

Recreational Vehicle Information for Drivers of Motor Homes, Truck Campers and House Trailers

March 15, 2008



Overview

This document addresses only selected requirements for motor homes, truck campers, house trailers and trucks that tow house trailers operating on the highway and is not an exhaustive list of all the rules that may apply.

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Terms Used In This Document

"actual weight" means;

- for a single truck = the actual weight of the truck and load, if any,
- for a truck towing a trailer = the actual weight of the truck and load, if any, and any weight transferred to the truck through the tongue or gooseneck of an attached trailer, including a house trailer.

"house trailer"

house trailer includes a fifth wheel house trailer, a ball hitch type house trailer, a travel trailer, a cabin trailer, a collapsible cabin trailer, a tent trailer and camping trailer, when being used for personal purposes.

"motor home" means:

a motor vehicle that is used for personal purposes as a temporary or permanent residence and contains at least four of the following items:

Cooking facilities, a refrigerator or an ice box, a self-contained toilet, a heating or air conditioning system, an independent electrical power supply or an independent gas supply or a potable water supply system with faucet and sink.

Note: "a van camper" is essentially a car-plated passenger van and as such is subject to the same rules as a passenger van or a car.

"registered gross weights"

The term "registered gross weight" (RGW) and "registered" are used throughout this document. The RGW determines the fee paid for a truck's licence plates.

For more information about RGW and to determine the appropriate amount of RGW for your truck or truck camper, please visit the following website:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/regulations/trailers.htm>

Motor homes are plated as passenger vehicles, [e.g. car plates] and do not have a RGW.

"truck camper" means:

a truck carrying a self-contained dwelling unit that is designed, equipped and used exclusively for living accommodation.

Note: The truck portion of a truck camper is registered and licensed as a truck and has an RGW. A truck camper reverts back to a truck when the camper is not being carried and therefore must comply with any truck safety rules that may apply for the size and weight of the truck. Some of these rules are included in this document.

"truck", includes a pickup.

Driver Licences

Driver licence reciprocity

Ontario permits an out-of-province driver to drive a vehicle or combination of vehicles in Ontario if the driver is properly licensed to drive the vehicle or combination in their Province or State of residency and the licence is valid.

Notes for the following "Class of driver licence required to drive":

- "towed vehicle" means
 - any type of trailer, including a house trailer, and
 - a tow-along motor vehicle such as car, truck, van, sports utility vehicle (SUV), etc. that is being towed on a dolly or with a tow bar.
- "towed vehicles" means a combination of towed trailers or a combination of towed trailer and towed motor vehicle.
- "vehicle weight" means the actual weight of a vehicle whether loaded or empty.
- "trailer weight" means the weight transmitted to the road by the trailer's axle(s) and is determined with the trailer attached to the towing vehicle.

Class of driver's licence required to drive;

A motor home only:

- Class "G" if the motor home weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less, or
- Class "D" if the motor home weighs more than 11,000 kgs.

A motor home towing a trailer and/or a motor vehicle:

- Class "G" if the combination weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less,
- Class "D" if the combination weighs more than 11,000 kgs, or
- Class "A" if the weight of the towed vehicle or the combined weight of the towed vehicles exceeds 4,600 kgs (10,141 lbs).

A truck only:

- Class "G" if the truck is registered for **and** weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less, or
- Class "D" if the truck is registered for **or** weighs more than 11,000 kgs.

A truck towing a trailer and/or a motor vehicle:

- Class "G" if the truck is registered for **and** the combination weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less,
- Class "D" if the truck is registered for **or** the combination weighs more than 11,000 kgs, or
- Class "A" if the weight of the towed vehicle or the combined weight of the towed vehicles exceeds 4,600 kgs (10,141 lbs).

A truck camper only:

- Class "G" if the truck is registered for **and** the truck, with the camper, weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less, or
- Class "D" if the truck is registered for **or** the truck, with the camper, weighs more than 11,000 kgs.

A truck camper towing a trailer and/or motor vehicle:

- Class "G" if the truck is registered for **and** the combination weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less,
- Class "D" if the truck is registered for **or** the combination weighs more than 11,000 kgs, or
- Class "A" if the weight of the towed vehicle or the combined weight of the towed vehicles exceeds 4,600 kgs (10,141 lbs).

