



Wisconsin Farmers on the Road

Size, weight and load

Current as of March 2010

Length limits

The length limit for a single vehicle and load is 40 feet. For a combination of two vehicles, the length limit is 65 feet.

There is no length limitation for implements of husbandry when they are temporarily operated upon a highway. An **implement of husbandry** is defined as a piece of machinery or equipment designed for agricultural purposes, used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations and generally used off the highway. This does not include any truck or truck tractor that meets the definition of a commercial motor vehicle. Two trailers used primarily as implements of husbandry, or one such trailer and any other implement of husbandry, may be pulled by a farm tractor if the overall length does not exceed 60 feet and if the operation is strictly a farming operation.

Two trailers transporting empty pressurized or non-pressurized tanks used for hauling or storing liquid agricultural fertilizer, or two implements of husbandry including two empty trailers used primarily as implements of husbandry in connection with seasonal agricultural activities, may be drawn by a truck or truck tractor without a special permit as long as the overall length of the combination of vehicles and load does not exceed 60 feet.

Under no circumstances are more than two implements of husbandry allowed to be pulled by any vehicle at one time upon a highway.

Loads shall not extend more than 3 feet beyond the front bumper, or more than 4 feet beyond the rear bumper without special markings.

Height limits

There are no limitations on height for implements of husbandry temporarily operated on a highway [Wisconsin Statutes 348.06(2)(a)]. The maximum height allowed on all other vehicles is 13 feet 6 inches [Wisconsin Statutes 348.06(1)].

Width limits

There are no limitations on width for implements of husbandry temporarily operated upon a highway in the performance of its work [Wisconsin Statutes 348.05(2)(a)]. A farm tractor is allowed 9 feet in width when operated on the Interstate system and 12 feet on all other roads. Loads of hay in bales may not exceed 12 feet in width. The total outside width of the load may not exceed the width of a single traffic lane. This hay width provision does not apply on an Interstate highway.

Farm tractors exceeding 12 feet in width and all other farm machinery and implements of husbandry exceeding 8 feet 6 inches in width not being operated in the course of performance of its work may be moved, towed or hauled over the highways without special permit between one-half hour before sunrise and sunset on Mondays to Thursdays and from one-half hour before sunrise to 2 on Fridays. Such overwidth machinery shall not be moved on any Wisconsin highway that is part of the Interstate highway system without special permit [Wisconsin Statutes 348.05(3)].

No person, without a special permit, shall operate on a highway any motor vehicle or trailer carrying any load extending beyond the left fender line, or extending more than 6 inches beyond the right fender line.

Also see [Form SP 4415 Motor Vehicle Size Regulation Summary](#)

Weight limits

Farmers are not exempt from weight laws.

Weight limits depend on factors such as the number of axles, axle spacing, class of highway and type of product carried. All wheels of a vehicle imposing weight upon the highway, extending across the full width of the vehicle and load, are weighed.

A maximum of 20,000 lbs. is allowed on a single axle; 34,000 lbs. on a tandem axle; and 13,000 lbs. on the steering axle of a truck tractor-trailer combination. The total gross weight may never exceed 80,000 lbs. without a special permit or seasonal allowance. The weights listed above are Class "A" highway limits. Class "B" highway maximum weights are 60% of these weights. Class "B" highways will be posted as such, while Class "A" highways are not posted. Some counties and townships often post selected roads and bridges for lesser weight limits, and these are enforced as posted.

One or more axles can be added to a truck or trailer that can be raised or lowered depending on the weight of the load. These added axles are called



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“air” or “tag” axles. To count as an axle, each “air” axle must carry a minimum of 8% of the total gross weight of the vehicle and its load. Axle spacing is measured from the center of the axle to the center of the next axle and is rounded off to the nearest foot.

If a vehicle or combination of vehicles is transporting exclusively livestock, the weight allowance for any single axle or group of axles is increased by 15% as long as the total gross weight does not exceed the maximum allowed for that vehicle. In no case is more than 80,000 lbs. allowed.

Also see [Form SP 4416 Raw Forest and Agricultural Products Weight Limitations Chart](#)

Oversize loads

Because of oversize variables and complicated laws, if you need information on the general provisions and regulations relating to permits for vehicles and loads of excessive size and weight, you may check on-line or refer to the following:

Questions on oversize loads? E-mail oversize-permits.dmv@dot.state.wi.us or call (608) 266-7320.

For more information, see www.dot.wisconsin.gov/statepatrol/inspection/size-weight

Securing the load

No person shall operate a vehicle on a highway unless that vehicle is constructed and loaded as to prevent its contents from dropping, sifting, leaking or escaping from the vehicle. If any part of the load escapes while on the highway, you are in violation.

Reciprocity agreements

Reciprocity agreements between states only cover registration and fuel tax. Any operation across state line requires the carrier to comply with the federal regulations and be indicated as an interstate carrier with its USDOT number.

Farmers may operate their farm registered trucks over 26,000 pounds without registering their vehicles for the state they are operating in as long as the truck is used in their farm service operation.

