

Interstate Transportation – Transportation of any load or shipment that has or will be crossing state lines. This includes the transportation of a load to river ports and terminals such as Savage, Red Wing or Duluth.

MNDOT –
Minnesota Department of Transportation

Pneumatic Tire – Every tire in which compressed air is designed to support the load.
[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.011 subdivision 55]

USDOT –
United States Department of Transportation

Minnesota law provides for several kinds of special hauling permits that allow certain agricultural products to be hauled in amounts greater than the legal limits described in the previous section. Effective October 1, 2012, the truck owner is responsible for paying the additional vehicle registration tax that represents the difference between the registered GVW and the amount of weight allowed in the special hauling permit. NOTE: Permits are no longer available at district offices. All permits come from the St. Paul office by calling 651-296-6000.

A. 90,000 and 97,000 Pound Loads

The gross weight limits for trucks hauling agricultural products has been increased to allow up to 90,000 pounds on six axles and 97,000 pounds on seven axles. These two permits apply to the transportation of “qualifying agricultural products” only. The transportation of finished products or of non-agricultural products is not allowed.

For purposes of these permits, “qualifying agricultural products” means:

- (1) Agricultural crops, including but not limited to corn, soybeans, oats, grain, and by-products of agricultural crops;
- (2) Livestock, including but not limited to cattle, hogs, and poultry;
- (3) Food crops, including but not limited to sugar beets, potatoes, carrots, and onions;
- (4) fluid milk;

SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL PERMITS & PROVISIONS

- (5) Seed and material used for or in livestock and poultry feed;
- (6) Livestock manure; and
- (7) Raw or processed grass seed.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 1a]

In addition, both trucks are subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) Posted bridge limits must be followed (this may limit the routes these trucks can travel).
- (2) Per-axle weight limitations must still be followed.
- (3) All wheels must have brakes.
- (4) Spring road restrictions must still be followed.
- (5) The manufacturer's gross vehicle rating must not be exceeded.
- (6) The 10% "first haul" allowance does not apply to either truck.
- (7) They may not be operated on interstate highways (except for trucks hauling fluid milk, which may be operated on interstate highways).
- (8) A permit must be obtained from each road authority (e.g., a county) if required.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 3]

The specifics of each are as follows:

90,000 on six axles

A six-axle truck can carry up to 90,000 pounds year-round and 99,000 pounds during the winter freeze period as set by MnDOT each year. The permit fee for this truck is \$300 per year and is valid year-round.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 1b]

97,000 on seven axles

A seven-axle truck can carry up to 97,000 pounds year-round and 99,000 pounds during the winter freeze period as set by MnDOT each year. The permit fee for this truck is \$500 per year and is valid year-round. In addition, the operator of this truck is not exempt from the age, medical card, and drug and alcohol testing requirements unless it is a Covered Farm Vehicle.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 2]

B. 10 Percent Overweight Permits

Minnesota law allows sugarbeet, potato, and carrot growers the option to purchase 10 percent overweight permits that allow growers to exceed the vehicle weight limits by 10 percent. Annual permits may be issued for the movement of sugar beets, carrots, and potatoes from the field of harvest to the point of the first unloading and are valid from the beginning of harvest until November 30. The cost of the permit is \$60. The permit holder must also increase the registered weight of the truck in order for the 10 percent overweight permit to be valid.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.86 subdivision 1 and 5(c); 169.826 subdivision 1a]

C. Baled Agricultural Product

Minnesota law allows a permit to haul a wide load of baled agricultural products that exceeds the legal size limits.

Farmers can receive an annual permit to enable a vehicle carrying *round* bales of hay, straw, or cornstalks, with a total outside width of the vehicle or the load not exceeding 12 feet and 14 ½ feet high. Farmers can also receive a permit to carry a first haul of *square* bales of straw, each bale having a minimum size of four feet by four feet by eight feet, with a total outside width of the load not exceeding 12 feet, to be hauled between August 1 and March 1 within 35 miles of the border between this state and the state of North Dakota.

