

New Virginia Law – Effective July 1, 2010

§ 46.2-1118. Connection between vehicles; tow trucks towing vehicles by means of a wheel lift apparatus.

The connection between any two vehicles, one of which is towing or drawing the other on a highway, shall consist of a fifth wheel, drawbar, *trailer hitch*, or other similar device not to exceed 15 feet in length from one vehicle to the other. Any such two vehicles shall, in addition to such drawbar or other similar device, be equipped at all times when so operated on the highway with an emergency chain or cable that is *structurally adequate to securely stop and hold the trailer being towed*.

The fifth wheel, drawbar, trailer hitch, or similar device must (i) be structurally adequate for the weight being drawn, (ii) be properly and securely mounted, (iii) provide for adequate articulation at the connection without excessive slack at that location, and (iv) be provided with a locking device that prevents accidental separation of the towed and towing vehicles. The mounting of the fifth wheel, drawbar, trailer hitch, or similar device on the towing vehicle must include reinforcement or bracing of the frame sufficient to produce strength and rigidity of the frame to prevent its undue distortion.

The foregoing provisions of this section shall not apply to (i) any farm tractor, as defined in § 46.2-100, when such farm tractor is towing any farm implement or farm machinery by means of a drawbar coupled with a safety hitch pin or manufacturer's coupling device or (ii) any tow truck towing a vehicle by means of a wheel lift apparatus that employs a safety strap to hold two of the towed vehicle's wheels within a wheel lift cradle in a manner consistent with instructions of the manufacturer of such wheel lift apparatus.

For the purposes of this section, "tow truck" means any motor vehicle that is constructed and used primarily for towing, lifting, or otherwise moving illegally parked or disabled vehicles.

Utility Trailers Basic Points to Remember

- Must have safety chains or cable adequate enough to support the trailer and contents.
- The hitch itself must be structurally adequate to support the weight being towed.
- Be properly and securely mounted.
- Provide adequate articulation without excessive slack.
- Provide an adequate locking device to prevent accidental separation between trailer and towing vehicle.

Below are examples of a trailer that is not properly secured and of one that is properly secured meeting the new regulations.

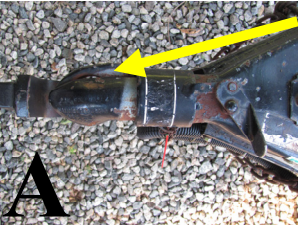


PHOTO A: VIOLATION
Locking mechanism is neither engaged nor secured.

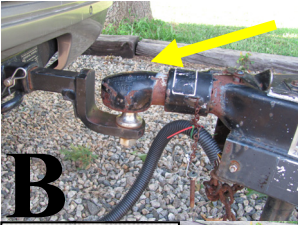


PHOTO B: VIOLATION
Locking mechanism is neither engaged nor secured and no chains are secured from trailer to vehicle.

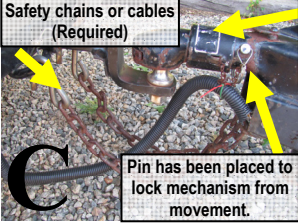


PHOTO C: NO VIOLATION
Safety chains in place, lights hooked up, and locking mechanism engaged with pin lock.

Other Law Reminders for Utility Trailers:

§ 46.2-1157 – State Inspection Requirements

Utility trailers having a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) less than 3,000 pounds are not required to be state inspected unless they are equipped with brakes.

If the GVWR is greater than 3,000 pounds, the trailer must be inspected and be equipped with brakes (electric or hydraulic).



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Chief of Police



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Excited about our future.

The County of Henrico does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability.

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Does your utility trailer look like the one pictured below? If so, it is not in compliance with state and local codes. This brochure is designed to assist you with utility trailer compliance to ensure safety for you and others on the road.



Report all suspicious activity!
Call the Henrico County
Division of Police at

501-5000
or
911—Emergency only

Henrico County
Division of Police

Utility Trailer Compliance

Code of Henrico County (Henrico law)

Sec. 10-102. Securing or covering loads.

(a) Required. No person shall transport gravel, sand, coal or other nonagricultural and non-forestry products in a truck, trailer or semitrailer along streets, roads or highways of the county, unless the load is secured to the vehicle or is covered by a tarpaulin or other suitable cover, securely fastened to the body of the vehicle, and of such size and shape as necessary to cover the entire load.

(b) Exceptions. This section shall not apply to pickup trucks, public service company vehicles, or emergency snow removal equipment while engaged in snow removal operations.

(c) Penalty. Violation of this section shall constitute a traffic infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$200.00.

State law references: Escape of material from vehicles transporting litter, Code of Virginia, §§ 46.2-1156(B), 46.2-113, 46.2-1300.

Sec. 10-103. Allowing escape of load material.

(a) Prohibited. No vehicle shall be operated or moved on any highway unless it is constructed, maintained and loaded to prevent its contents from dropping, sifting, leaking or otherwise escaping.