A car or SUV towing a trailer:

- Class "G" if the combination weighs 11,000 kgs (24,250 lbs) or less,
- Class "D" if the combination weighs more than 11,000 kgs, or
- Class "A" if the towed trailer weighs more than 4,600 kgs (10,141 lbs).

Classes of driver's licences that may be held in lieu of a Class G or D licence:

- for Class G = Class A, B, C, D, E or F.
- for Class D = Class A, B or C.

Please visit the following website;

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_940340_e.htm for a complete list of driver licence classifications.

Air brake endorsement (Z endorsement)

Any person who drives a motor home or a truck fitted with an air brake system or an air-over-hydraulic brake system is required to have a Z endorsement on their driver's licence.

Exemption

A person receiving driving instructions in a vehicle equipped with air brakes is not required to have a Z endorsement if the driving instructions are for the purposes of obtaining a Z endorsement. The person providing the driving instructions is required to have a Z endorsement.

Accompanying driver for the purposes of instruction:

- A Class G driver may drive a Class D truck, motor home, motor home-trailer combination or truck-trailer combination, and
- A Class G or D driver may drive a Class A motor home-trailer or truck-trailer combination, if the driver is accompanied by a person with the appropriate class of licence for the vehicle or combination of vehicles and is occupying a seat beside the driver for the purpose of giving him or her instruction.

Types of Vehicles That May Be Used For Driver Licence Road Tests

If a vehicle or combination of vehicles, as mentioned above, requires the driver to hold a Class "D" or Class "A" driver's licence, the ministry may permit such a vehicle or combination of vehicles to be used to conduct the tests, including the road tests required by the ministry. Restrictions may apply if the driver intends to, or is obtaining a higher class of licence to drive a truck for commercial purposes.

Manufacturer's Vehicle Ratings Which Are Not Appropriate For Determining Class of Driver's Licence

The following ratings are not used to determine the class of driver's licence required: manufacturer's vehicle weight ratings; vehicle weight ratings; gross vehicle weight ratings; unloaded vehicle weight ratings; net carrying capacity ratings; gross combination weight ratings; sleeping capacity weight ratings; axle weight ratings; and trailer permit empty weights.

The empty weight indicated on a trailer's permit is not a certified weight and may have been provided to the ministry prior to the addition of equipment and accessories by secondary manufacturers or previous owners. An empty weight on a permit should not be relied upon in determining that a higher class of driver's licence is not required, that a vehicle does not need brakes or that a vehicle will not weigh more than a particular amount when loaded with a known weight. Drivers should always determine the actual weight of the vehicles if they wish to ensure that they hold the proper class of driver's licence for the vehicle or that they are otherwise in compliance with laws or regulations in relation to vehicles for which an empty weight is indicated on the permit.

Passengers Carried In House Trailers

Passengers are not allowed to ride in a house trailer, including fifth wheel house trailer or a boat trailer while being towed on a highway with a motor vehicle. Passengers are permitted to ride in the camper portion of a truck camper.

Brake Requirements

Service brakes are required on house trailers if the trailer's axle(s) transmit more than 1,360 kgs (3,000 lbs) to the road when the trailer is attached to the towing vehicle. This applies to cases where the trailer is loaded or empty. If brakes are required, at least one axle of the trailer must be fitted with brakes.

Brakes are not required on towed motor vehicles, whether towed with a tow bar or on a dolly. Tow dollies do not require brakes whether or not the dolly is carrying a motor vehicle.

House trailers with electric or hydraulic brakes are not required to have trailer breakaway braking devices or parking brakes while being towed in Ontario. Breakaway devices may be required in other Canadian provinces, the US and Mexico. Please contact those jurisdictions for their requirements.

Brake, Signal And Tail Lamp Requirements

The following provides the minimum requirements for brake, tail and signal lamps on tow dollies, vehicles mounted on tow dollies, and vehicles towed with tow bars when towed behind motor homes and truck campers.

Tail Lamps:

Red tail lamps are required at night and during inclement weather on the rear of:

- vehicles that are mounted on dollies;
- on dollies or on the fenders of dollies, when vehicles are not mounted; and
- vehicles that are towed with tow bars.

