

Montana Annotated Code

Title 61. MOTOR VEHICLES

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/tire_restrictions.shtml

Towing – Passenger Vehicle Combinations

Reference: 61-10-104 M.C.A.

A passenger vehicle or truck of less than 2,000 pounds "manufacturer's rated capacity" may not tow more than one trailer or semi-trailer. This combination may not exceed an overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, in excess of 65 feet, except as provided in 61-10-124 M.C.A.

Passenger vehicles or trucks with a "manufacturer's rated capacity" of 2,000 pounds or more may tow 2 trailers. This combination may not have an overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, in excess of 75 feet, except as provided in [61-10-124 M.C.A.](#) Each trailer exceeding 3,000 pounds must be equipped with brakes and breakaway brakes, as required in [61-9-304 M.C.A.](#) and [61-9-305 M.C.A.](#) The total weight on and including the wheels of the trailer or trailers may not exceed 40% of the gross weight of the towing vehicle when connected to the trailer or trailers as per [61-9-304\(1\)\(a\) MCA.](#)

61-1-101. Definitions. As used in this title, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following definitions apply:

(70) "Semitrailer" means a vehicle, with or without motive power, other than a pole trailer, designed for carrying property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and constructed so that some part of its weight and that of its load rests upon or is carried by another vehicle.

(82) (a) "Trailer" means a vehicle, with or without motive power, other than a pole trailer, designed for carrying property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and constructed so that no part of its weight rests upon the towing vehicle.

(b) The term does not include a mobile home or a manufactured home, as defined in [15-1-101.](#)

61-10-102. Width -- definitions. (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3), a vehicle, including a bus, unloaded or with load, may not have a total outside width in excess of 102 inches. This width for buses is allowed only on paved highways 20 feet or more in width.

(2) (a) Subsection (1) does not apply to an implement of husbandry or a vehicle used for hauling hay that is moved or propelled upon the highway during daylight hours for a distance of not more than 100 miles if the movement is incidental to the farming operations of the owner of the implement of husbandry or the vehicle used for hauling hay. If the implement or vehicle is more than 12 1/2 feet wide, it must be preceded by flag vehicle escorts to warn other highway users. This restriction does not apply to dual-wheel tractors under 15 feet overall width that are used in farming operations or to movement on a county road within 100 miles of the farming operation of the owner of an implement of husbandry or a vehicle used for hauling hay. Lights that meet the requirements of [61-9-219\(4\)](#) must be displayed on the rear of the implement of husbandry or vehicle used for hauling hay. However, if the highway passes through a hazardous area, the implements or vehicles must be preceded and followed by flag vehicle escorts unless the movement of the implements or vehicles is restricted to a county road within 100 miles of the farming operation of the owner.

(b) An implement of husbandry or a vehicle used for hauling hay that exceeds 16 1/2 feet in width and that is traveling on an interstate or a four-lane highway must be followed by a flag vehicle escort.

(c) A commercial vehicle that is hauling hay but does not qualify under subsection (2)(a) may be granted a permit subject to the provisions of [61-10-121](#) through [61-10-127](#) and the following requirements:

(i) travel during daylight hours only for an oversize shipment of large round bales of hay, whether the vehicle is loaded or with an empty hay rack, up to 144 inches; when empty, a square red or orange flag measuring 12 inches on each side must be attached to each corner of the hay rack; and

(ii) travel day or night for any other shipment of baled hay, whether the vehicle is loaded or with an empty hay rack, up to 114 inches.

(d) Subsection (1) does not apply to a commercial hay grinder moved or propelled upon the highway during daylight hours for a distance of not more than 100 miles if the movement is incidental to operations of the commercial hay grinder. A commercial hay grinder exceeding 102 inches in width must have a permit issued under [61-10-124](#). If the commercial hay grinder is more than 12 1/2 feet wide, it must be preceded by flag vehicle escorts to warn other highway users. Lights that meet the requirements of [61-9-219\(4\)](#) must be displayed on the rear of the commercial hay grinder. Movement of a commercial hay grinder that does not exceed 138 inches in width may occur on any day of the week, including holidays, and is restricted to movement during daylight hours. Movement of a commercial hay grinder may not exceed the posted speed limit, including the speed limit on an interstate highway.

