

# The Colorado State Patrol

## Commercial Vehicle Safety Unit

### Small Truck and Truck/Trailer Combination Owner's Guide for Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations



This pamphlet is intended only as an informational guide to assist the small truck and truck/trailer combination operator with understanding some of the State Laws and Federal Regulations. It does not cover all the laws required to maintain compliance. All reference to the State and Federal Regulations should be confirmed using the Colorado Revised Statutes and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations.

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Colorado State Patrol  
Motor Carrier Safety Section  
15075 South Golden Road  
Golden, Colorado 80401  
303-273-1875 Office  
303-273-1939 Fax

This document supersedes all previous versions



Definitions: To clarify the application of the rules and regulations for small truck and truck trailer combinations, it is necessary to set forth the following definitions. Please refer to these definitions when seen in **BOLD** print throughout this pamphlet.

**CMV** (Commercial Motor Vehicle) any self-propelled or towed vehicle bearing an apportioned plate or having a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (**GVWR**) or Gross Combination Weight Rating (**GCWR**) of 10,001 pounds or more, which is used in commerce on a public highway, or of any weight which used to:

- Transport 9 or more people for compensation or
- Is designed to transport 16 or more people regardless of compensation or
- A placadable amount of hazmat or
- Is designed or equipped to transport other vehicles via cables or winches 49 CFR 390.5, CRS 42-4-235

**GVWR** (Gross vehicle weight rating) is the value specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of a single vehicle. Usually found on the VIN label. 49 CFR 390.5

**GCWR** (Gross combination weight rating) is the value specified by the manufacturer as the loaded weight of a combination (articulated) motor vehicle. In the absence of a value specified by the manufacturer, GCWR will be determined by adding the GVWR of the power unit and the total weight of the towed unit and any load thereon, or the GVWR of the power unit to the GVWR of the trailer. 49 CFR 390.5

**CRS** (Colorado Revised Statute) requires motor carrier to be knowledgeable of the safety regulations for commercial motor vehicles. CRS 42-4-235

**HERE IS A CONDENSED VERSION OF SAFETY  
REGULATIONS THAT ARE SOMETIMES OVERLOOKED.**

Small truck and truck/trailer combination vehicle (vehicles with a **GVWR** or **GCWR**, between 10,001 and 26,000 pounds) drivers are not exempt from complying with the safety requirements contained in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) as adopted by the State of Colorado, when operating vehicles that meet the definitions shown in this guide.

**COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSES:**

**49 CFR 383** Drivers of small vehicles generally only need a regular driver's license.

However, a pick-up truck with a large bumper pull or gooseneck trailer may meet the description for a Class A vehicle depending on the weight of the truck and the trailer.

**Example: Steve operates a landscaping business and has a 1 ton truck GVWR 12,000 pounds, and purchases a gooseneck trailer with a GVW of 14,500 pounds. The GCWR of the combination would be 26,500 pounds and the trailer towed is over 10,000 pounds, so Steve would need a class A CDL to operate this combination.**

**Class "A"**

Heavy Combination Vehicle: any combination of vehicles with a **GCWR** of 26,001 pounds or more if the **GVWR** or **GVW** of the trailer/trailers being towed are more than 10,000 pounds.



## **Class “B”**

Heavy Straight Vehicle: any single vehicle with a **GVWR** of 26,001 pounds or more by itself or towing a trailer with a **GVWR or GVW** of less than 10,001 pounds.



## **Class “C”**

A vehicle that doesn't meet the definition of a Class A or Class B vehicle, but is used to transport a placardable load of hazmat or is designed to transport 16 passengers or more including the driver.

### **Regular Driver's License**

Any vehicle that doesn't meet any of the above definitions

### **MARKINGS: (Company name and USDOT number)**

**49 CFR 390.21** requires that all **CMVs** must be marked on both sides with the company name. Interstate and intrastate carriers are required to display their USDOT number. The FHWA issues numbers to interstate and intrastate carriers. Intrastate carrier operating combination vehicles may meet the requirements of this section by marking the trailer if the power unit's GVWR is 10,000 pounds or less.

