



# 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](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)

### Minnesota Resources

Department of Public Safety  
Website..... <https://dps.mn.gov>  
Driver and Vehicle Services Division

..... 651-297-5029  
Website..... [dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs](http://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs)  
Prorate Unit..... 651-205-4141  
State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Information

..... 651-405-6171  
Website..... [dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp](http://dps.mn.gov/divisions/msp)

Minnesota Department of Transportation (St. Paul)  
..... 651-296-3000  
Website..... [www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us)

Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations  
..... 651-215-6330  
Vehicle Size and Weight/Permits..... 651-296-6000

### Surrounding State Transportation Resources

Iowa DOT ..... 515-239-1101  
Website..... [www.iowadot.gov](http://www.iowadot.gov)  
North Dakota DOT ..... 701-328-2500  
Website..... [www.dot.nd.gov](http://www.dot.nd.gov)

South Dakota DOT ..... 605-773-3265  
Website..... [www.sdot.com](http://www.sdot.com)

Wisconsin DOT ..... 608-266-9900  
Website..... [www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us)

Canada DOT ..... 613-990-2309  
Website..... [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)



**Agricultural Products** - means agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, dairy products, livestock, wildlife, poultry, bees, forest products, fish and shellfish, and their products, including processed and manufactured products, and products raised or produced on farms, including processed or manufactured products.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 51A.02 subdivision 4]

**CDL** - Commercial Driver's License

**Commercial Motor Vehicle** - means 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.

**FMCSA** - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

**GVW** - Gross Vehicle Weight. Means the greater of the GVW rating or actual weight inclusive of the load.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Farm Tractor** - means 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. 169.01 subdivision 8]

**Farm Truck** - means 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. 168.011 subdivision 17]

**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.

**First Haul** - means 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** - means 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. 169.01 subdivision 55]

**Intrastate** - Any goods transported within the boundaries of the state of Minnesota (except river ports).

**Interstate** - Any load or shipment that has or will be crossing state lines. This includes river ports and terminals such as Savage, Red Wing or Duluth.

**MNDOT** - Minnesota Department of Transportation

**Pneumatic Tire** - means every tire in which compressed air is designed to support the load. [*Source:* Minn. Stat. sec. 169.01 subdivision 12]

**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. The two new categories of trucks apply to the transportation of “raw or unprocessed agricultural products” only. The transportation of finished products or of non-agricultural products is not allowed. 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 1]

## **SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL PERMITS & PROVISIONS**

**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 must hold a valid commercial driver's license (CDL). [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 2]

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, and 8) a permit must be obtained from each road authority (e.g., a county) if required. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.865 subdivision 3]

**B. 10 Percent Overweight Permits.** Minnesota 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)]

C. Baled Agricultural Product. Minnesota 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 allows trucks hauling livestock to purchase a permit to haul up to 88,000 pounds in 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(a)2]

E. 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]

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]

Farmers generally do not need to comply with hours of service limitations. If the truck is involved in interstate commerce, the driver must follow federal hours of service rules, but only if the truck travels more than 100 miles into the neighboring state. Minnesota exempts farmers from hours of service limitations for intrastate transportation.

**FEDERAL LAW** states that 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 100 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.

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

**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:

- (1) Agricultural commodities or farm supplies for agricultural purposes in Minnesota during the planting and harvesting seasons from March 15 to December 15 of each year; or
- (2) Sugarbeets during the harvesting season for sugarbeets from September 1 to May 15 of each year if the transportation is limited to an area within a 100 air-mile radius from the source of the commodities or the distribution point for the farm supplies.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 221.0314 subdivision 9a]

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]

## HOURS OF SERVICE

A. Drivers' License for Farm Trucks. 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)]

B. Quarterly Registration. Minnesota 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]

## **LICENSING & QUARTERLY REGISTRATION**

## **USDOT NUMBERS**

A USDOT number and compliance with the Unified Carrier Registration Agreement is required when a truck 10,001 pounds and greater 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** states that all trucks weighing 10,001 pounds and greater *that cross state lines or delivered to port terminals* must have a USDOT number and 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. [Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 390.19]

**MINNESOTA LAW** does not require a USDOT number 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. Farm trucks involved in intrastate transportation with five or more axles (semis) must display the carrier name and address.