(3) (a) The width of a recreational vehicle, as defined in [61-1-101](#), and a camper, as defined in [61-1-101](#), that is being operated for noncommercial purposes may exceed 102 inches if:

(i) the excess width is attributable to recreational vehicle or camper appurtenances that do not extend beyond the exterior rearview mirrors of the recreational vehicle, the camper, a vehicle being towed by the recreational vehicle, or the motor vehicle providing motive power; and

(ii) the rearview mirrors extend only the distance necessary to provide the appropriate field of view for the vehicle before the recreational vehicle or camper appurtenances are attached.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "recreational vehicle or camper appurtenances" means an awning and its support hardware or any appendage that is intended to be an integral part of the recreational vehicle or camper and that is installed by the manufacturer or dealer.

(4) A safety device that the department determines by rule adopted pursuant to [61-9-504](#) to be necessary for safe and efficient operation of motor vehicles is not included in the calculation of width provided in subsection (1).

(5) Except as provided in subsections (2)(a) and (2)(b), a rear flag vehicle escort is not required for a vehicle that exceeds 12 1/2 feet in width, that is hauling or towing an implement of husbandry, construction equipment, or forestry equipment, and that is operating under this section or as authorized by special permit issued under [61-10-121](#) through [61-10-125](#) if the vehicle is operating at highway speed or with the flow of traffic.

(6) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Construction equipment" means any vehicle, machine, or attachment designed or adapted for and used in construction, heavy construction, highway construction, and remodeling work.

(b) "Flag vehicle" means a vehicle equipped as required by law or by department of transportation rule to warn or guide vehicular traffic. When not being operated as a flag vehicle, signs must be removed.

61-10-103. Height. A vehicle, unladen or with load, may not exceed a height of 14 feet.

61-10-104. Length -- definitions. (1) A single truck, bus, or self-propelled vehicle, unladen or with load, may not have an overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, in excess of 55 feet.

(2) (a) When used in a truck tractor-semitrailer combination, the semitrailer may not exceed 53 feet in length, excluding those portions not designed to carry a load, except as provided by [61-10-124](#). When used in a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer or a truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer combination, the semitrailer and trailer or the two semitrailers may not exceed 28 1/2 feet each in length or 61 feet in combined trailer length, excluding those portions not designed to carry a load, except as provided by [61-10-124](#). Truck tractor-semitrailer, truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer, and truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer combinations are not subject to a combination length limit.

(b) A stinger-steered automobile or boat transporter may not exceed 75 feet in length plus a maximum 3 feet of front overhang and 4 feet of rear overhang, except as provided by [61-10-124](#). "Stinger-steered automobile or boat transporter" means a truck tractor-semitrailer combination that has a fifth wheel on a drop frame located behind and below the rear axle of the truck tractor and that is designed and used for the transportation of vehicles or assembled boats or boat hulls.

(c) All other combinations of vehicles may not have a combination length in excess of 75 feet, except as provided by [61-10-124](#). If the combination consists of more than two units, the rear units of the combination must be equipped with breakaway brakes.

(3) A motor vehicle may not tow more than one motor vehicle, and a motor vehicle may not

draw more than three motor vehicles attached to it by the triple saddle-mount method (that is, by mounting the front wheels of one vehicle on the bed of another, leaving only the rear wheels of the vehicle in contact with the roadway), and this combination may not have a combination length in excess of 75 feet.

(4) A passenger vehicle or truck of less than 2,000 pounds "manufacturer's rated capacity" may not tow more than one trailer or semitrailer, and this combination may not have a length in excess of 65 feet.

(5) (a) The length of a vehicle combination consisting of a truck or truck tractor and one pole trailer or semitrailer hauling raw logs may not exceed 75 feet in overall length. As used in this subsection (5)(a), the term "length" means the total length of the vehicle combination beginning at the front of the front bumper of the truck or truck tractor and extending to the most distant end of the logs being hauled. A term permit for an overlength vehicle combination, as provided in [61-10-124\(2\)](#), does not apply to the vehicle combination described in this subsection (5)(a). A vehicle combination exceeding 75 feet must have a trip permit.

(b) The maximum overhang of any log may not exceed 15 feet, except by special, single-trip permit. Overhang is measured from the center of the rear-most axle to the most distant end of the logs being hauled.

(c) The provisions in subsections (5)(a) and (5)(b) do not apply to a vehicle combination hauling utility poles.

(6) As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(a) "Axle" means a transverse beam that is the common axis of rotation of one or more wheels and that, to receive credit for allowable total gross loading, must be capable of continuously transmitting a proportionate share of the total gross load to the roadway when the axle is in operation.

(b) "Combination length" means the total length of a combination of vehicles, such as a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer combination, measured from the front bumper of the motor vehicle to the back bumper or rear extremity of the last trailer, including the connection tongues.