### **MEDICAL CARD:**

**49 CFR 391** Medical Card. Colorado requires interstate drivers of all **CMVs** and drivers operating a **CMV** that requires a CDL to obtain a medical card.

### **DRIVING COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES:**

**49 CFR 392** prohibits unsafe driving practices for all drivers operating **Commercial Motor Vehicles**. These prohibited practices include but are not limited to the following:

- (392.2) Operating a **CMV** in violation of a local law
- (392.3) Operating a **CMV** while ill or fatigued
- (392.4) Possession/Consumption of Drugs or other substances
- (392.5) Possession/Consumption of Alcohol
- (392.7) Operating a **CMV** when the driver has not determined the vehicle is in safe operating condition
- (392.14) Failing to use extreme caution or discontinue trip when adverse conditions are encountered
- (392.16) Operating a **CMV** while not wearing a safety belt
- (392.71) Operating a **CMV** that is equipped with a radar detector
- (392.80) Operating a **CMV** while texting
- (392.82) Operating a **CMV** while using a handheld cellular phone

### **LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS:**

**49 CFR 393.11** requires all **CMVs** have operational headlights, front and rear side marker lights, turn, tail, stop lamps and reflex reflectors. Any **CMV** that is 80 inches or more in width is required to have lights marking the extreme width and height of the vehicle with I.D. and clearance lights on the front and rear of the vehicle. These light and reflector requirements are also covered under state statutes.

**RETROFLECTIVE SHEETING AND REFLEX REFLECTORS:**

**49 CFR 393.13** As of June 1, 2001 retro-reflective sheeting and reflex reflectors will be required on all trailers and semitrailers with a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or more.

**BRAKES:**

**49 CFR 393.48** requires all brakes installed on a vehicle to be in use and operational at all times regardless of weight.

**49 CFR 393.42** requires brakes on all wheels of all towed vehicles weighing more than 3,000 pounds.

**49 CFR 393.43** towed vehicles that are required to have brakes are also required to have a breakaway brake system, which applies the brakes of the towed vehicle if the towed vehicle becomes detached from the towing vehicle during transit.

**CRS 42-4-223** has the same requirements.

**SAFETY CHAINS ON TRAILERS:**

**49 CFR 393.70, and CRS 42-4-506(3)** require that all trailers towed by a vehicle must have adequate safety chains to prevent the towed vehicle from separating from the towing vehicle if the main tow connection malfunctions. Trailers attached via a fifth wheel assembly are excluded from this requirement.

**TIRES**

**49 CFR 393.75** requires tires to be in good condition with no tread separation, leaks, or exposed belt material. Front tires must have a minimum of 4/32 of an inch tread groove and other tires must have 2/32 of an inch tread groove.

**REAR END PROTECTION:**

**49 CFR 393.86** requires a **CMV**, that has a clearance at the rear end of more than 30 inches from the ground when empty, and the measurement from the rear tires to the rear of the bed is 24 inches or more, must have a device substantially constructed and firmly attached to the frame, to prevent a vehicle from going under the rear of the **CMV**. Rear impact guards are also required on trailers with a GVWR of 10,001 pounds or more.

**EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT:**

**49 CFR 393.95** requires a **CMV** to have a fire extinguisher with at least a 5 B:C rating and either three bi-directional reflective triangles or six road flares.

**LOAD SECUREMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

**49 CFR 393.100** through **393.136** contain the requirements for securing loads and the specifications of the load securing devices and front-end structures. **A load must be secured to prevent it from shifting or falling off of the vehicle.** In addition, each cargo carrying motor vehicle must conform to the applicable rules in **393.102, 393.104 and 393.106.**

**CRS 42-4-1407** requires vehicles carrying material of less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to be covered to prevent blowing of the material from the vehicle.