There are limits on the routes, days, and times that the wide loads can be moved. A vehicle operated under the permit must display red, orange, or yellow flags, 18 inches square, as markers at the front and rear and on both sides of the load. Farm vehicles not for hire carrying round baled hay less than 20 miles are exempt from the requirement to obtain a permit. The fee for the permit is \$60.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.862]

D. Livestock Haulers

Minnesota law allows farmers hauling livestock to purchase a permit to haul up to 88,000 pounds on a semi truck provided the semi truck has six axles or more. The truck could then haul 88,000 pounds year-round except for spring road restrictions. Permit holders must abide by posted bridge weight limits and may not use interstate highways. The fee for the permit is \$200.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.824 subdivision 2(2) and 169.86 subdivision 5(j)]

E. Vehicle Transporting Milk

Single-unit straight trucks (but not semi-truck configurations) transporting fluid milk are allowed a 10 percent increase in weight limits to transport milk from the point of production to another point of production or to the point of first processing. This increase is not over and above the 10% winter weight limit increase. A vehicle operated under this weight increase is subject to some spring load restrictions and bridge postings, as well as to maximum weight ratings for tires and gross vehicle weight limits. A permit is not required for the 10% weight limit increase to apply.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.8295]

In addition, spring road restrictions do not apply to a vehicle transporting milk from the point of production to the point of first processing if, at the time the weight restriction is exceeded, the vehicle is carrying milk loaded at only one point of production. This subdivision does not authorize a vehicle described in this subdivision to exceed a weight restriction of five tons per axle by more than two tons per axle. There is no permit required for this exemption.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.87 subdivision 4]

F. Canola

Minnesota law allows trucks to haul up to 105,500 pounds of canola from the Canadian border on Highway 75 or from the North Dakota border on Highway 175 to a processing plant in Hallock.

These trucks must still comply with overall length, per-axle weight limitations and spring road restrictions. The annual permit fee is \$850 per truck.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.866]

G. Soybean Meal

Minnesota law allows trucks to haul up to 106,000 pounds of soybean meal on marked U.S. Highway 75 in Crookston to marked U.S. Highway 2, and on marked U.S. Highway 2 from Crookston to the North Dakota border using a combination of vehicles, including a truck-tractor and a semitrailer drawing one additional semitrailer, provided no semitrailer used in the three-vehicle combination has an overall length in excess of 28-1/2 feet. These trucks must still comply with overall length, per-axle weight limitations and spring road restrictions. The annual permit fee is \$850 per truck.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.8665]

Farmers generally do not need to comply with hours of service limitations. Minnesota exempts drivers of vehicles owned and operated by farmers involved in intrastate commerce from the hours of service regulations. Minnesota also exempts intrastate drivers of vehicles (including for hire carriers) transporting agricultural, horticultural, dairy, livestock, other farm products with a 100 mile radius of the carrier performing the transportation from the hours of service regulations.

Drivers of Covered Farm Vehicles are exempt from the Hours of Service regulations. (See **Definitions** for the Covered Farm Vehicle Exemption for additional information, applicability and mileage limits).

Interstate drivers/vehicles may qualify for the Agricultural Operations Exemption which provides relief from the Hours of Service regulations.

FEDERAL LAW

Agricultural Operations Exemption states the federal hours of service requirements do not apply to drivers transporting agricultural commodities or farm supplies for agricultural purposes in a State if such transportation:

- (1) Is limited to an area within a 150 air-mile radius from the source of the commodities, and
- (2) Is conducted during the planting and harvesting seasons within such State, as determined by the State. (*MN has defined the planting and harvesting season as Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 395.1(k)]

MINNESOTA LAW

Minnesota law states that the federal regulations governing maximum driving and on-duty time do not apply to drivers engaged in the interstate or intrastate transportation of agricultural commodities or farm supplies for agricultural purposes in Minnesota during the planting and harvesting seasons from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 221.031 subdivision 2d and Minn. Stat. sec. 221.0314 subdivision 9]

*Note – drivers exempt from the hours of service regulations are exempt from the requirement to use Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs).

