

Chapter 15 - Commercial Vehicles

You will need to know the following information if you are applying for a Class E license. As a driver of a commercial vehicle, you must obey all Missouri traffic laws including the laws on commercial vehicles.

Note:

- All size and weight limits listed below include the load of the vehicle.
- All limits that refer to interstates or certain designated highways include roads up to ten miles from the interstate or highway.
- The size and weight and exceptions listed in this chapter are for Missouri highways only.

Size Limitations (Without Special Permit)

Height

- Maximum height of any vehicle outside of a commercial zone* on designated highways plus ten miles therefrom 14'
- Maximum height of any vehicle in a commercial zone..... 15'
- Maximum height on all other highways 13½'

Width

- Maximum width of any vehicle..... 8½'

***Commercial Zone** — Commercial zones exist only in cities with a population of 75,000 or more. The commercial zone is one mile beyond the city limits plus one mile for every 50,000 residents or portion thereof, except:

- The commercial zone for St. Louis City extends 18 miles beyond the city limits.
- The commercial zone for Kansas City extends 12 miles beyond the city limits and includes the city of Harrisonville.
- The commercial zones for Springfield, St. Joseph, and Columbia extends only two miles beyond the city limits.
- The commercial zone on interstate highways extends only two miles beyond the city limits.

Length

- Maximum length of any single vehicle 45'
- Maximum length of any bus or trackless trolley coach not including one foot in front and back for safety bumper 45'
- Maximum length of truck-tractor and semi-trailer
 - upon interstates and certain designated highways the length of the semi-trailer (no overall maximum length, includes load) 53'
 - upon all other roads 60'
- Maximum length of truck-tractor, semi-trailer, and trailer combinations (double bottoms)
 - upon interstates and certain designated highways the length of the semi-trailer or trailer (no overall maximum length) 28'
 - upon all other roads 65'
- Maximum length of truck and trailer(s) and all other combinations of vehicles
 - upon interstates and certain primary highways 65'
 - the overall maximum length upon all other roads 55'

- Maximum length of Automobile Transporters and Boat Transporters
 - Conventional 5th Wheel 75' for combination unit plus
 - Stingersteered 75' 3' front to 4' rear overhang.
- Maximum length of Driveaway Saddle Mount Combinations (Double or Triple on interstate and designated highways).....97'

Motor vehicle carriers may carry loads that extend beyond their legal length limits. Loads must not extend more than three feet beyond the front or four feet beyond the rear of the vehicle.

Exemptions

- Farm machinery driven occasionally for short distances;
- Vehicles temporarily transporting farm machinery;
- Implement dealers delivering or moving farm machinery for repair;
- Vehicles temporarily transporting road-making machines or road materials; and
- Vehicles towing disabled vehicles for repair on highways.

These exemptions do not include interstate highways.

Weight Limitations (Without Special Permit)

A bridge's weight limit may differ from the road's weight limit. If a bridge has a different weight limit, the limit will be posted.

Maximum Weight on Any Single Axle Pounds

- Maximum weight allowed on interstates.....20,000
- Maximum weight allowed in a commercial zone.....22,400
- Maximum weight allowed on all other routes22,000

Maximum Weight on Any Tandem Axle Pounds

- Maximum weight allowed on interstates.....34,000
- Maximum weight allowed on all other routes36,000

Maximum Gross Weight Pounds

The actual gross weight allowed depends on the distance from the first to last axle. To determine the maximum gross weight allowed in a commercial zone, multiply the number of axles by 22,400 pounds. The maximum gross weight allowed on all highways in Missouri is 80,000 pounds, except where bridge structures are posted with lesser weight limits.

- Maximum gross weight allowed on interstates, primary and other designated highways.....80,000

Overdimension and Overweight Permits

You may apply for an overdimension or overweight permit by calling 1-800-877-8499, or (573) 751-2871 for local calls only, or by contacting:

Missouri Department of Transportation, Motor Carrier Services Unit
P.O. Box 893
Jefferson City, MO 65102
Fax: (573) 751-7408

To receive an oversize or overweight permit:

- The load on your vehicle must be non-reducible;
- You must have property damage and bodily injury liability insurance; and
- You must pay a permit fee.

