

Tennessee Title 55 - Motor and Other Vehicles

55-1-105. "Manufactured home," "Mobile home or house trailer," "pole trailer," "semitrailer" and "trailer" defined.

(a) "Manufactured home" means any structure, transportable in one (1) or more sections, which, in the traveling mode, is eight (8) or more body-feet in width or forty (40) or more body-feet in length, or when erected on site, is three hundred twenty (320) or more square feet, and which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities, and includes the plumbing, heating, air-conditioning and electrical systems contained therein. The term includes any structure that meets all of the requirements of this subsection (a) except the size requirements and with respect to which the manufacturer voluntarily files a certification required by the United States secretary of housing and urban development and complies with the standards established by title 42 of the United States Code. As defined in this subsection (a), "manufactured home" also has the same meaning as "mobile home," as defined in title 68, chapter 126, and "manufactured home," as defined in § 47-9-102.

(b) "Mobile home or house trailer" means any vehicle or conveyance, not self-propelled, designed for travel upon the public highways, and designed for use as a residence, office, apartment, storehouse, warehouse, or any other similar purpose. "Mobile home or house trailer" includes any "manufactured home" as defined in subsection (a).

(c) "Pole trailer" means every vehicle without motive power designed to be drawn by another vehicle and attached to the towing vehicle by means of a reach, or pole, or by being boomed or otherwise secured to the towing vehicle, and ordinarily used for transporting long or irregularly shaped loads such as poles, pipes, or structural members capable, generally, of sustaining themselves as beams between the supporting connections.

(d) "Semitrailer" means every vehicle without motive power and not a motor vehicle as defined in this section, other than a pole trailer, designed for carrying persons or property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and so constructed that some part of its weight and that of its load rests upon or is carried by another vehicle.

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

55-7-114. Safety chains for trailers -- Penalty -- Exceptions.

(a) In addition to any other attachment, any trailer, semitrailer, or pole trailer operated on the highways of Tennessee shall be attached to the towing vehicle by a chain, securely attached to both vehicles, and reasonably capable of maintaining the attachment in the event of failure by any other attachment device.

(b) The responsibility for providing safety chains for trailers rented, leased, or loaned to farmers by persons customarily doing so for the haulage of farm supplies or crops shall be with the person so renting, leasing, or loaning the trailer.

(c) Failure to comply with this section shall subject the offender to a fine of fifty dollars (\$50.00) on a first offense, that may be submitted by the offender to the clerk of the court that has jurisdiction of the offense in the county in which the offense charged was alleged to have been committed, in lieu of appearance in court by the offender. On second and subsequent offenses, the fine shall be not less than fifty dollars (\$50.00) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500).

(d) (1) This section does not apply to farm implements used in tillage, harvesting, or seeding, if the implements were not equipped at the time of manufacture with safety chains, and if the implements are being towed on state or local roads at a speed of less than twenty-five miles per hour (25 mph), except this exemption shall not apply to farm trailers.

(2) This section also does not apply to any motor vehicle with an attached gooseneck type trailer or semitrailer with a fifth wheel.

55-7-201. Maximum length of vehicles. [Amendment operative on advisement by federal motor carrier safety administration. See the Compiler's and Amendment Notes.]

(a) For purposes of this section, "truck tractor" means the noncargo carrying power unit that operates in combination with a semitrailer or trailer, except that a truck tractor and semitrailer engaged in the transportation of automobiles may transport motor vehicles on part of the power unit.

(b) No motor vehicle as defined in § 55-1-103 consisting of a straight truck whose length, including any part of its body or load, exceeds forty-five feet (45') and no straight truck with trailer attached, the total length of which combination, including any part of the body or load, exceeds sixty-five feet (65') shall be operated on any highway.

(c) Motor vehicles consisting of a truck-tractor and semitrailer or trailer combination shall be permitted to operate over the federal and state highway system; provided, that the towed vehicle

shall not exceed fifty feet (50') in length from the point of attachment to the tractor, except that this length may be increased to fifty-two feet (52') when the load on the vehicle consists of livestock, motor vehicle parts, automobiles and/or motor vehicles. If the towed vehicle exceeds forty-eight feet (48') in length from the point of attachment to the tractor and the load on the vehicle does not consist of livestock, motor vehicle parts, automobiles and/or motor vehicles, the distance between the kingpin and the rearmost axle or a point midway between the two (2) rear axles, if the two (2) rear axles are a tandem axle, shall not exceed forty-one feet (41').

(d) Motor vehicles consisting of a truck-tractor and twin trailer combination shall be permitted to operate on the interstate system and other federal-aid highways designated by the commissioner of transportation; provided, that neither of the towed vehicles shall exceed twenty-eight feet six inches (28' 6") in length.