A federal rule states that no driver shall operate a commercial motor vehicle while the driver's ability or alertness is impaired, or likely to become impaired, through fatigue, illness, or any other cause, as to make it unsafe for him/her to begin or continue to operate the commercial motor vehicle.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 392.3]

A. Drivers' License for Farm Trucks/ Covered Farm Vehicles

In Minnesota, a Class D drivers' license is valid for operating all farm trucks if the farm truck is:

- (1) Controlled and operated by a farmer, including operation by an immediate family member or an employee of the farmer;
- (2) Used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery or farm supplies, including hazardous materials, to or from a farm;
- (3) Not used in the operations of a common or contract motor carrier; and
- (4) Used within 150 miles of the farm.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 171.02 subdivision 2(c)(1)]

A Class D drivers' license is also valid for operating a covered farm vehicle that is not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded in accordance with 49 C.F.R. sec. 172.504.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 171.02 subdivision 2(c)(8)]

B. Quarterly Registration

Minnesota law allows farmers to register and license their farm trucks on a quarterly basis. The law states that the owner of any farm truck may elect to register and license the truck only for one or more quarters of a registration year, at a tax of one-fourth of the annual tax on the vehicle plus \$5 for each quarterly registration. The owner may not apply for quarterly registration or renewal until seven days before the selected quarter or concurrent quarters. The expiration date of a registration shall be displayed on the license plate in such a manner as the registrar shall direct. No truck registered on a quarterly basis shall be operated on the public streets and highways more than 10 days beyond the end of the quarter for which it is registered unless the registration has been renewed for another quarter or for the remainder of the registration year. For purposes of this section registration quarters shall begin on March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 168.18]

USDOT NUMBERS

A USDOT number and compliance with the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement is required when a truck weighing 10,001 pounds or more is involved in interstate commerce. A single trip across a state border with a commercial motor vehicle will trigger the requirement. A USDOT number is not required for farm trucks that are involved in intrastate commerce.

FEDERAL LAW

All trucks weighing 10,001 pounds and greater that cross state lines or deliver to port terminals must have a USDOT number.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 390.21]

In addition, truck owners with a USDOT number must comply with the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement. Each motor carrier subject to this rule must file a Motor Carrier Identification Report, Form MCS-150, every 24 months according to a schedule set by the FMCSA. Complete information is available on the FMCSA website.

MINNESOTA LAW

A USDOT number is not required for farm trucks that travel solely within the state. Minnesota law states that the requirement to obtain and display a USDOT number does not apply to a farm truck that is not used in interstate commerce.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 168.185(d)]

DISPLAYING THE NUMBER AND FARM NAME

A Commercial Motor Vehicle involved in interstate commerce needs a USDOT number which must be displayed along with the company name on the truck according to federal law.

FEDERAL LAW

A truck must be marked as follows:

- (1) The legal name or a single trade name of the motor carrier;
- (2) The motor carrier identification number issued by the FMCSA, preceded by the letters “USDOT”;
- (3) The marking must appear on both sides of the CMV;
- (4) Be in letters that contrast sharply in color with the background on which the letters are placed;
- (5) Be readily legible, during daylight hours, from a distance of 50 feet while the vehicle is stationary; and
- (6) Be kept and maintained in a manner that retains the legibility.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 390.21]

MINNESOTA LAW

The following carriers shall display the carrier’s name and address on the power unit of each vehicle:

- 1) Motor carriers, regardless of the weight of the vehicle;
- 2) Interstate and intrastate private carriers operating vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds and greater;
- 3) Vehicles, except farm trucks operating solely within the state of Minnesota, providing transportation of agricultural products with a gross vehicle weight of 10,001 pounds and greater.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 221.031 subdivision 6]

COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSES (CDLs)

As a general rule, farmers and their employees do not need commercial driver's licenses. They are exempt under the federal rules below.