Brake and Signal Lamps:

Brake and signal lamps are not required on tow dollies, on vehicles mounted on tow dollies or on the rear of vehicles towed with tow bars **provided** the brake and signal lamps on the rear of the motor home or truck camper are clearly visible to motorists approaching from the rear. When a lamp or lamps are obscured, or are not clearly visible from the rear, the obscured lamp(s) must be duplicated on the towed vehicle. Lamps may be duplicated on the fenders of tow dollies that have mounted vehicles provided the lamps are clearly visible.

Trailer Hitches

Trailer hitches are generally available in four weight limits:

- Class I – up to 2,000 lbs;
- Class II – up to 3,500 lbs;
- Class III – up to 5,000 lbs;
- Class IV – 5,000 to 10,000 lbs.

The weight of a trailer and the trailer's tongue weight should never exceed the weight limits set by the trailer hitch manufacturer. Contact the hitch manufacturer for weight limits.

Safety Chains

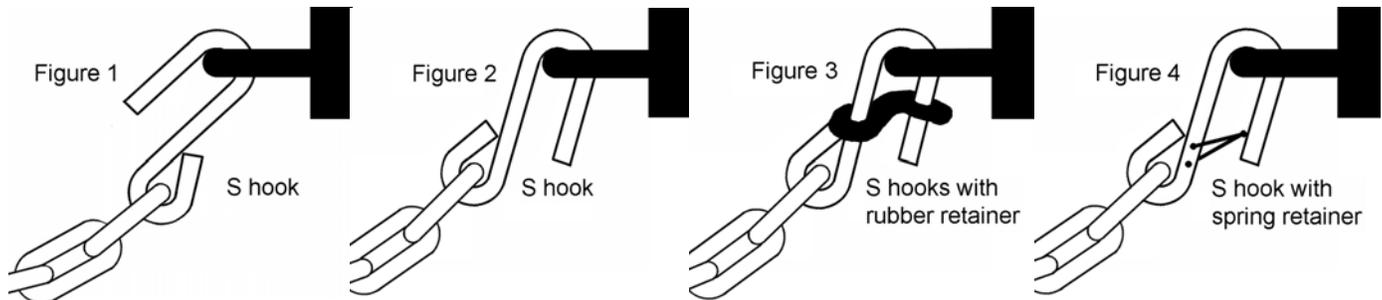
Safety chains are required between the hitches of towing vehicles and the tongues or tow bars of towed vehicles. This also applies between the first and second towed vehicles. If two chains are used, the chains should be crossed under the tongue or tow bar to prevent the tongue or tow bar from dropping to the road if the hitch accidentally disconnects. Chains should be long enough to permit full turning of the towed vehicle but short enough not to drag on the road.

Chain with a breaking strength equal to the weight of the towed vehicle(s) will comply with Ontario's requirements. If two chains are used, the breaking strength of each chain would need to equal the weight of the towed vehicle(s). A guide to chain break strengths is provided at the following website;
<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/pubs/farm/appendixa.htm>

The breaking strength of chain hooks, attaching devices and the point of chain attachment to the vehicle should be equal to or greater than the breaking strength of the chain.

Note: safety devices such as cable and metal links may be used in lieu of a chain.

Many North American trailer manufacturers install "S" type chain hooks on light duty trailers. These hooks are specifically designed to remain attached to the towing vehicle when the hooks, chains and vehicles are used properly. The hooks in Figures 1 and 2, without retainers, comply with Ontario requirements. Figures 3 and 4 show hooks with retainers. Many Ontario motorists now prefer the hook with a retainer. Chain hooks, other than "S" hooks, that are not specifically designed for light duty trailer application may require a retainer to ensure the hook remains attached under normal vehicle use.



Fifth wheel trailers do not require safety chains or cables **provided** the fifth wheels have operating safety latches. Goose neck type trailers that utilize ball and socket type hitch connections, are required to have a safety chain.

Vehicles mounted on dollies are required to be secured to the dolly.

Maximum Vehicle Dimensions

Maximum length

Motor home or truck camper, including load and extensions

- 12.5 metres (41 ft).

Note: Motor homes longer than 12.5 m (41 ft), but not exceeding 14 m (45 ft 11 in), including load, may be driven in Ontario if the motor home qualifies for a special over-length permit. For details please contact the ministry by telephone at (416) 246-7166 ext. 6306, fax - (905) 704-2545, e-mail OO.Permit.Department@Ontario.ca, or mail to the Ministry of Transportation, O/O Permits, 3rd Floor, 301 St. Paul Street, St Catharines Ontario L2R 7R4.