**FEDERAL LAW** states that the 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";

## **CDL & FARM PLATE EXEMPTIONS**

- (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** states 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 and state rules below.

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

- (A) Controlled and operated by a farmer, including operation by employees or family members;
- (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. 383.3(d)(1)]

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](http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/169/824.html)) and the MNDOT website [www.dot.state.mn.us](http://www.dot.state.mn.us) or the MN State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Division website at [www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/comveh/index.htm](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/comveh/index.htm). 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]

## **TRUCK WEIGHT LIMITS/PENALTIES**

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 case to farmers by mail after the fact, but only if the load is the *first haul* of an agricultural product, more than 10 percent over the legal limit and is delivered by a truck with more than three axles (tri-axles and semis). If the first haul is less than 10 percent overweight, a case cannot be pursued after the fact. In addition, the state patrol has 14 days after the load is delivered to inspect scale tickets, and then 90 days after the date of inspection to actually issue the ticket, otherwise the ticket will be invalid. 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 civil penalties for exceeding the legal weight limits during a “Relevant Evidence” check. 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. 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.** The law also gives law enforcement officers the authority to conduct random spot 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 standing 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]

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:

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]

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 beginning on January 1, 2010. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.801 subdivision 2]

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]

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]

## IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY

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]

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]

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]

Lights & Reflectors. At times when lights are required a combination of *self-propelled* implement or towed implement 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 and 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)]

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]

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)]

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)]

A. Medical/Health Cards. Farmers and their drivers generally do not need to carry medical or health cards. However, truck and trailer drivers involved in interstate commerce do need to carry a medical card.

**FEDERAL LAW** states that 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. [Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 391.41(a), 391.2, and 391.67]

**MINNESOTA LAW** follows the federal rule and only requires medical or health cards for farm combination truck and trailer drivers that cross state lines.

[Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 221.0314 sub. 3b]

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 and state rules below.

**FEDERAL LAW** states that 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)]

**MINNESOTA LAW** states that the rules for drug and alcohol testing do not apply to vehicles controlled by a farmer and operated by a farmer or farm employee to transport agricultural products, farm machinery, or supplies to or from a farm if the vehicle is not used in the operations of a motor carrier and not carrying hazardous materials. The definition of farm truck generally follows the rule above. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 171.02 subdivision 2(b)(1)]

C. Age.

**FEDERAL LAW** requires that all farm truck drivers involved in interstate commerce using a combination truck and trailer be 18 years of age. 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** requires that all farm truck drivers operating in intrastate commerce have a valid class D license.

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

**HEALTH CARD/AGE/  
DRUG & ALCOHOL**

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 safe operation of farm trucks.** This is particularly true for brakes because improper adjustment of brakes can lead to serious accidents. Also, failure to have all of the following parts and accessories in working order could cause the truck to be immediately placed “out of service” by an inspecting officer until the violation is corrected. There is no need to list the statute citations for all of the following, but growers should be reminded that the law requires them to have the following items in working order:

brakes	mufflers
head & tail lights	seat belts
hazard warning lights	reflective triangle
warning devices	clearance lights
mirrors	reflectors
tires	turn signals
first aid kit	horns
fire extinguisher	

***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 ability 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. [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.781 subdivision 2].

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 26,001 pounds or greater involved in *intrastate* commerce must display an annual decal. (The two year decal for single-axle and tandem trucks weighing less than 57,000 pounds is no longer available.) [Source: Minn. Stat. sec. 169.781 subdivision 2].

B. Roadside Inspections. The law also gives law enforcement officers the authority to conduct random spot checks using portable scales. 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 standing 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].

C. Daily Inspections. The driver of a commercial motor vehicle must also be sure that it remains in good repair from day to day. While a daily, written inspection is not required for farm vehicles operating intrastate, the driver of a farm vehicle must be certain that essential parts and accessories are in good working order before the vehicle can be operated. [Source: 49 C.F.R. sec. 392.7].

## TRUCK INSPECTIONS

This handbook was developed by the **Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation** in cooperation with the **Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council** with support from the following partners:

- Commercial Vehicle Inspectors
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Federal Highway Department

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