FEDERAL LAW

You *do not need* to have a commercial driver's license (CDL) if you operate a farm vehicle which is:

- (1) Controlled and operated by a farmer, including operation by employees or family members;
- (2) Used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery, farm supplies, or both to or from a farm;
- (3) Not used in the operations of a common or contract motor carrier; and
- (4) Used within 150 miles of the farmer's farm.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 383.3(d)(1)]

Drivers of covered farm vehicles are also exempt from the CDL requirement.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 383.3(h)]

A. General Weight Provisions

Minnesota regulates vehicle weights based on tire size, wheel weight, single axle limits, groups of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 axles, and gross vehicle weights. The group of axle weights for a truck varies based on the number of axles and their spacing. The chart is listed in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 169.824.

[www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/169/824.html]

The gross vehicle weight of all axles of a vehicle or combination of vehicles shall not exceed:

- (1) 80,000 pounds for any vehicle or combination of vehicles on all state trunk highways, paved county roads unless otherwise posted, and routes with seasonal weight increases;
- (2) 73,280 pounds for any vehicle or combination of vehicles with five axles or less on all routes (other than state trunk highways), paved county roads that are posted, and routes with seasonal weight increases; and
- (3) 80,000 pounds for any vehicle or combination of vehicles with six or more axles on all routes, other than state trunk highways and routes with seasonal weight increases.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.824]

B. Winter Gross Weight Increase Amounts

The regular weight limitations in Chapter 169.824 are increased by 10 percent between dates set by the commissioner for each zone established by the commissioner based on a freezing index model each winter.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.826]

C. Load Limits on Bridges

Subject to the limitations upon wheel and axle loads, the gross weight of any vehicle or combination of vehicles driven onto or over a bridge on any highway shall not exceed the safe capacity of the bridge as indicated by warning posted on the bridge or the approaches to the bridge.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.84]

D. Civil Weight Inspections and Penalties

The Minnesota State Patrol has the legal authority to bring a civil overweight case against a truck owner by mail after the fact. If the load is the first haul (see definition of first haul) of an agricultural product, a civil overweight case can only be filed if the load is more than 10 percent over the legal limit and is delivered by a truck with more than three axles (tri-axles, quad-axles, and semis). The Minnesota State Patrol has 14 days after the load is delivered to inspect scale tickets, and 90 days after the date of inspection to issue the civil overweight ticket. This authority is commonly referred to as the “Relevant Evidence” law.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.851 and 169.872]

A person who weighs goods before or after unloading shall keep a written record of the origin, weight, and composition of each shipment, the date of loading or receipt, the name and address of the shipper, the total number of axles on the vehicle or combination of vehicles, and the registration number of the power unit or some other means of identification by which the shipment was transported. The record shall be retained for 14 days and shall be open to inspection and copying by a state law enforcement officer or motor transport representative upon demand. No search warrant is required to inspect or copy the record.

This subdivision does not apply to a person weighing goods who is not involved in the shipping, receiving, and transporting of those goods, or to a person weighing raw and unfinished farm products transported in a single-unit vehicle with *not more than three axles* or by a trailer towed by a farm tractor when the transportation is the first haul of the product.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.872]

The fine schedule outlined below lists the penalties imposed for exceeding the legal weight limits for a civil overweight violation. Minnesota law states that the owner or lessee of a vehicle that is operated with a gross weight in excess of a weight limit is liable for a civil penalty as follows:

- (1) If the total gross excess weight is not more than 1,000 pounds, one cent per pound for each pound in excess of the legal limit;
- (2) If the total gross excess weight is more than 1,000 pounds but not more than 3,000 pounds, \$10 plus five cents per pound for each pound in excess of 1,000 pounds;
- (3) If the total gross excess weight is more than 3,000 pounds but not more than 5,000 pounds, \$110 plus 10 cents per pound for each pound in excess of 3,000 pounds;
- (4) If the total gross excess weight is more than 5,000 pounds but not more than 7,000 pounds, \$310 plus 15 cents per pound for each pound in excess of 5,000 pounds;
- (5) If the total gross excess weight is more than 7,000 pounds, \$610 plus 20 cents per pound for each pound in excess of 7,000 pounds.