(c) "Combined trailer length" means the total length of a combination of trailers measured from the front of the first trailer to the back of the last trailer, including the connection tongues and loads.

(d) "Length", except as provided in subsection (5)(a), means the total longitudinal dimension of a single vehicle, a trailer, or a semitrailer. The length of a trailer or semitrailer is measured from the front of the cargo-carrying unit to its rear, exclusive of safety or energy efficiency devices, air-conditioning units, air compressors, flexible fender extensions, splash and spray suppressant devices, bolsters, mechanical fastening devices, and hydraulic lift gates.

(e) "Rocky Mountain double" means a combination of vehicles that includes a truck tractor pulling a long semitrailer and a shorter trailer.

(f) "Steering axle" means an axle that pivots at the hub to allow the wheel to follow the travel of the vehicle. A steering axle is capable of being steered but need not always be connected to a steering wheel.

61-10-124. (Temporary) Special permits -- fees. (1) Except as provided in subsections (2)(d) and (4), in addition to the regular registration and gross vehicle weight fees, a fee of \$10 for each trip permit and a fee of \$75 for each term permit issued for size in excess of that specified in [61-10-101](#) through [61-10-104](#) must be paid for all movements under special permits on the public highways under the jurisdiction of the department of transportation.

(2) (a) Except as provided in subsections (2)(b), (2)(d), (2)(f), (2)(h), (4), and (5), term or blanket permits may not be issued for an overwidth vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of 15 feet; an overlength vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, object, or other thing in excess of 95 feet; or an overheight vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of 14 feet or of a limit determined by the department. A vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of these dimensions is limited to trip permits. Except as provided in subsection (2)(g), a Rocky Mountain double may not exceed 81 feet in combined trailer length. A Rocky Mountain double is not subject to a combination length limit. Special permits for vehicle combinations of more than two trailers or more than two units designed for or used to carry a load are not permitted except as provided in subsections (4) and (5). Special permits for vehicle combinations may specify and special permits under subsections (4) and (5) must specify highway routing and otherwise limit or prescribe conditions of operation of the vehicle or combination, including but not limited to required equipment, speed, stability, operational procedures, and insurance.

(b) A term permit may be issued to a dealer in implements of husbandry and self-propelled machinery for an overwidth or overlength vehicle referred to in subsection (2)(a). This permit expires on December 31 of each year, with no grace period.

(c) With payment of the appropriate gross weight fees required by [61-10-201](#) and with payment of the fee prescribed in subsection (1), allowable gross weight of a five-axle combination logging vehicle is 80,000 pounds.

(d) A term permit may be issued for any combination of vehicles that exceeds 95 feet in length but does not exceed 100 feet in combination length, except a truck-trailer-trailer or a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer-trailer combination, for travel only on highways that are part of the federal-aid interstate system, as defined in [60-1-103](#), or on other highways within a 2-mile radius of an interchange on the interstate system in order to obtain necessary services or to load or unload at a terminal. When a terminal is beyond a 2-mile radius, the department may authorize travel between the terminal and the interchange. The fee for this permit is \$125.

(e) A term permit may be issued for a truck tractor-semitrailer combination when the semitrailer exceeds 53 feet in length but does not exceed 57 feet in length.

(f) (i) An annual permit may be issued for nondivisible loads up to 120 feet in length. The fee for this permit is \$125.

(ii) Portions of a nondivisible load hauled on a public road off of the interstate highway may be detached and reloaded on the same hauling unit if the separate pieces are necessary to the operation of the machine or equipment that is being hauled and if the arrangement does not exceed limits for which a permit may be issued.

(iii) An applicant for a nondivisible load permit for use as provided in subsection (6)(b) is responsible for providing information regarding the number of work hours required to dismantle the load.

(iv) For use as provided in subsection (6)(b) and for the purposes of this section, emergency response vehicles and casks designed and used for the transport of spent nuclear materials are considered nondivisible loads.

(g) A Rocky Mountain double carrying baled hay may not exceed 88 feet of combined trailer length.

(h) A term permit may be issued for an overlength vehicle moving a mobile home or a manufactured home, as defined in [15-24-201](#), when the vehicle does not exceed 110 feet in length or 16 feet in width.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b), a permit may not be issued for a period of time greater than the period for which the GVW license is valid as provided in this title, including grace periods allowed by this title. Owners of vehicles licensed in other jurisdictions may, at the discretion of the department of transportation, purchase permits to expire with their registration. A license required by the state governs the issuance of a special permit.