Vehicle Route Map

The Missouri Vehicle Route Map is available from the Missouri Department of Transportation. This map shows the routes on which the larger and heavier trucks are allowed to travel as specified by state statute. You may obtain a map by calling 1-866-831-6277 or by contacting:

Missouri Department of Transportation, Motor Carrier Services

P.O. Box 893

Jefferson City, MO 65102

Fax: (573) 751-7408

contactus@modot.mo.gov

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations

Missouri has adopted as state law Parts 390 through 397 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. Therefore, drivers and vehicles operating solely intrastate must obey those regulations except for the following exemptions:

- Commercial vehicles with a GVWR or GCWR of 26,000 lbs. or less than 26,001 GVWR unless transporting hazardous materials or passengers.
- Commercial vehicles licensed for gross weight of 60,000 pounds or less when used only for the transportation of solid waste.
- Commercial vehicles licensed for 42,000 pounds or less for farm use and indicated by the letter "F" on the license plate as authorized by **Section 301.030, RSMo**, unless transporting hazardous materials except fertilizer.

Transporting Hazardous Material

If you are transporting hazardous material, your vehicle must comply with the equipment and operating regulations of the United States Department of Transportation.

Emergency Equipment And Signals

When operating wholly within the state, Missouri law does not require emergency equipment for:

- Vehicles licensed for 42,000 pounds or less with an "F" plate;
- Solid waste haulers licensed for 60,000 pounds or less; and
- Commercial vehicles licensed for 12,000 pounds or less.

Any other commercial motor vehicle used for intrastate or interstate commerce that is licensed for more than 12,000 pounds must carry the following emergency equipment:

- One fire extinguisher. The extinguisher must be rated at 5 B:C or more by Underwriter's Laboratories Incorporated.
- One spare fuse or other overload protective device for each kind and size used, if the devices are not of a reset type.
- One of the following combination of warning devices:
 - Three flares (liquid-burning pot torches) and three fuses and two red flags. This combination must not be carried by vehicles transporting explosive or flammable material or using flammable compressed gas as a motor fuel.
 - Three red electric lanterns and two red flags.
 - Three bi-directional emergency red reflective triangles.

Information on Commercial Motor Vehicles

The following information must be clearly visible on commercial motor vehicles:

- The name of the owner;
- The address the vehicle is operated from and the number issued to a motor carrier by the Motor Carrier Services. (USDOT 123456 MO); and
- The word “Local” displayed on every local commercial vehicle. For-hire carriers must display their USDOT number followed by the letters “MO”.

Your vehicle does not need to show the above information if:

- It is licensed for 36,000 pounds or less; and
- It is not regularly used for commercial purposes.

Following Distance

If you are driving a bus or truck, you must not follow another bus or truck any closer than 300 feet. However, you may follow closer than 300 feet when you are in a business or residential district, or when passing. Always stay a safe distance behind the vehicle in front of you. For each ten feet of length in your vehicle, keep at least one second between you and the vehicle in front of you. For example, if you are driving a 40-foot vehicle, keep four seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you.

Railroad Crossing

You must stop within 15 to 50 feet before the railroad tracks if you are driving a:

- Motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire;
- School bus;
- Motor vehicle carrying material that is corrosive, flammable, explosive, or poisonous; or
- Motor vehicle used for the transportation of flammable or corrosive liquids in bulk, whether loaded or empty.

If there is no sign of a train, you may cross the tracks.

Load Security

To avoid any part of a load falling off your vehicle, you must secure it or have a protective cover on it.

Off-Tracking

When a vehicle turns, the rear wheels take a shorter path than the front wheels. The greater the distance between the front and rear wheels, the greater the difference in their paths. To compensate for the off-tracking, begin a left-turn as far to the right as possible. Begin a right-turn as far to the left as possible.

Weigh Stations

All commercial motor vehicles must stop at weigh stations except those licensed for 18,000 pounds or less or otherwise exempted by law, unless directed by a peace officer.

Tailgaters

To avoid a crash with a tailgater, you should:

- Slow down. It is better to be tailgated at a low speed than a high speed.
- Avoid any sudden turns or stops and signal well in advance.

- Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front of you. This will help you to avoid any sudden stops.
- Do not flash your taillights or brake lights at the tailgater. The tailgater may not believe your brake lights when you do slow down or stop.

Space Overhead

Make sure you have enough space over your vehicle at all times.

- Do not assume that posted heights at bridges or underpasses are correct.
- Check all wires, signs, trees, and air conditioning units.

Soft Surfaces

Make sure the surface will hold the weight of your vehicle. Be wary of:

- Parking lots;
- Unpaved roads or parking areas, especially when wet; and
- Construction areas.

Space to Cross or Enter Traffic

Your acceleration rate varies with the weight of your vehicle. And your time to cross the road is also affected by the length of your vehicle. In a long or heavily weighted vehicle, you will need a larger gap to cross the road than you would in a car.