If a person found guilty of a violation of a weight limit is also found by the court to have knowingly and contemporaneously attempted to evade a fixed weigh station or to otherwise avoid weighing by means of stationary scales or other law, the court shall impose a penalty of twice the amount otherwise authorized above.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.871 subdivisions 1(a) and (b)]

First Two Violations - The penalty for the first two overweight violations in each 12 month period may not exceed \$150 per incident, per truck. Minnesota law states that a civil penalty under subdivision 1 for a violation in a motor vehicle in the course of a first haul of [agricultural products] that is not preceded by two or more violations of the gross weight limits in those sections in that motor vehicle within the previous 12 months may not exceed \$150.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.871 subdivision 1b]

E. Portable Scales

Minnesota State law gives law enforcement officers the authority to conduct random weight checks using portable scales. The owner of a truck may be liable for civil as well as for criminal penalties for weight violations that are discovered on a portable scale during a roadside stop. The law enforcement officer may stop all trucks for weighing at portable scale sites and an officer may require the driver to stop the vehicle in a suitable place and remain there until a portion of the load is removed that is sufficient to reduce the gross weight of the vehicle to the legal weight limits.

The driver of a vehicle who: (1) Fails or refuses to stop and submit the vehicle and load to a weighing as required in this section, (2) Fails or refuses, when directed by an officer upon a weighing of the vehicle, to stop the vehicle and otherwise comply with the provisions of this section, or (3) Fails to comply with an official traffic control device directs the driver to the nearest scale is guilty of a misdemeanor.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.85 subdivision]

F. Vehicle Transporting Milk

Spring road restrictions do not apply to a vehicle transporting milk from the point of production to the point of first processing if, at the time the weight restriction is exceeded, the vehicle is carrying milk loaded at only one point of production. This subdivision does not authorize a vehicle described in this subdivision to exceed a weight restriction of five tons per axle by more than two tons per axle.

There is no permit required for this exemption.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.87 subdivision 4]

Minnesota law provides for many special rules and exemptions to operate implements of husbandry on public roads. The following is a list of the most relevant sections:

Animal-Drawn Vehicles

In addition to the SMV emblem required above, an animal-drawn vehicle must be equipped with an identification lamp or lamps that indicate the vehicle's presence and are visible from a distance of at least 500 feet from both the front and the rear. The lighting requirement under this subdivision may be met using a lamp powered by energy generated from the vehicle's movement. This subdivision does not apply to an animal-drawn vehicle that: (1) operates exclusively between the hours of sunrise and sunset and never during periods of reduced visibility, inclement weather, or insufficient light; or (2) never operates on a public roadway.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.58 subdivision 6]

Brakes

A *self-propelled* implement of husbandry must be equipped with brakes adequate to control its movement and to stop and hold it and any vehicle it is towing. A **towed** implement of husbandry must be equipped with brakes adequate to control its movement and to stop and hold it, unless the implement of husbandry is in a combination of vehicles (such as a pickup truck pulling the implement) and the towing vehicle's braking capability meets state braking performance standards set forth in Minn. Stat. sec. 169.67, subdivision. 5. If a towed implement of husbandry is required to have brakes, and is manufactured after January 1, 2011 with a gross vehicle weight of more than 3,000 pounds, it must also be equipped with brakes adequate to stop and hold it if it becomes detached from the towing vehicle.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 10]

Bridge and Load Limits

An implement of husbandry that is not self-propelled and is equipped with pneumatic tires may not be operated on a public highway with a maximum wheel load that exceeds 500 pounds per inch of tire width. Also, a person operating or towing an implement of husbandry must abide by gross bridge weight limitations found in 169.824. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 2]

Centerline of the Road.

