



Minnesota Trailer Laws: A Complete Guide for Safe Towing

Minnesota has specific laws and regulations for hauling trailers, covering trailer length, weight limits, brakes, and safety chains. Understanding these laws is essential to ensure safety and compliance while towing.

Trailer Length Limits in Minnesota

- **Single Trailer Length:** A single trailer cannot exceed 45 feet in length, including the tow bar assembly.
- **Combined Trailer and Tow Vehicle Length:** The combined length of the trailer and towing vehicle must not exceed 60 feet.

Weight Limits for Trailers in Minnesota

- **Brakes Required:** Trailers weighing over 3,000 pounds must be equipped with brakes for safe towing.
- **Maximum Towing Weight:** Your vehicle's tow rating dictates the maximum weight it can safely pull. Ensure your towing vehicle's rating meets or exceeds the weight of the trailer and cargo.

Trailer Brakes

- **Automatic Brake Engagement:** If the trailer detaches from the towing vehicle, the trailer's braking system must automatically engage to stop the trailer.

Safety Chains

- **Mandatory Safety Chains:** Safety chains are required to secure the trailer to the towing vehicle.
- **Chain Strength:** The chains must be strong enough to control the trailer if the primary towing mechanism fails.

Other Essential Trailer Requirements

- **Trailer Design:** The trailer must be designed for its intended use and meet safety standards.
- **Trailer Lights:** The trailer must be equipped with working lights, including brake lights, turn signals, and running lights.
- **Securing Cargo:** All cargo must be properly secured using chains, tie-downs, or other appropriate methods to prevent shifting during transit.
- **Level Trailer:** When hitched, the trailer and towing vehicle should be level at the hitching point for optimal handling and safety.
- **Balanced Loading:** The trailer should be loaded front-to-rear and balanced side-to-side to prevent swaying and uneven wear on tires.

Minnesota CDL and Towing Regulations

Towing without a CDL: In Minnesota, you do not need a CDL unless your combined vehicle and trailer weight exceeds 26,000 lbs

- Class A License: Required for combined gross vehicle weight (GVW) over 26,000 lbs.
- Class B License: Required if the combined GVW exceeds 26,000 lbs, but the trailer weight is under 10,000 lbs.

DOT Number: For interstate commerce, if your combined GVW is over 10,000 lbs, you will need a DOT number.

How Much Weight Can You Haul in Minnesota?

- Maximum Gross Weight: Minnesota allows a maximum gross weight of 80,000 lbs, provided you do not exceed the 7-ton axle limit. The total weight limit may vary depending on axle configurations.

Trailer Towing Specifications in Minnesota

- Maximum Trailer Length: Trailers cannot exceed 45 feet in length, with a combined vehicle and trailer length limit of 60 feet.
- Width and Height: The maximum allowed width for any vehicle, including trailers, is 102 inches. The maximum height is 13 feet 6 inches.

Trailer Brake Requirements in Minnesota

- Brake Requirements: If a trailer has an empty weight of over 3,000 lbs, it must be equipped with working brakes. All trailer brake systems must ensure the vehicle can stop within 40 feet at 20 mph.

Can Anyone Tow a Trailer in Minnesota?

- License Requirements: You must hold a valid driver's license to tow any trailer. If you have a full car license, you can tow trailers of appropriate size and weight without need additional certifications.

Do All Trailers in Minnesota Require Lights?

- Lighting Requirements: Yes, trailers must be equipped with functional lights (including brake lights and turn signals) and safety chains. Additionally, trailers over 3,000 lbs must have brakes.



General Trailer Towing Guidelines in Minnesota

Driver's Responsibilities:

- Ensure you have the proper training for towing trailers and follow the guidelines for safe operation.
- Pre-trip Safety Check: Perform a safety check to ensure the trailer and vehicle are ready for towing.

Tow Vehicle Requirements:

- Ensure the vehicle is equipped with the proper towing capacity, hitch size, and hitch ball to safely tow the trailer.
- Check that the hitch, safety chains, and wiring harness are in good condition before towing.

Passenger vans with a capacity of 10 or more people should not be used for towing.

Trailer Requirements:

- The trailer must be designed for the intended use, and if it lacks fenders, wheel flaps are required.
- Trailers must be equipped with working lights and safety chains.
- Trailers over 3,000 lbs require brakes for safe towing.

Cargo and Load Requirements:

- Load the trailer front-to-rear and side-to-side for proper balance.
- Secure all cargo with certified tie-downs and chains to prevent shifting or damage during transit.

Conclusion

By understanding and following Minnesota's trailer laws, you can ensure safe, legal towing, and avoid costly fines. Whether you're hauling a small utility trailer or a large cargo load, always verify your towing capacity, ensure your trailer is properly equipped, and distribute your load safely.