



Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Update

New Kentucky Administrative Regulation for Transporting or Moving Overweight or Overdimensional Farm Equipment

601 KAR 1:019. Overweight or Overdimensional Farm Equipment (effective 7-6-12)

In July 2012 the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet clarified and established a separate regulation for the movement of overweight or overdimensional farm equipment on public roads. This not only includes transporting such equipment by truck or trailer, but when operating the farm equipment itself (i.e., tractors and self-propelled machines) under its own power on roads.

Certain situations require permits, and certain situations are exempted from permits. ***This update focuses on the requirements for operation of tractors or other self-propelled farm equipment on roadways in permit-exempt situations, as described below. Requirements when operating with a permit are not covered here; operators should consult the text of the regulation for details of permits and associated requirements.***

For specifics, and the complete text of the regulation, go to this web page: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/kar/601/001/019.htm>. For more information in general on current Kentucky laws (Kentucky revised statutes, or KRS) and Kentucky administrative regulations (KAR), go to this searchable website: <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Law.htm>.

While this KAR establishes when permits are required for transporting overweight and overdimensional farm equipment, ***Section 2 specifically states that permits are not required in the following situations: when moving such equipment from one farm to another, from farm***

to repair shop or dealer, and from repair shop or dealer back to the farm. However, even without a permit, the safety requirements in the regulation must still be followed. This is when the farm equipment operator must know what is required.

An “overdimensional” farm machine is one that is wider than eight feet. Some tractors by themselves are overdimensional, not to mention trailing implements, combines with the header attached, etc. If the width is greater than 12 feet, an escort vehicle will be required, as described below.

When exceeding the eight foot width limit, but no greater than 12 feet, operators must use one or more of the following on their machine while on the road: (1) Flashing lights or amber oscillating lights, visible from the rear; (2) Flags made of red or fluorescent orange material, at least 18 inches square, and displayed at the widest point of the load; or (3) a yellow sign with black letters reading “Oversize Load”, displayed so that the sign is visible to traffic. The sign must be at least six to eight feet wide, the black letters at least 18 inches tall, and the “brushstroke” (width of the lines of each letter) must be at least 1.4 inches wide. Remember that the operator only needs to use one of these three alternatives, although two or more are allowed. An escort vehicle is optional, not required. If an escort vehicle is used, the lights, flags, or “Oversize Load” sign can be on the escort vehicle instead of the machinery. Other general requirements of escort vehicles are listed below.

As indicated previously, when the width exceeds 12 feet, at least one escort vehicle is required. Below are general requirements for escort vehicles, and specific requirements for escort vehicles used when the width exceeds 12 feet.

General requirements for all escort vehicles include (1) keeping its headlights on; (2) staying 300 feet ahead of (“lead position”), or 300 feet behind (“trail position”), the load being escorted, although this may vary because of safety or road conditions; (3) may tow something itself on a two-lane highway (e.g., a combine header lengthways on a trailer); (4) if operating on a four-lane road at speeds of 45 mph or less, at least one escort vehicle must be in the trail position.

Specific requirements for escort vehicles for loads exceeding 12 feet in width include (1) on two lane roads, having at least one escort vehicle in the lead position; (2) on a four-lane road, having at least one escort vehicle in the trail position.

Special situations include the following: (1) A single vehicle and load in excess of 85 feet long on a two lane road must have at least one escort vehicle in the lead position; (2) a single vehicle and load with length of 120 feet or more, operating on a four-lane road, must have at least one escort vehicle in the trail position; (3) a convoy of more than one vehicle and load exceeding 12 feet width or 85 feet length, on a two lane road, must have at least one escort vehicle in the lead position for the entire convoy.

Travel restrictions: Movement of farm equipment wider than 12 feet shall not be made on a road if adverse weather or road conditions will cause the move to be dangerous.

Note that there is no maximum width established for operation of farm equipment on roads. Good judgment should be used and take into consideration hills, curves, and sight lines, as well as roadside obstacles.

Overweight or overdimensional farm equipment shall not be operated on toll roads (including where tolls were collected in the past), parkways, or interstate highways. However, single use or annual permits to operate on a fully-controlled-access highway can be obtained if the movement does not create an unreasonable impedance of traffic, and is accompanied by an escort vehicle according to the requirements listed above.

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