

IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY

An overview of Illinois laws regulating the operation of farm equipment on public roads. These laws are found in the Illinois Vehicle Code (IVC)—not in trucking regulations—and thus are applicable only within Illinois.

DEFINITIONS

Implement of Husbandry: Every vehicle designed and adapted exclusively for agricultural, horticultural, or livestock raising operations, including farm wagons, wagon trailers or like vehicles used in connection therewith, or for lifting or carrying an implement of husbandry provided that no farm wagon, wagon trailer or like vehicle having a gross weight of more than 36,000 pounds [1-130]

ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles): ATVs are specifically excluded from the definition of a “farm tractor” and are not considered to be implements of husbandry regardless of their use. [1-120]

Farm Tractor: A farm tractor is any motor vehicle designed and used primarily as a farm implement for drawing other implements of husbandry, and every self-propelled implement of husbandry, but not ATVs. [1-120]

Gooseneck Trailers (Slang): Flat bed, box, and livestock gooseneck trailers are generally not considered to be implements of husbandry because their design permits multiple uses. [1-130]

Illinois Vehicle Code (IVC): A collection of Illinois statutes (laws) that regulate vehicles and drivers.

REGISTRATION AND TESTING

Title

Implements of husbandry are not required to be titled. [3-102.6] However, they may be if the owner desires. [3-103]

Licensing

Implements of husbandry are not required to be licensed (registered). [3-402.A.(2)]

Safety Testing

Implements of husbandry are not required to be safety tested. [13-101.(a)]

RULES OF THE ROAD

Towing Unit

An implement of husbandry generally remains an implement of husbandry regardless of the type of vehicle towing it (i.e., truck or farm tractor); therefore, the traffic rules are generally the same regardless of the towing unit used. [1-130] This does not alter licensing or regulatory requirements that apply to the towing vehicle itself.

Driver's License

A driver's license is generally not required to operate an implement of husbandry. [6-102.4] Under certain conditions

the operator of a fertilizer “floater” may be required to have a valid driver's license. [3-809.(c)]

Traffic Rules

Most traffic rules which apply to operating cars or trucks also apply to operating implements of husbandry on public roadways, i.e., stop and yield signs, lane usage, etc. [11-202] & [11-1418]

A farm tractor must not be on the road unless it is being used as an implement of husbandry in a farming operation. [11-1418]

Implements of husbandry are not generally restricted to a specified maximum speed limit other than the posted limit and the reasonable limits of safe operation. [11-601]

Fertilizer “floaters” may not exceed 30 mph. [3-809.(c)]

Implements of husbandry should not impede or block the reasonable flow of traffic. [11.606]

Interstate Highways

Implements of husbandry may not be operated on interstate highways or tollways. [11-711]

SIZE AND WEIGHT

Size

There is a general exemption from State standards limiting the length, width or height of most implements of husbandry.

[15-101(b)]

Sprayers and fertilizer “floaters” are limited to a maximum width of 12 feet. [3-809(c)]

An implement of husbandry loaded on another vehicle for transport may not exceed 13 feet 6 inches in height from the road's surface. Such loads are generally not restricted by width during the period from 1/2 hour after sunrise to 1/2 before sunset. However, at any other time, this load may not exceed 8 feet 6 inches in width unless in compliance with wide load laws. [15-102.2]

With limited exceptions, two is the maximum number of implements of husbandry that may be towed in tandem behind a power unit for a total of 3 vehicles in combination.

Weight

Implements of husbandry are generally not subject to the axle weight limits that apply to trucks and trailers. [15-101(b)]

Despite this exemption, the implement operator and/or owner can be held liable for damage to roads or bridges caused by the implement. [15.318]

Implements of Husbandry are generally considered to be subject to weight postings on bridges. [15-317] & [15-111]

Farm wagons, farm trailers, nurse tanks, sprayers and fertilizer equipment—and their loads—are restricted to 36,000 pounds gross weight or less. [1-130]

MARKINGS

SMV Emblem

The SMV emblem is required to be displayed on implements of husbandry any time they are on a public road—day or night. It must be mounted at or near the center of the rear of the implement and must be no less than 4 feet nor more than 10 feet from its bottom edge to the road's surface. SMV emblems may be used only on implements of husbandry, animal drawn vehicles, and special mobile equipment. Any other use is illegal and subject to a fine.