(e) No twin trailer truck authorized by this chapter shall be operated on any highway designated as a scenic highway under the authority of title 54, chapter 17. The interstate system and other federal-aid highways designated by the commissioner shall not be considered scenic routes for purposes of this chapter.

(f) The limitation as to length stated in this section shall not apply to loads of poles, logs or timber in single length pieces; provided, that no motor vehicle, including any part of the body or load, transporting such material shall be in excess of seventy-five feet (75') in length unless a permit has first been obtained as authorized in § 55-7-205.

(g) The length limitations described in this section shall be exclusive of safety and energy conservation devices designated by the commissioner except that no device excluded from the limitations of this section shall have by its design or use the capability to carry cargo.

(h) [Amendment operative on advisement by federal motor carrier safety administration. See the Compiler's and Amendment Notes.] It is not a violation of the length limits set forth in this section when any otherwise properly titled and registered vehicle, which is in compliance with applicable length requirements, is disabled on the highways and requires a tow or other assistance in proceeding to an exit or a repair or terminal facility within one hundred (100) miles of the point where the vehicle became disabled, and the combined lengths of the disabled vehicle and the tow vehicle exceed the limits in this section. This exemption shall only apply to vehicles disabled while operating on the highway, and only when authorized by the owner, terminal manager, owner's agent, or law enforcement official.

55-7-202. Maximum width and height.

(a) (1) No motor vehicle as defined in § 55-1-103 or any trailer or semitrailer, whose width,

including any part of the load, exceeds eight feet (8') (that is, four feet (4') on each side of the center line of the vehicle), or whose height, including any part of the load, exceeds thirteen and one-half feet (13 1/2'), shall be operated on any highway; provided, that this section shall not apply to farm tractors or farm machinery temporarily moving on any highway.

(2) Subdivision (a)(1) relating to maximum width restrictions on trailers and semitrailers shall not apply to a trailer or semitrailer utilized for transporting seed cotton or rolled hay bales; provided, that the width of any such trailer or semitrailer, including any part of the load, shall not exceed ten feet (10') (that is five feet (5') on each side of the center line of the trailer, or semitrailer), and such movement is performed during daylight hours within a radius of fifty (50) miles of the point of origin, and no part of the movement is upon any highway designated and known as a part of the national system of interstate and defense highways or any fully controlled access highway facility or other federal-aid highway designated by the commissioner of transportation.

(3) In the event federal law and regulations permit the operation of passenger buses of widths in excess of eight feet (8') on the national systems of interstate and defense highways, then there may be operated on highways with four (4) or more lanes, and such other highways as are designated and approved by the commissioner within the state, passenger buses, the width of which do not exceed eight feet six inches (8' 6"), or such width, not exceeding eight feet six inches (8' 6"), as is permitted under the federal rules and regulations.

(4) It is not a violation of this part to transport a houseboat eighteen feet (18') in width, or less, on the highways, but any houseboat in excess of eight feet (8') shall be subject to the fees provided in § 55-7-205.

(b) The approval of the commissioner for buses in excess of eight feet (8') to operate on streets and roads shall be inoperative unless approved by the legislative body of any city with a population of one hundred seventy thousand (170,000) to two hundred fifty thousand (250,000), according to the 1970 federal census.

(c) Motor vehicles not exceeding eight feet six inches (8' 6") in width are permitted to operate over the interstate system and other federal-aid highways designated by the commissioner. Incidental appurtenances and retracted awnings, where the width does not exceed six inches (6"), and safety devices, as designated by the commissioner, shall be excluded from the measurement of width and the provisions contained in § 55-7-205. Within the limitations as provided in this chapter, any such vehicles may use and must confine themselves to the shortest reasonable route to and from the interstate system, other designated highways, and terminals; or, in the case of household goods carriers, to and from points of loading and unloading. Access to facilities in interchange areas adjoining these highways for food, fuel, repairs and rest shall not be denied.

(d) Notwithstanding the limitations in subsection (a), a motor vehicle, as defined in § 55-1-103, or a trailer or semitrailer, whose width, including any part of the load, does not exceed eight feet

six inches (8' 6") (that is, four feet three inches (4' 3") on each side of the center line of the vehicle), and whose height, including any part of the load does not exceed thirteen feet six inches (13' 6"), may be operated on the federal and state highway system. Any such vehicles may use and must confine themselves to the shortest reasonable route to and from the federal and state highway system, and terminals; or, in the case of household goods carriers, to and from points of loading and unloading. Access to facilities in interchange areas adjoining these highways for food, fuel, repairs and rest shall not be denied.

