

STATUTES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF AGRICULTURAL VEHICLES

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Few people seem to fully understand the laws that apply to the operation of vehicles that farmers traditionally use on or around their farm. Many farmers and police officers are unaware of numerous special rules that apply to agricultural vehicles and their drivers. Persons who are aware of a special rule often struggle to find where that rule is stated in the law. In some situations, there are no special rules, and the agricultural vehicle and driver are subject to the same requirements as other vehicles.

The confusion about laws that apply to agricultural vehicles becomes most troublesome when a driver of an agricultural vehicle is subject to a traffic stop by a police officer. In the midst of the traffic stop, both the driver and the officer may have misconceptions about how the law applies to the vehicle or driver. Failure by the driver or officer to know the particular law that applies or the particular section where the law appears can lead to lengthy and frustrating delays in time and heightened conflict between the driver and the officer during the traffic stop.

The next series of articles tries to identify areas where special rules apply to agricultural vehicles and their drivers. The articles will also try to identify areas where there are no special rules and where the agricultural vehicle and driver must comply with the general requirements that other vehicles and drivers must meet.

Each article will provide references where the rules being described appear in law. Nearly all of the rules governing the use of agricultural vehicles and drivers can be found in either the state Vehicle Code (Title 75 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes), state regulations issued by the Department of Transportation (Title 67 of the Pennsylvania Code), or federal regulations governing the operation of vehicles interstate (Title 49 of the Federal Code of Regulations). “**PVC**” will be used to identify references to the state Vehicle Code, while “**PaDOTRegs**” will refer to the state transportation regulations and “**FedRegs**” will refer to the federal transportation regulations prescribed in Title 49 of the federal regulations. The symbol “**§**” will be used to identify the particular section where the rule appears in the body of law referenced.

Separate articles will cover farm trucks and combinations and their drivers; implements (farm machinery) and their drivers; trailers; multipurpose agricultural vehicles, and limitations in vehicle height, weight and width and other limitations that apply in operating vehicles on public roads. Please keep in mind that the following articles will focus attention on agricultural vehicles and drivers. While some aspects of the law’s application to non-agricultural vehicles and drivers may be covered in the discussion of agricultural vehicles and drivers, the articles will not discuss the law’s application to non-agricultural vehicles or drivers in depth. Also keep in mind that the articles will focus on those aspects of the law that are most important for farmers to understand and are

more likely to be subjects of police enforcement activity. They will not cover every law that may be applicable in every situation.