Fifth wheel house trailer

- 14.65 m (48 ft), excluding auxiliary equipment or machinery that extends beyond the front or rear of the trailer and is not designed or used to carry a load, or
- up to 16.2 m (53 ft) if certain conditions are met, i.e. must have air brakes on all wheels of the combination.

Contact the ministry for additional conditions for trailers over 48 ft long.

Hitch pull type house trailer

- 12.5 m (41 ft), including load.

Combination of vehicles

- 23 m (75' 6").

Maximum width

Motor home, truck camper, truck, house trailer and dolly

- 2.6 m (8'6").

Maximum height

Motor home, truck camper and house trailer

- 4.15 m (13'6").

Mirror Widths And Lengths

The length of mirrors that extend beyond the front of a motor home are not included in the overall length of the vehicle.

The width of mirrors that extend beyond the side of a motor home, truck camper and truck are not included in the overall width of the vehicle.

Mirrors that extend more than 305 mm (12") from the side of a car or SUV must be removed when the vehicle is not towing a trailer. A car or SUV, with extended mirrors installed, cannot exceed 2.6 m (8'6"), even when towing a trailer.

Towing More Than One Vehicle

Cars, passenger vans and SUVs are not permitted to tow more than one trailer or one vehicle. Motor homes, trucks, pickup trucks and truck campers are legally permitted to tow two trailers or a trailer and a motor vehicle behind a trailer. However, a three vehicle combination that is swaying excessively, is unstable or has reduced handling capabilities is subject to action by the police as an unsafe combination of vehicles under the Highway Traffic Act.

The maximum length of any combination of vehicles is 23 m (75' 6").

Seat Belts

The Highway Traffic Act states that no person shall drive a motor vehicle on a highway in which a seat belt assembly required under the *Motor Vehicle Safety Act* (Canada) at the time that the vehicle was manufactured or imported into Canada has been removed, rendered partly or wholly inoperative, modified so as to reduce its effectiveness or is not operating properly through lack of maintenance.

The Motor Vehicle Safety Act (Canada) has, since July 1, 1972, required that motor home manufacturers install driver seat and right front passenger seat belts. Since April 1, 1999 motor home manufacturers have been required to install as many seat belts in the motor home as the motor home has sleeping positions. For example, a motor home that sleeps six persons requires four additional belts, in addition to the driver and front passenger belts.

Buses that have been converted to motor homes must retain the seat belts for those seats that remain after the modification of the vehicle.

Flares, Lamps, Lanterns Or Reflectors

Motor homes and truck campers are required to carry flares, lamps, lanterns or reflectors if the vehicle is driven on a highway, when lighted lamps are required, and the speed limit is in excess of 60 km/h. Such flares, lamps or lanterns must be capable of continuous operation for at least 8 hours. Flares, lamps, lanterns or reflectors are to be placed 30 m (100 feet) ahead of and behind the vehicle when the vehicle is disabled on the travelled portion of the highway.

Portable triangle reflectors that are marked with SAE W4-81-dot, FMVSS 125 or DOT are acceptable.

Exemptions From Entering Highway Weigh Scales

The following vehicles are not required to enter Ministry of Transportation roadside highway scales when the "Trucks Enter Inspection Station" amber lamps are flashing:

- a motor home and a truck camper carrying a slide-in camper when being used for personal or recreational purposes.
- a personal-use pickup truck operated singularly or in combination with a personal-use trailer, including a house or camper trailer. This applies regardless of the pickup's registered gross weight, actual weight or trailer weight.

The driver of a vehicle of any size, weight or type can be required to enter a scale if requested by an officer in person or in a cruiser.

Propane Appliances And Tanks (motor homes and house trailers)

Refuelling

Propane and electric appliances may be operated while travelling in Ontario. However, all sources of ignition including propane appliances must be turned off when refuelling the vehicle.

Inspection and Repair of Propane Appliances

A person who installs, alters, purges, activates, repairs, services or removes propane appliances in motor homes and house trailers must hold a valid and subsisting RV.1 certificate issued by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA). TSSA can be contacted at 1-877-682-8772 or by visiting their website at <http://www.tssa.org/home>.