(4) The department may issue special permits to the operating company for a truck-trailer-trailer or truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer-trailer combination of vehicles under the following conditions:

(a) the combination may be operated only on highways that are part of the federal-aid interstate system, as defined in [60-1-103](#), and within a 2-mile radius of an interchange on the interstate system on other highways only in order to obtain necessary services or to load or unload at a terminal. When a terminal is beyond a 2-mile radius, the department may authorize travel between the terminal and the interchange.

(b) a combination of vehicles powered by a cab-over or tilt-cab truck tractor or a truck may not exceed an overall length of 105 feet, inclusive of front and rear bumpers and overhang;

(c) a combination of vehicles powered by a conventional truck tractor may not exceed an overall length of 110 feet, inclusive of the front and rear bumpers and overhang;

(d) an individual cargo unit of the combination may not exceed 28 1/2 feet in length and 102 inches in width;

(e) gross weight fees under [61-10-201](#) must be paid on the truck or truck tractor for the declared registered gross weight of the special vehicle combination, but not to exceed the formula in [61-10-107](#);

(f) the combination must have a special overlength permit issued at a fee of \$200 for a term permit or \$20 for each trip permit;

(g) travel of the combination may be restricted to specific routes, hours of operation, specific days, or seasonal periods; and

(h) the department may enforce any other restrictions determined by the department to be necessary. The permit is not transferable, and the fee for the permit is \$200.

(5) The department of transportation may issue special permits under subsection (4) for vehicle combinations that consist of a truck-trailer-trailer if:

(a) the vehicle combination's overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, is not more than 95 feet; and

(b) the person, firm, or corporation applying for the permit:

(i) restricts truck-trailer-trailer operations authorized by the permit to the hauling of talc ore, chlorite, dolomite, limestone, and custom combine equipment;

(ii) operated the truck-trailer-trailer combination before July 1, 1987;
(iii) restricts the truck-trailer-trailer operations authorized by the permit to the specified routes that those vehicles used before July 1, 1987; and
(iv) provides the department of transportation with an affidavit confirming the routes used before July 1, 1987, for truck-trailer-trailer operations.

(6) For the purposes of this section, a "nondivisible load" is:

(a) on public roads off of interstate highways, a load that cannot be readily or reasonably dismantled and that is reduced to a minimum practical size and weight;
(b) on interstate highways, a load or vehicle exceeding applicable length or weight limits that, if separated into smaller loads or vehicles, would:

(i) compromise the intended use of the vehicle;

(ii) destroy the value of the load or vehicle; or

(iii) require more than 8 work hours to dismantle using appropriate equipment. (*Effective on occurrence of contingency*)

61-10-124. (*Effective on occurrence of contingency*) . Special permits -- fees. (1) Except as provided in subsections (2)(d) and (4), in addition to the regular registration and gross vehicle weight fees, a fee of \$10 for each trip permit and a fee of \$75 for each term permit issued for size in excess of that specified in [61-10-101](#) through [61-10-104](#) must be paid for all movements under special permits on the public highways under the jurisdiction of the department of transportation.

(2) (a) Except as provided in subsections (2)(b), (2)(d), (2)(f), (2)(g), (4), and (5), term or blanket permits may not be issued for an overwidth vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of 15 feet; an overlength vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, object, or other thing in excess of 95 feet; or an overheight vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of 14 feet or of a limit determined by the department. A vehicle, combination of vehicles, load, or other thing in excess of these dimensions is limited to trip permits. A Rocky Mountain double may not exceed 81 feet in combined trailer length. A Rocky Mountain double is not subject to a combination length limit. Special permits for vehicle combinations of more than two trailers or more than two units designed for or used to carry a load are not permitted except as provided in subsections (4) and (5). Special permits for vehicle combinations may specify and special permits under subsections (4) and (5) must specify highway routing and otherwise limit or prescribe conditions of operation of the vehicle or combination, including but not limited to required equipment, speed, stability, operational procedures, and insurance.

(b) A term permit may be issued to a dealer in implements of husbandry and self-propelled machinery for an overwidth or overlength vehicle referred to in subsection (2)(a). This permit expires on December 31 of each year, with no grace period.

(c) With payment of the appropriate gross weight fees required by [61-10-201](#) and with payment of the fee prescribed in subsection (1), allowable gross weight of a five-axle combination logging vehicle is 80,000 pounds.