An implement of husbandry may be operated or towed to the left of the center of a roadway only if it is escorted at the front by a vehicle displaying hazard warning lights visible in normal sunlight and the operation does not extend into the left half of the roadway more than is necessary. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 7(b)]

Hazard Warning Lights

No person may operate a self-propelled implement of husbandry manufactured after January 1, 1970, on a highway unless the implement of husbandry displays vehicular hazard warning lights visible to the front and rear in normal sunlight. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.55 subdivision 3]

Height Restrictions

A person operating, towing, or transporting an implement of husbandry that is higher than 13 feet six inches or wider than allowed under section 169.80, subdivision 2, must ensure that the operation or transportation does not damage a highway structure, utility line or structure, or other fixture adjacent to or over a public highway. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 5]

Hitches

A towed implement of husbandry must be equipped with safety chains, a regulation fifth wheel and kingpin assembly approved by the commissioner of public safety, or a hitch pin or other hitching device with a retainer that prevents accidental unhitching. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 3]

Interstate Travel Prohibited

An implement of husbandry may not be operated or towed on an interstate highway. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 Subdivision 7(a)]

Lights & Reflectors

At times when lights are required, a combination of *self-propelled* or towed implements of husbandry must be equipped with at least one lamp displaying a white or amber light to the front, at least one red or amber light to the rear (those must be to the extreme left projection), and two red reflectors visible to the rear on the rear most unit. The reflectors must be mounted as close as practicable to the extreme edges of the implement of husbandry. The reflectors must be reflex reflectors that are visible at night from all distances within 600 feet to 100 feet when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.55 subdivision 2]

Rear Lamps. An implement of husbandry being towed by a motor vehicle at a speed of not more than 30 miles per hour, displaying a slow-moving vehicle emblem, is not required to have a red tail lamp.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.50(c)]

Size, Weight, and Load

The state laws that govern size, weight, and load generally do not apply to an implement of husbandry except as provided below.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 1]

Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) Sign

All implements of husbandry which are designed for operation at a speed of 30 miles per hour or less, must display a triangular SMV emblem. The emblem must consist of a fluorescent or illuminated red-orange triangle with a dark red reflective border and be mounted so as to be visible from a distance of not less than 600 feet to the rear. When a primary power unit towing an implement of husbandry or other machinery displays a slow-moving vehicle emblem visible from a distance of 600 feet to the rear, it is not necessary to display a similar emblem on the secondary unit.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.522]

Speed Limits

No person may drive or tow an implement of husbandry at a speed in excess of 30 miles per hour.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 6]

A. Medical/Health Cards

Farmers and their drivers generally do not need to carry medical or health cards. However, drivers of combination vehicles (truck and trailer) involved in interstate commerce who are not operating under the Covered Farm Vehicle Exemption do need to carry a medical card.

FEDERAL LAW

A person shall not drive [an articulated] commercial motor vehicle unless he/she is physically qualified to do so and has on his/her person the original, or a photographic copy, of a medical examiner's certificate that he/she is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle. This requirement does not apply to a covered farm vehicle.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 391.41(a), 391.2, and 391.67]

MINNESOTA LAW

Minnesota follows the federal rule and only requires medical or health cards for farm combination truck and trailer drivers that cross state lines and are not defined as covered farm vehicles and are not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded in accordance with 49 C.F.R. sec. 172.504.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 221.031 sub. 2c(b)(1)]

B. Drug and Alcohol Testing

Farmers and their truck drivers are generally not subject to drug and alcohol testing. They are exempt under the federal rules below.

FEDERAL LAW

Operators of farm vehicles are exempt from controlled substance and alcohol use testing if the truck is:

- A) Controlled and operated by a farmer;
- B) Used to transport agricultural products, farm machinery, farm supplies, or both to or from a farm;
- C) Not used in the operations of a common or contract motor carrier; and
- D) Used within 150 miles of the farmer's farm.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 382.103(d)(3)(i)]

Drivers of Covered Farm Vehicles are exempt from drug and alcohol use testing.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 383.103(d)(4)]

C. Age

FEDERAL LAW

All farm truck drivers involved in interstate commerce using a combination truck and trailer be 18 years of age, except for those operating a Covered Farm Vehicle. For straight farm trucks used in interstate commerce, the driver must possess a valid driver's license.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 391.67(a)]

MINNESOTA LAW

All farm truck drivers operating in intrastate commerce must have a valid class D license.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 171.02 subdivision 2(c)]

Various Minnesota state laws require the following parts and accessories to be in working order because they are necessary for safe operation of large vehicles. The equipment listed below is very important for the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles including farm trucks. Failure to have all of the following parts and accessories in working order could cause the truck to be placed “out of service” by an inspecting officer until such time the violation is corrected.