(e) (1) Notwithstanding the limitations set forth in subsection (a), between one (1) minute past midnight (12:01 a.m.) on the first Friday in March and eleven fifty-nine p.m. (11:59 p.m.) on the first Sunday in November each year, a motor vehicle carrying rafts or rafting apparatus used by an operator for commercial whitewater rafting purposes, when the driver of such motor vehicle possesses written documentation from the department of revenue that such operator is in compliance with the policy of liability insurance provisions in § 65-15-110(b), and having a height, including any part of the load, that exceeds thirteen feet (13') but does not exceed seventeen and one half feet (17 1/2') may operate on the following state highway segments:

(A) State Route 40 (United States Highway 64) in Polk County between State Route 33 (United States Highway 411) east of Cleveland and State Route 68 in Ducktown (Ocoee River); and

(B) Interstate 40 in Cocke County between the Foothills Parkway and the Tennessee-North Carolina border (Pigeon River);

and within five (5) miles of such highway segments upon any additional public road as necessary to travel to and from such operator's place of business to such highway or to and from such highway to such operator's river access point, so long as the load is secured and the vehicle is operated in a safe manner at all times.

(2) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the department of transportation or any other entity to design, construct, or maintain overhead structures on or along such highways or public roads with a clearance in excess of thirteen feet (13') or any otherwise applicable design standard.

32-18-17. Breakaway from towing vehicle — **Brakes** to be applied automatically and promptly — **Trailers** — Class 2 misdemeanor.

- Every **trailer**, semitrailer, and pole **trailer** equipped with air or vacuum actuated **brakes** and every **trailer**, semitrailer, and pole **trailer** with a gross weight in excess of three thousand pounds, manufactured or assembled after July 1, 1967, shall be equipped with **brakes** acting on all wheels and of such character as to be applied automatically and promptly, and remain applied for at least fifteen minutes, upon breakaway from the towing vehicle. A violation of this section is a Class 2 misdemeanor.

55-9-405. Lighting devices and reflectors on vehicles having width in excess of 80 inches, truck tractors, and **trailers** -- **Lamp** or flag on projecting load -- Penalties.

- **(a)** Every motor vehicle other than any passenger car, any road roller, road machinery or farm tractor having a width of eighty inches (80") or more shall be equipped with at least the following lighting devices and reflectors:
 - **(1)** On the front, at least two (2) headlamps, an equal number at each side; two (2) turn signals, one (1) at each side; two (2) clearance **lamps**, one (1) at each side; three (3) identification **lamps**, mounted on the vertical centerline of the vehicle, or the vertical centerline of the cab where different from the centerline of the vehicle, except that where the cab is not more than forty-two inches (42") wide at the front roofline, a single **lamp** at the center of the cab shall be deemed to comply with the requirements for identification **lamps**. No part of the identification **lamps** or their mountings may extend below the top of the vehicle windshield;
 - **(2)** On the rear, two (2) tail **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) stop **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) turn signals, one (1) at each side; two (2) clearance **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side; and three (3) identification **lamps**, mounted on the vertical center line of the vehicle; provided, that the identification **lamps** need not be lighted if obscured by a vehicle towed by the truck; and
 - **(3)** On each side, one (1) side-marker **lamp** at or near the front, one (1) side-marker **lamp** at or near the rear; one (1) reflector at or near the front, and one (1) reflector at or near the rear.
- **(b)** Every truck tractor shall be equipped as follows:
 - **(1)** On the front, at least two (2) headlamps, an equal number at each side; two (2) turn signals, one (1) at each side; two (2) clearance **lamps**, one (1) at each side; and three (3) identification **lamps**, mounted on the vertical centerline of the vehicle, or the vertical centerline of the cab where different from the centerline of the vehicle, except that where the cab is not more than forty-two inches (42") wide at the front roofline, a single **lamp** at the center of the cab shall be deemed to comply with the requirement for identification **lamps**. No part of the identification **lamps** or their mountings may extend below the top of the vehicle windshield; and
 - **(2)** On the rear, one (1) tail **lamp**; one (1) stop **lamp**; two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side; and, unless the turn signals on the front are so constructed (double faced) and located as to be visible to passing drivers, two (2) turn signals on the rear of the cab, one (1) at each side.