For information regarding the repair and inspection of propane-powered motor homes and truck campers please contact TSSA.

Propane Tanks

Barbeque propane tanks used to fuel appliances in motor homes, truck campers and house trailers may be carried on the exterior of the vehicles, **provided** the tanks do not weigh more than 30 kgs (67 lbs) each when full and are transported between:

- a retail outlet and the residence of the purchaser,
- a retail outlet and the purchaser's place of use,
- the residence of the purchaser and a place of use, or
- between two residences;

AND

- the tanks are designed, constructed, filled, closed, secured and maintained so that under normal conditions of transport, including handling, there will be no accidental release of propane that could endanger public safety;
- are not for resale or for commercial or industrial use; and
- are in a quantity and concentration available to the general public at retail outlets.

Examples of retail outlets are hardware stores, automotive industry stores, pool supply stores and farm co-ops.

Running a supply line from a barbeque propane tank, that is mounted on the exterior of a vehicle, is prohibited.

Annual Safety Inspections (yellow stickers)

An annual safety inspection is required:

- on a truck, which does not tow a trailer if:
 - the truck's actual weight, registered gross weight or gross vehicle weight rating exceeds 4,500 kgs (9,920 lbs).
- on a truck, which tows a house trailer only:
 - if the truck's RGW exceeds 4,500 kgs.
 - if the truck's gross vehicle weight rating exceeds 4,500 kgs, or
 - if the truck's actual weight (without the house trailer attached), exceeds 4,500 kgs.

Notes:

- house trailer weight **is not used** when determining a truck's actual weight.
- house trailer weight **is used** to determine a truck's RGW.
- a house trailer does not require an annual safety inspection.

- on both the truck and towed trailer (other than a house trailer) if:
 - the truck's actual weight, registered gross weight or gross vehicle weight rating exceeds 4,500 kgs, or
 - the actual weight of the truck, when added to the actual weight of the towed trailer or trailers exceeds 4,500 kgs, or
 - the gross vehicle weight rating of the truck, when added to the gross vehicle weight rating of the towed trailer or trailers exceeds 4,500 kgs.

This MTO website provides complete details on annual safety inspections:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/regulations/annual.htm>

Daily Driver Vehicle Inspections, Hours-of-Service (Log Books) And Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR)

Pickups that weigh **and** are registered for 4,500 kgs or less are not subject to daily vehicle inspections, hours-of-work (log books) or commercial vehicle operator registration (CVOR).

Pickups that weigh **or** are registered for over 4,500 kgs and are only ever used for personal purposes or are only ever used to tow personal use trailers, including house and camper trailers are exempt from the requirements to have a commercial vehicle operator registration certificate, from conducting daily vehicle inspections and from drivers being subject to the hours-of-service requirements.

In order for a pickup to qualify for the above exemption it must have a vehicle weight rating of 6,000 kgs (13,227 lbs) or less and be fitted with either, the original unmodified pickup box that was installed by the manufacturer or an unmodified replacement box that duplicates the one that was installed by the manufacturer.

Pickups that weigh or are registered for over 4,500 kgs and used for both personal **and business purposes** may be subject to certain requirements or exemptions. For details please visit the following ministry websites:

Daily Vehicle Inspections, please visit:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/regulations/daily/>

Hours-of-Service:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/regulations/hours.htm>

CVOR:

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/trucks/cvor/index.html>

Ministry of Transportation Contacts

If the information on this web page has not answered your question(s), please contact the Ministry of Transportation Enforcement Office nearest you, at:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Durham Region | (905) 728-7505 x 105 | Ottawa | (613) 731-1474 |
| Halton Region | (905) 315-7556 | Peel Region | (905) 564-9190 |
| Hamilton | (905) 643-7947 x 200 | Sault Ste. Marie | (705) 945-9395 |
| Kenora | (807) 468-2781 | Sudbury | (705) 566-1414 |
| Kingston | (613) 544-2220 | Thunder Bay | (807) 473-2021 |
| Waterloo | (519) 885-4297 | Timmins | (705) 497-5411 |
| London | (519) 873-4286 | Toronto | (416) 325-2642 |
| Niagara Region | (905) 643-7947 x 200 | Windsor | (519) 972-9044 |
| North Bay | (705) 497-5411 | York Region | (905) 713-7324 |