Farmers may operate their commercial motor vehicle over 26,000 pounds up to 30 miles into Minnesota, Michigan or Iowa and not be required to obtain vehicle registration or fuel tax for that state. Any travel beyond 30 miles requires the vehicle to have a trip permit for registration and fuel tax or have the apportioned registration and fuel tax license.

Federal regulations

Definitions:

Interstate Commerce: Movement of persons or property from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction, i.e., state to state, based on the load’s origin and destination.

Intrastate Commerce: Movement of persons or property from one point in Wisconsin to another point in Wisconsin. The load does not come from another state and/or does not leave the State of Wisconsin.

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 are under the direct control of that person.

Commercial Driver’s License: The Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) is a federally-based requirement that is regulated by individual states. Farm vehicle drivers are exempt from the CDL requirements if the commercial motor vehicle is:

- (a) Controlled and operated by a farmer as a private motor carrier of property,
- (b) Being used to transport either
 - (1) Agricultural products, or
 - (2) Farm machinery, farm supplies, or both, to or from a farm;
- (c) Not being used in the operation of a for-hire motor carrier;
- (d) Not carrying hazardous materials of a type or quantity that requires the commercial motor vehicle to be placarded, and
- (e) Being used within 150 air miles of the farmer’s farm.

A commercial motor vehicle (CMV) requiring a CDL is a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the motor vehicle is:

- (a) a combination of vehicles with a registered, actual gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 lbs. or more inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a GVWR of more than 10,000 lbs; or
- (b) a single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 lbs. or more; or
- (c) is designed to transport 16 or more people including the driver, or
- (d) is of any size and is transporting hazardous materials in an amount sufficient to require placards.



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For purposes of equipment, maintenance, logs etc., Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations define a CMV as a vehicle or combination with a GVWR/GCWR of 10,001 lbs. or more. However, **Wisconsin Statutes 194.05(4)** contains an exemption from FMCSR for farm trucks or dual purpose farm trucks combined with any semi-trailer or farm trailer or any vehicle combined with a horse trailer, if the vehicle combination's gross combination weight rating, registered weight and actual gross weight do not exceed 26,000 lbs., and the vehicle combination is operated solely in **intrastate** commerce. For CMV's operating in interstate commerce or not fitting that specific Wisconsin Statutes 194.05(4) exemption, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations apply. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations are available on-line at www.fmcsa.dot.gov under Rules and Regulations.

Medical Certificate: All Interstate drivers in vehicles GCWR, GVWR or actual weight in excess of 10,000 lbs. must possess a medical certificate (for farmers-articulated [combination] vehicles only). Wisconsin intrastate drivers in a CMV less than 26,001 lbs. are exempt from the requirement of a medical certificate.

Hours of Service: If the trip is over 100 air miles one way, you need a log book to record your hours of service. Aside from the agricultural exemption, the log book would be required of a driver of any type of vehicle over 10,000 lbs. on an Interstate trip or over 26,000 lbs. on an Intrastate trip.

Care should be taken not to confuse these groups of regulations. The CDL rules apply differently than equipment, lighting, medical cards or log books, and farmers have exemptions or limited exemptions from some of the regulations. For example, you may need a CDL but not a log book, or you may need a log book when going interstate but not intrastate. If you are uncertain, ask questions prior to your trip. Wisconsin treats violations of CDL regulations as traffic violations. They carry serious fines and point assessments.

Frequently asked question: "Do I need to stop at scales?"

Wisconsin Statute 348.19 requires vehicles to be weighed when directed to do so by a traffic officer. The remaining requirements are covered under Administrative Rule. Transportation rule 312.03(2) states, "...the Department chooses not to require operators of trucks having a gross weight of 8,000 pounds or less to stop at open weigh stations unless directed to do so by a traffic officer."

Resources:

FMCSA Web site: www.fmcsa.dot.gov

State Patrol Web site: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/statepatrol/inspection/mcsap.htm

CMV registration: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/plateguide/heavy-truck.htm

Motor Carrier Enforcement

Information System: (608) 267-9762

Driver license/records: (608) 267-2353

License plates and titles : (608) 266-1466

State Patrol telephone directory

Hill Farms State Transportation Building

State Patrol: (608) 266-3212

Southwest Region

DeForest Post: (608) 846-8500

Tomah Post: (608) 374-0513

Southeast Region

Waukesha Post: (262) 785-4700

Northeast Region

Fond du Lac Post: (920) 929-3700

North Central Region

Wausau Post: (715) 845-1143

Northwest Region

Eau Claire Post: (715) 839-3800

Spooner Post: (715) 635-2141

State Patrol Academy: (608) 269-2500

Safety and weight enforcement facilities (SWEFs)

Dickeyville: (608) 478-4536

Madison: (608) 838-7032

La Prairie: (608) 758-6740

West Salem: (608) 786-0275

Kenosha: (262) 857-7360

Racine: (262) 835-4328

Wrightstown: (920) 766-1424

Newton: (920) 726-4521

Abrams: (920) 826-5368

Hudson: (715) 749-3744

Menomonie: (715) 235-4581

Superior: (715) 398-6822

Coloma: (715) 249-5920