Conspicuity

This reflective marking is included in ASABE standards and applies to newer farm equipment. It is the slow-moving vehicle equivalent of the night-time red and white reflective markings seen on large trucks. There is one major difference:

Conspicuity markings on farm equipment consists of alternating retro-reflective red and fluorescent orange horizontal bars across the rear of the implement. Each is 2 inches by 9 inches. **(Do not use red and white – that is for high-speed vehicles.)**

The marking may have gaps of up to 6 feet and should extend to within 16 inches of the left and right extremities. The SMV emblem may be counted as part of the conspicuity marking.

BRAKES	Keep dual brake pedals locked when traveling on the road.
LANE USAGE	As much as practical, keep your equipment completely in your lane. Your equipment must not interfere with traffic in an adjoining lane. On a busy two-lane highway or narrow road, pull over when possible to let traffic backed up behind you pass safely. Wide equipment should be folded or loaded as its design was intended for transport between fields.
HITCHES	Always connect the implement at a point lower than the rear axle of the tractor. Use a hitch pin that has a locking device to keep the pin in place. Two safety chains should be used to connect the tongue of a farm wagon, wagon trailer, implement trailer, nurse tank, or fertilizer buggy to the towing vehicle.
REFLECTORS	Keep all reflectors, lights, and slow-moving vehicle emblems clean and free of dust or mud. Replace faded SMV emblems with a new emblem meeting ASABE standards.
MUD & DEBRIS	Clean off your vehicles before leaving the field so they do not track mud or other debris onto the road. If your vehicle deposits mud or debris on the road, it is your responsibility to clean it off.

LIGHTS

Lights If manufactured before January 1, 2003

Lights are required on implements of husbandry when on the road between sunset and sunrise. [12-205]

On older equipment, they must include:

- At least two white headlights on the towing unit. [12-205.1]
- Two red taillights (may not flash except as turn signal). [12-205]
- At least one oscillating, rotating or flashing amber light visible to the rear, mounted as high as practical. [12-205.1] & [12-215(b)11]

Lights on Implement Combinations

If the implement(s) being towed partially or fully obscures the taillights and/or the SMV emblem mounted on the towing vehicle, the lights and markings must then be mounted on the back of the rearmost implement in tow.

The flashing amber light(s) must be mounted on the rearmost implement in tow. [12-205.1]

Lighting & marking requirements for equipment manufactured in 2003 or later-Based on ASABE standard S279.11

Two flashing amber lights and two white headlights must be visible to the front.

Two flashing amber lights, two red taillights, and two red reflectors must be visible to the rear. They must also be placed on the trailing implement if it obscures the lights on the tractor.

Measured from point of hitch to extreme rear:

- Implements over 16 feet must have an SMV emblem mounted on the rear and amber reflectors along each side.
- Implements over 25 feet must have taillights and flashing amber lights mounted on the rear, even if those on tractor are visible.

If the implement or the tractor is over 8 feet wide, amber reflectors are required on the front to mark the extremities.

If over 12 feet wide, the flashing amber lights (front and rear) and conspicuity markings (rear) must be extended to within 16 inches of the left and right extremities.

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Because these ASABE standards provide far better visibility of farm equipment while on the road, it is recommended that the additional lighting and reflective material be displayed on all equipment, old and new.

Illinois law requires that all farm equipment manufactured in 2003 and later be equipped with the lights and markings set out in ASABE standard S279.11.

Effective June 22, 2017, all new agricultural equipment with the potential of being operated on public roadways throughout the United States needs to be in compliance with the requirements of ASABE S279.14 or its successors.

Not all requirements are spelled out here.

For additional information or to purchase a copy of the standard (about \$50) contact the ASABE at:

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