(d) A term permit may be issued for any combination of vehicles that exceeds 95 feet in length but does not exceed 100 feet in combination length, except a truck-trailer-trailer or a truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer-trailer combination, for travel only on highways that are part of the federal-aid interstate system, as defined in [60-1-103](#), or on other highways within a 2-mile radius

of an interchange on the interstate system in order to obtain necessary services or to load or unload at a terminal. When a terminal is beyond a 2-mile radius, the department may authorize travel between the terminal and the interchange. The fee for this permit is \$125.

(e) A term permit may be issued for a truck tractor-semitrailer combination when the semitrailer exceeds 53 feet in length but does not exceed 57 feet in length.

(f) (i) An annual permit may be issued for nondivisible loads up to 120 feet in length. The fee for this permit is \$125.

(ii) Portions of a nondivisible load hauled on a public road off of the interstate highway may be detached and reloaded on the same hauling unit if the separate pieces are necessary to the operation of the machine or equipment that is being hauled and if the arrangement does not exceed limits for which a permit may be issued.

(iii) An applicant for a nondivisible load permit for use as provided in subsection (6)(b) is responsible for providing information regarding the number of work hours required to dismantle the load.

(iv) For use as provided in subsection (6)(b) and for the purposes of this section, emergency response vehicles and casks designed and used for the transport of spent nuclear materials are considered nondivisible loads.

(g) A term permit may be issued for an overlength vehicle moving a mobile home or a manufactured home, as defined in [15-24-201](#), when the vehicle does not exceed 110 feet in length or 16 feet in width.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (2)(b), a permit may not be issued for a period of time greater than the period for which the GVW license is valid as provided in this title, including grace periods allowed by this title. Owners of vehicles licensed in other jurisdictions may, at the discretion of the department of transportation, purchase permits to expire with their registration. A license required by the state governs the issuance of a special permit.

(4) The department may issue special permits to the operating company for a truck-trailer-trailer or truck tractor-semitrailer-trailer-trailer combination of vehicles under the following conditions:

(a) the combination may be operated only on highways that are part of the federal-aid interstate system, as defined in [60-1-103](#), and within a 2-mile radius of an interchange on the interstate system on other highways only in order to obtain necessary services or to load or unload at a terminal. When a terminal is beyond a 2-mile radius, the department may authorize travel between the terminal and the interchange.

(b) a combination of vehicles powered by a cab-over or tilt-cab truck tractor or a truck may not exceed an overall length of 105 feet, inclusive of front and rear bumpers and overhang;

(c) a combination of vehicles powered by a conventional truck tractor may not exceed an overall length of 110 feet, inclusive of the front and rear bumpers and overhang;

(d) an individual cargo unit of the combination may not exceed 28 1/2 feet in length and 102 inches in width;

(e) gross weight fees under [61-10-201](#) must be paid on the truck or truck tractor for the declared registered gross weight of the special vehicle combination, but not to exceed the formula in [61-10-107](#);

(f) the combination must have a special overlength permit issued at a fee of \$200 for a term

permit or \$20 for each trip permit;

(g) travel of the combination may be restricted to specific routes, hours of operation, specific days, or seasonal periods; and

(h) the department may enforce any other restrictions determined by the department to be necessary. The permit is not transferable, and the fee for the permit is \$200.

(5) The department of transportation may issue special permits under subsection (4) for vehicle combinations that consist of a truck-trailer-trailer if:

(a) the vehicle combination's overall length, inclusive of front and rear bumpers, is not more than 95 feet; and

(b) the person, firm, or corporation applying for the permit:

(i) restricts truck-trailer-trailer operations authorized by the permit to the hauling of talc ore, chlorite, dolomite, limestone, and custom combine equipment;

(ii) operated the truck-trailer-trailer combination before July 1, 1987;

(iii) restricts the truck-trailer-trailer operations authorized by the permit to the specified routes that those vehicles used before July 1, 1987; and

(iv) provides the department of transportation with an affidavit confirming the routes used before July 1, 1987, for truck-trailer-trailer operations.

(6) For the purposes of this section, a "nondivisible load" is:

(a) on public roads off of interstate highways, a load that cannot be readily or reasonably dismantled and that is reduced to a minimum practical size and weight;

(b) on interstate highways, a load or vehicle exceeding applicable length or weight limits that, if separated into smaller loads or vehicles, would:

(i) compromise the intended use of the vehicle;

(ii) destroy the value of the load or vehicle; or

(iii) require more than 8 work hours to dismantle using appropriate equipment.