(b) Exceptions. This section shall not apply to any:

- (1) Motor vehicle which is used exclusively for agricultural purposes as provided in Code of Virginia, § 46.2-698, and is not licensed in any other state;
- (2) Agricultural vehicle, tractor or other vehicle exempted from registration and licensing requirements under state law; or
- (3) Motor vehicle transporting forest products, poultry or livestock.

(c) Penalty. Violation of this section shall constitute a traffic infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$200.00.

(Code 1980, § 12.1-4; Ord. No. 976, § 2, 5-27-98)

State law references: Transportation, littering, Code of Virginia, §§ 46.2-113, 46.2-1156, 46.2-1300.

The Code of Virginia (Virginia law)

§ 46.2-1088.5. Reflectors or reflectorized material required on rear end of certain trailers.

There shall be affixed to the rear end of every utility trailer that does not require state inspection either two or more reflectors of a type approved by the Superintendent or at least 100 square inches of solid reflectorized material. The reflectors or reflective material shall be applied so as to outline the rear end of the trailer. For the purposes of this section, "utility trailer" means a trailer whose body and tailgate consist largely or exclusively of a metal mesh.

Also note that utility trailers that have a gross vehicle weight of 3,000 pounds or more are required to be inspected and be equipped with brakes.

Other Related State Codes:

§ 46.2-704. Prohibited operations; checking on weights; penalties.

A. No person shall operate or permit the operation of any motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer for which the fee for registration is prescribed by § 46.2-697 on any highway in the Commonwealth, under any of the following circumstances:

1. Without first having paid the registration fee hereinabove prescribed.
2. If, at the time of the operation, the gross weight of the vehicle or of the combination of vehicles of which it is a part, is in excess of the gross weight on the basis of which it is registered. In any case where a pickup truck is used in combination with another vehicle,

operation shall be unlawful only if the combined gross weight exceeds the combined gross weight on the basis of which each vehicle is registered... (see complete code online)

§ 46.2-1111. Extension of loads beyond line of fender or body

No vehicle shall carry any load extending more than six inches beyond the line of the fender or body. Nor shall such load exceed a total outside width as prescribed by §§ 46.2-1105 through 46.2-1109.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, watercraft carried on vehicles may extend more than six inches beyond the line of the fender or body of such vehicle if the total width of watercraft and the carrier upon which it is carried does not exceed seventy-six inches.

§ 46.2-1120. Extension of loads beyond front of vehicles.

No vehicle shall carry any load extending more than three feet beyond the front thereof.

§ 46.2-1121. Flag or light at end of load.

Whenever the load on any vehicle extends more than four feet beyond the rear of the bed or body thereof, there shall be displayed at the end of the load, in such a position as to be clearly visible at all times from the rear of the load, a red flag, not less than twelve inches, both in length and width. Between sunset and sunrise, however, there shall be displayed at the end of the load a red light plainly visible in clear weather at least 500 feet to the sides and rear of the vehicle.

§ 46.2-1161. Exemption of certain trailers not equipped with brakes. No boat, utility, or travel trailer which is not equipped with brakes shall be required to be inspected.

To review the above listed Virginia State Codes in their entirety, visit the web page:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+TOC4602000>



PHOTO 1: VIOLATION - This trailer has no reflectors or reflectorized tape.

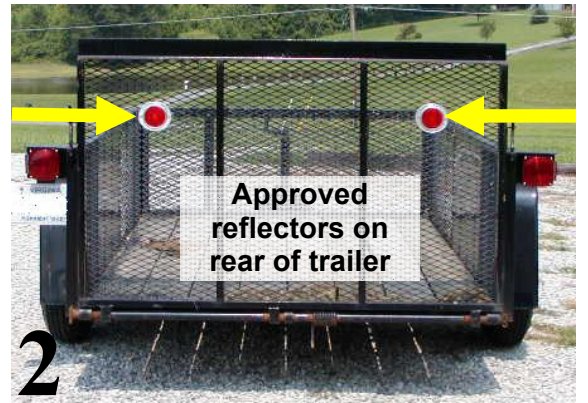


PHOTO 2: NO VIOLATION - This trailer has two reflectors on the rear.

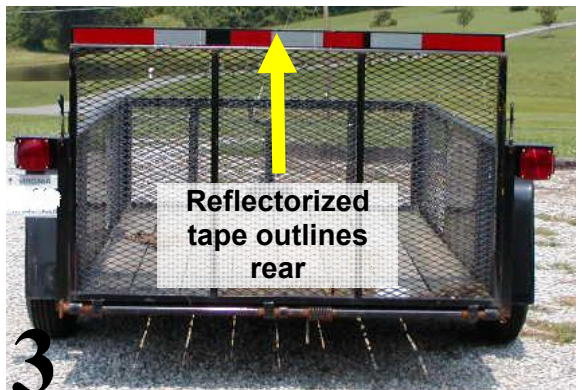


PHOTO 3: NO VIOLATION - This trailer has 100+ inches of reflectorized tape.