Brakes	Clearance lights
Fire extinguisher	First aid kit
Hazard warning lights	Head & tail lights
Horns	Mirrors
Mufflers	Reflectors
Reflective triangle warning devices	Tires
Seat belts	
Turn signals	

Mud flaps are not required on rear unloading farm trucks.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.733]

Seatbelt use is required under federal law if the commercial motor vehicle has a seat belt assembly installed in the driver’s seat. Seatbelt use is also mandatory in Minnesota for passenger cars.

However, a person driving or riding in a pickup truck while engaged in normal farming work or activity is exempt from the primary seatbelt law.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 392.16, Minn. Stat. sec. 169.686 subdivision 2(7)].

Various Minnesota statutes also require the following:

- * License plates must be kept clean and must be visible at all times.
- * Growers must carry proof of insurance.
- * Registration cards or vehicle registration must be kept in the cab of the truck.
- * Swinging gates must be secure at all times.
- * Loads must be secure, not be leaking, blowing, or falling from the vehicle.
- * A conviction for a DUI offense may affect your eligibility to drive a truck.

IMPORTANT PARTS & ACCESSORIES

A. Annual Truck Inspections

It is unlawful for a person to operate a commercial motor vehicle registered in Minnesota unless the vehicle displays a valid safety inspection decal issued by an inspector certified by the commissioner. The decal must state that in the month specified on the decal the vehicle was inspected and each inspected component complied with federal motor carrier safety regulations. The decal is valid for the period of time specified on the decal. Commercial motor vehicles 10,001 pounds or greater involved in interstate commerce must have proof of a federal annual inspection (a Minnesota one-year annual decal will be sufficient as that proof). Commercial motor vehicles 10,001 pounds or greater involved in intrastate commerce must display an annual decal. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.781 subdivision 2].

*** Important Note:** A Covered Farm Vehicle that is not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded in accordance with 49 C.F.R. sec. 172.504 is exempt from the annual truck inspection requirement. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.781 subdivision 10(b)]

B. Roadside Inspections

Minnesota law also gives law enforcement officers the authority to conduct random, roadside spot checks for unsafe motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.771 subdivision 2(a)]

*** Important Note:** A vehicle stopped for a roadside inspection and found to be operating as a Covered Farm Vehicle (that is not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded in accordance with 49 C.F.R. sec. 172.504) is exempt from further inspection under this section. If probable cause exists to believe the vehicle or its equipment is unsafe or illegal activity is suspected, enforcement action may be initiated. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.771 subdivision 2(c)]

C. Daily Inspections

The driver of a truck must be sure that a truck remains in good repair from day to day. Prior to operating a vehicle, the driver must be certain that essential parts and accessories are in good working order. The driver of a commercial motor vehicle is required to prepare a driver vehicle inspection report at the completion of each day's work if vehicle defects are discovered or reported.

[Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 392.7, 396.11, Minn. Stat. sec. 169.782 subdivision 1(a)].

** Important Note:* A Covered Farm Vehicle (that is not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the vehicle to be placarded in accordance with 49 C.F.R. sec. 172.504) is **exempt** from the requirement to complete a driver vehicle inspection report.

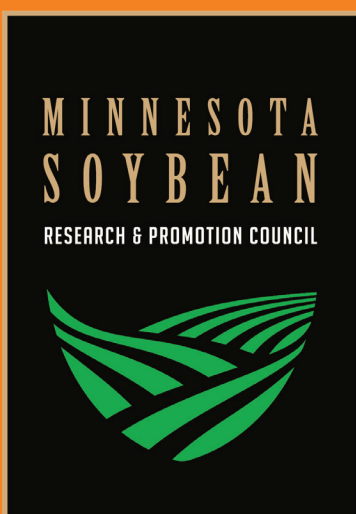
[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.782 subdivision 4(c)]

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