- (c) Every semitrailer or full **trailer** eighty inches (80") or more in overall width, except converter dollies, shall be equipped as follows:
 - (1) On the front, two (2) clearance **lamps**, one (1) at each side;
 - (2) On the rear, two (2) tail **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) stop **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) turn signals, one (1) at each side; two (2) clearance **lamps**, one (1) at each side; two (2) reflectors, one (1) at each side; and three (3) identification **lamps**, mounted on the vertical centerline of the vehicle; provided that the identification **lamps** need not be lighted if obscured by another vehicle in the same combination;
 - (3) On each side, one (1) side-marker **lamp** at or near the front; one (1) side-marker **lamp** at or near the rear; one (1) reflector at or near the front; one (1) reflector at or near the rear; and, in case of semitrailers and full **trailers** thirty feet (30') or more in length, at least one (1) additional side-marker **lamp** at optional height and at least one (1) additional reflector, the additional side-marker **lamp** or **lamps** and reflector or reflectors to be at or near the center or at approximately uniform spacing in the length of the vehicle; and
 - (4) For the purposes of these regulations, "converter dolly" is a motor vehicle with a fifth wheel lower half or equivalent mechanism, the attachment of which vehicle converts a semitrailer to a full **trailer**. Each dolly, when towed singly by another vehicle, and not as part of a full **trailer**, shall be equipped with one (1) stop **lamp**, one (1) tail **lamp**, and two (2) reflectors on the rear. No lighting devices or reflectors are required on the front or sides of any dolly.

- (d)
 - (1) Except as provided in subdivision (d)(2), from one half (1/2) hour before sunset to one half (1/2) hour after sunrise and at all other times when lights are required to be displayed, there shall be attached to the rearmost extremity of any load that projects four feet (4') or more beyond the rear of the body of the motor vehicle, or at any tailboard or tailgate so projecting, or to the rearmost extremity of any load, carried on a pole **trailer**, at least one (1) red **lamp**, securely fastened thereto, which shall be visible from a distance of five hundred feet (500') to the sides and rear under normal atmospheric conditions. At all other times one (1) red flag, at least eighteen inches (18") square, made of cloth, synthetic or man-made material, shall be so displayed.
 - (2) This subsection (d) shall apply only to:
 - (A) Any noncommercial motor vehicle transporting property intrastate; and
 - (B) Any commercial motor vehicle having a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of twenty six

thousand pounds (26,000 lbs.) or less when such motor vehicle is transporting property intrastate.

- (3) Title 65, chapter 15, and all applicable federal rules shall apply to all commercial vehicles having a GVWR or a GCWR of more than twenty six thousand pounds (26,000 lbs.).
- (e) From one half (1/2) hour before sunset to one half (1/2) hour after sunrise and at all other times when lights are required to be displayed, any motor vehicle or **trailer** transporting intrastate a load of logs, long pulpwood, poles, or posts that projects four feet (4') or more beyond the rear of the body or bed of such vehicle, when the vehicle is operated on any highway or parked on the shoulder or immediately adjacent to the traveled portions of such highway, shall have securely affixed as close as practical to the end of any such projecting load either:
 - (1) One (1) amber strobe-type **lamp**, complying with SAE J595, equipped with a multidirectional type lens so mounted as to be visible from the rear and both sides of the projecting load. If the mounting of one (1) amber strobe **lamp** cannot be accomplished so that it is visible from the rear and both sides of the projecting load, multiple amber strobe lights, complying with SAE J595, shall be utilized so as to meet the visibility requirements of this subdivision (e)(1). The amber strobe **lamp** shall flash at a rate of at least sixty (60) flashes per minute and shall be plainly visible from a distance of at least five hundred feet (500') to the rear and sides at a radius of one hundred eighty degrees (180 degrees) of the projecting load. At all other times one (1) red flag, at least eighteen inches (18") square, made of cloth, synthetic or man-made material, shall be so displayed; or
 - (2) One (1) amber light-emitting diode (LED) light, complying with SAE J595, equipped with a multidirectional type lens, mounted so as to be visible from the rear and from both sides of the projecting load. If the mounting of one (1) amber LED light cannot be accomplished so that it is visible from the rear and from both sides of the projecting load, multiple amber LED lights, complying with SAE J595, shall be utilized so as to meet the visibility requirements of this subdivision (e)(2). The amber LED light shall flash at a rate of at least sixty (60) flashes per minute and shall be plainly visible from a distance of at least five hundred feet (500') from the rear and sides at a radius of one hundred eighty degrees (180 degrees) of the projecting load. Any LED light shall be constructed of durable, weather resistant material and may be powered by the vehicle's electrical system or by an independent battery system, or both. If the LED light is powered by an independent battery system, the driver of the vehicle shall have in the driver's immediate possession charged, spare batteries for use in case of battery failure. Any solid state LED lighting that consists of multiple LED lights shall not have less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the LED lights in operable condition. At all other times one (1) red flag, at least eighteen inches (18") square, made of cloth, synthetic or man-made material, shall be so displayed.

- **(f)** A violation of this section is a Class C misdemeanor.