### **HOURS OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS:**

**49 CFR 395.8** requires all **CMV** drivers to prepare records of duty status (**RODS or commonly known as a Trucker's Log Book**).

**49 CFR 395.1(e)** provides an exemption from 395.8 (**RODS or commonly known as a Trucker's Log Book**) if:

The driver operates a property carrying **CMV** that doesn't require a **CDL**

and completes a time card with start time, end time and total time for each work day

and does not go outside a 150 air mile radius from the location where the driver reports to work

and the driver starts and ends the day at the same location

and the driver has at least 10 hours off between shifts

and the driver doesn't drive after the 14<sup>th</sup> hour 5 days of the week and the 16<sup>th</sup> hour 2 days of the week

and the driver doesn't drive after the 60<sup>th</sup> hour in 7 days if the company operates 6 or less days per week or the 70<sup>th</sup> hour in 8 days if the company operates every day of the week.

### **INSPECTION, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE:**

**49 CFR 396** covers the inspection repair and maintenance for all **CMVs**.

**49 CFR 396.11** Requires companies with 2 or more vehicles to have all drivers complete a report on each vehicle driven when any issues affecting the safe operation of the vehicle or creating the possibility of breakdown is detected with the vehicle (driver vehicle inspection report DVIR). This report will be completed at the end of the day, documenting the issues and how they were corrected.

**49 CFR 396.17** Requires that vehicles are annually inspected by a qualified mechanic to determine that the vehicle is safe to operate.

**49 CFR 393** addresses parts and accessories that are necessary for safe operation.

**49 CFR Appendix G** sets forth the minimum standards for a vehicle to pass an annual inspection performed by a qualified mechanic.

**49 CFR 392.7** prior to operating the vehicle, a driver is required to check the vehicle's parts and accessories, to ensure the vehicle is in safe working order (pre-trip inspection).

There are many additional safety regulations that must be complied with, such as frames, suspension, steering etc. that this informational pamphlet due to space limitations, cannot cover. All motor carriers should obtain a copy of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR) to refer to, for all the safety regulations.

**COMMERCIAL VEHICLE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE FOLLOWING  
AGENCIES:**

**COLORADO STATE PATROL** (303) 273-1875  
(Motor Carrier Safety)  
(Hazardous Materials Transport Safety and Response)  
(Port of Entry)  
15075 South Golden Road, Golden, CO 80401 [www.colorado.gov/csp](http://www.colorado.gov/csp)

**COLORADO DEPT. OF REVENUE** (303) 205-5983  
**Commercial Driver's License Information** [www.colorado.gov/pacific/dmv](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dmv)

**COLORADO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION** (303) 757-9539  
**Extra Legal Loads, LVC Permits** [www.codot.gov/business/permits/truckpermits](http://www.codot.gov/business/permits/truckpermits)

**COLORADO REGULATED CARRIERS** (303) 894-2000  
Public Utilities Commission

**FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION**  
12300 W. Dakota Ave. #130, Lakewood, CO 80228 (720) 963-3130  
Main Site [www.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov)  
Public company safety scores [ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/default.aspx](http://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/default.aspx)  
Forms [www.fmcsa.dot.gov/forms/forms.htm](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/forms/forms.htm)  
Data Quality [dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov](http://dataqs.fmcsa.dot.gov)

**THE FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY REGULATIONS AND OTHER REQUIRED FORMS MAY  
BE OBTAINED FROM:**

**Colorado Motor Carrier's Association** [www.cmca.com](http://www.cmca.com) (303) 433-3375  
**J.J. Keller & Associates, Inc.** [www.jjkeller.com](http://www.jjkeller.com) (800) 558-5011  
**Label Master** [www.labelmaster.com](http://www.labelmaster.com) (800) 723-4327  
**Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance** [www.cvsa.org](http://www.cvsa.org) (301) 564-1623

